

June 18, 2002

Dr. Robert B. Ingram, Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ENDORSE THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S HOME RULE CHARTER FOR THE INDEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICT FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, TO BE NAMED "THE CHILDREN'S TRUST", AND DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO ALL MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS' EMPLOYEES, PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS

On September 10, 2002, there will be a special election in Miami-Dade County, Florida, to approve an amendment to Miami-Dade County's Home Rule Charter for the Independent Special District for Children's Services. Voters will decide upon an amendment for "The Children's Trust". If approved, the Trust will have authority to fund improvements for children's health, development and safety, as well as programs to support the promotion of parental responsibility for their children. This laudable ballot item shows great promise for enabling community experts to be proactive in the healthy development of children in Miami-Dade County, particularly those most at risk.

There can be little doubt of the need for a dedicated funding source for children in Miami-Dade County. Children make up 25% of the local population; nevertheless, they comprise 100% of the area's future. The establishment of "The Children's Trust" will ensure the availability and affordability of high-quality services. One out of three children enrolled in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) district lives below the poverty level and many of them have no access to health care. One hundred thousand children have no health insurance and thousands more do not have adequate coverage. Of the more than 1,400 licensed day care centers in the community, only 96 have national accreditation. Moreover, national data indicate that one in ten children, between the ages of five and ten, goes to an empty home after school each week, while more than four out of ten children, between the ages of 12-14, spend time unsupervised after school. The establishment of "The Children's Trust" would be a positive community step in the advocacy of children. The promotion of children's safety and welfare is also an assurance of a better quality of life for Miami-Dade County adults. Everyone benefits from programming which betters the life of local children.

This item does not appear in the published agenda. The good cause to vary from the agenda is because if the Board's endorsement is approved now, it would allow for maximum utilization of the endorsement in literature, advertisement, flyers, etc., that are currently being developed for promoting "The Children's Trust."

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. ROBERT B. INGRAM:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse the proposed amendment to Miami-Dade County's Home Rule Charter for the Independent Special District for Children's Services, to be named "The Children's Trust", and direct the superintendent to disseminate information to all Miami-Dade County Public Schools' employees, parents, guardians and students.