

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SCHOOL BOARD ATTORNEY AND THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS TO REVIEW THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO DETERMINE IF FEMA WILL REIMBURSE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR SUPPLEMENTAL COMPENSATION BASED ON ADDITIONAL DUTIES PERFORMED BY ESSENTIAL EXEMPT EMPLOYEES DURING THE DECLARED EMERGENCY PERIOD FOR HURRICANE IRMA

COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

Hurricane Irma was a record-setting storm that impacted most of South Florida with tropical storm and hurricane winds. Miami was expected to bear the brunt of the storm once it hit Florida, but the storm's trajectory shifted westward with the Keys, Marco Island, Naples, Ft. Myers and the Tampa Bay area for the worst effects of the storm. Mandatory evacuations were issued for most of the South and Southwest Florida including Hillsborough County around the Tampa Bay area.

On September 4, 2017, Florida Governor Rick Scott declared a state of emergency for all 67 counties in Florida. On September 5, 2017, President Donald J. Trump declared that "an emergency exists in the State of Florida and ordered "Federal assistance to supplement State, tribal, and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Irma beginning on September 5, 2017, and continuing." On September 6, 2017, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Superintendent declared a state of emergency effective 10:01 a.m. Thursday, September 7, 2017, and this state of emergency concluded at 11:59 p.m. on September 17, 2017.

In Miami-Dade County, over 600,000 residents were impacted by the mandatory evacuation order issued by Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez. More than 30,000 citizens came to 44 M-DCPS schools that were serving as shelters. The outstanding work and commitment of our employees to ensure the safety, security, and the ability of these shelters to operate successfully was an under estimated task. Our employees performed beyond what was expected and we must ensure that all of them are properly recognized for their exceptional work. Some will be rightfully compensated based on current language in the applicable labor contracts.

Many of our exempt employees, principals and assistant principals, worked many, many extra hours performing additional duties by evaluating damages to school facilities, securing school building sites to ensure that they were ready to open, and managing shelters, leaving their families to attend to the needs of the Miami-Dade community. Other exempt employees at the regions and district offices spent long weekday and weekend hours enabling the process for schools to open as quickly as possible.

Therefore, this agenda item requests authorization from the Board for the School Board Attorney and the Superintendent of Schools to review the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance Program to determine if FEMA will reimburse the school district for supplemental compensation based on additional duties performed by essential exempt employees during the declared emergency period.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney's office as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the School Board Attorney and the Superintendent of Schools to:

- 1) review the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance Program to determine if FEMA will reimburse the school district for supplemental compensation based on additional duties performed by essential exempt employees during the declared emergency period; and
- 2) recommend, if appropriate, any policy changes to the *Manual of Procedures for Managerial Exempt Personnel (MEP)*; and
- 3) report their findings back to the School Board by November 15, 2017.