

October 17, 2002

Dr. Robert B. Ingram, Member

**SUBJECT: REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO EXAMINE THE COMMISSION FOR
FLORIDA LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCREDITATION PROCESS FOR
THE MIAMI-DADE SCHOOLS POLICE DEPARTMENT, INCLUDING
THE ESTIMATED COST THEREOF**

In 1993 Florida Statute 943.125 encouraged the Florida Sheriff's Association (FSA) and the Florida Police Chief Association (FPCA) to create an independent voluntary law enforcement agency "*accreditation program*." The movement by law enforcement professionals to create accrediting bodies is in response to a need to ensure the public that quality services are delivered in accordance with recognized and accepted standards.

Representatives from FSA and FPCA developed an accreditation program, modeled after the national accreditation program, which requires compliance with more than 275 professional standards, designed specifically for Florida law enforcement agencies. These standards are practical, easily understood and achievable even for the smallest law enforcement agency. The program was designed with consideration for the following goals:

- To establish and maintain standards that represent current professional law enforcement practices;
- To increase effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of law enforcement services;
- To establish standards that make an agency and its personnel accountable to the constituency they serve;
- To implement a Florida accreditation program that establishes standards, which do not conflict with national standards.

The Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation was established in December 1994 and then incorporated on February 9, 1995. The purpose of the Commission is to establish a program for accreditation that can be achieved by all Florida law enforcement agencies.

The Commission offers two ways for a law enforcement agency to become state accredited. Agencies may choose to comply with all applicable state standards (full compliance) or, if the agency is currently nationally accredited under the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), it may choose to comply with only the standards outlined as additional to the national process (comparative compliance).

The Miami-Dade Schools Police Department (MDSPD) would benefit greatly by participating in the accreditation process. By implementing and raising standards, MDSPD ensures that the quality of service provided is at the highest level. Accreditation can also provide an umbrella of liability coverage when action is taken, or service is provided, consistent with standards that are universally tested and accepted.

By engaging in the accreditation process, all facets of a productive and successful police agency can be examined. Deficiencies will be noted and corrective actions implemented to ensure MDSPD is operating at the most effective and efficient level possible.

The accreditation process is both time consuming and labor intensive in both its preparation and implementation. It should be viewed and accepted as an investment in the quality of service expected by administration, staff, students and parents.

It may be possible to contract with experts in this growing specialized field of quality law enforcement. Authorizing a feasibility study would allow a recommendation to the School Board that would consider cost and staffing commitment internally as well as externally.

Furthermore, the accreditation process is in direct correlation with recommendations and suggestions made by OPPAGA as it relates to the Safety and Security Best Practices.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

DR. ROBERT B. INGRAM: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize a study to examine the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation process for the Miami-Dade Schools Police Department (MDSPD), and include internal and external staffing commitments and costs.