

Dr. Lawrence Feldman, Board Vice-Chair

**SUBJECT: PLACEMENT SERVICES**

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC  
FRAMEWORK: SCHOOL/DISTRICT LEADERSHIP**

Education has been viewed and promoted as the great equalizer between and among all the peoples of this country. Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) core mission is to provide its students with the highest quality of education so that all students are empowered to lead productive and fulfilling lives as lifelong learners and responsible citizens. M-DCPS holds true to that core belief when it endeavors to ensure the development of both the academic and trade skills our students seek in order to become future leaders and productive members of society. Our school system has made strides in the academic arena with recent accolades such as the College Board Advanced Placement District Award, the Broad Prize and the Florida TaxWatch recognition confirming the achievements of our students, teachers, and administrators. However, our system is also proud to feature a robust, dynamic and highly successful adult education program featuring career and technical skills courses of study that serve a diverse and often neglected segment of the population.

M-DCPS boasts Florida's largest adult education system, offering courses at 21 adult education campuses and numerous off-campus locations throughout Miami-Dade County. Post-secondary training is designed to support the local workforce, with pathways in the areas of Industrial/Technical, Health/Medical, Business/Computers, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Public Service. Teachers in these programs work to impart real-world skills to students who come to them from all walks of life. Adult Education also services high school students who seek to fulfill their GED requirements or attain their high school diploma while becoming industry certified in a program of their choice. Most recently, the 2015 Francisco R. Walker Teacher of the Year recognition was awarded to Ms. Myrna Betancourt, a culinary arts teacher at South Dade Adult Education, whose work with homeless students from a nearby shelter has garnered much attention. The success of students in programs like Ms. Betancourt's is often measured by their ability to learn the skills needed for their trade, as well as, by the ability to become gainfully employed and, ultimately, secure fiscal stability. The plight of Ms. Betancourt's students highlights the need to address internship opportunities, placement services, and resources available for high school students as they transition out of our programs and into the world of work. Traditional high schools often employ CAP advisors and counselors to assist their students in seeking college acceptance and

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assistance. We would be well-served to also provide assistance to our high school students involved in career and technical training through placement services for those seeking employment after graduation.

Certainly innovative and proactive steps have already been initiated throughout the past year. The Superintendent has taken steps to bridge the training received in career and technical education programs to established businesses in the community through partnerships, most notably with Braman Motors. Additionally, the team of dedicated professionals in Adult Education and the Division of Workforce Development Education maintain an updated 'Job Report - Weekly Report of Job Openings' on their website which features myriad employment opportunities from established businesses in the county. The opportunity to scaffold our high school students through the graduation process and into the world of post-secondary employment can secure and enhance the quality of life of our students and their families.

This item seeks to request the Superintendent explore career internship and placement opportunities for high school students in career and technical skills educational programs through the development of district-wide partnerships with businesses and the establishment of a placement service program that links these students with employers that will coach, mentor, assist, and ultimately employ our students upon successful graduation.

Whether students choose to further their learning in a university setting, join the military, or enter the workforce, if a school system defines one of its most important goals as facilitating that chosen pathway to economic security for its students, then optimal assistance and opportunity for this to occur must be provided.

#### **PROPOSED ACTION**

**DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County request the Superintendent:

- a) explore career internship and placement opportunities for high school students in career and technical skills educational programs through the development of district-wide partnerships with businesses; and
- b) explore the establishment of a placement service program that links these students with employers that will coach, mentor, assist, and ultimately employ our students upon successful graduation; and
- c) provide a report to the Board addressing the implementation viability and timeline of placement programs and partnerships.