

Dr. Robert B. Ingram, Vice Chair

**SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF A GRANT DEVELOPMENT UNIT WITHIN
THE OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND
GRANTS ADMINISTRATION**

COMMITTEE: EDUCATION AND SCHOOL OPERATIONS

In the last several years, despite the efforts of our state and federal elected officials, funding for education has been impacted at the state and federal levels as a result of a downturn in the economy and the need to fund Homeland Security and National Defense. It appears that funding in future years will be similarly impacted, making the need for supplemental educational funding critical. This district must aggressively pursue external supplemental funding available through grant opportunities from both public and private sources to support student achievement and enhance district educational initiatives.

The Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Grants Administration (OIAGA), with a staff of six administrators, presently handles 281 different grant programs with a total value of over \$276.7 million in supplemental educational funding. OIAGA staff is responsible for assisting grant project managers in meeting their individual grant compliance requirements and ensuring that funds are fully spent, researching grant opportunities, disseminating information on grant opportunities throughout the district, providing technical reviews of grant applications prior to submission, negotiating grant award amounts and amendments with funding agencies, reviewing current funding trends and preparing comments on final regulations, as well as preparing and distributing a variety of detailed monthly/quarterly/annual and special reports.

Since its reorganization last year, OIAGA's efforts have been targeted to providing more technical assistance and grant writing training to the ACCESS Centers, district, and school site staff. A web site has even been launched that contains a wide variety of resources, including general needs statements and other templates designed to make the grant writing process less difficult. OIAGA, however, still does not have staff positions dedicated solely to the development and writing of grant applications. The actual writing of grants is done primarily by teachers, school-site administrators, and district staff such as curriculum specialists who are able to invest the extra time required to develop grant applications which may take as much as 80 hours of research and writing.

Therefore, the schools that have staff with grant writing skills and leadership that support their efforts are often in a much better position to receive extra funding through grant competitions. This district has schools that routinely compete and win grant dollars, while there are many others that virtually never submit an application. This situation is a basic issue of equity that must be addressed at the district level by providing additional resources available to all schools.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools must invest to receive. Last year alone, the district received a total of \$5,237,222 in indirect cost from grants. These dollars are placed in the general fund and not re-invested in grant development.

The reinvestment of a portion of these dollars into grant research and development staff positions, such as master grant writers, will result in this district's receiving even more revenue. Such master grant writers would enable the district to pursue funding sources such as foundations, which typically go untapped. Additionally, these grant writers could focus on funding for district wide programs, providing resources to schools that do not often actively pursue grant opportunities individually.

Under the direction of OIAGA, the master grant writers will work with district staff, ACCESS center directors, and principals, pursuing funding for programs in line with our district strategic goals and priorities. This district must have staff dedicated to building relationships in the supplemental funding arena, enabling us to pursue vast untapped areas of potential revenue from private foundations and corporate entities. This critical need for additional resources in grant development should be addressed by the Superintendent when planning next year's budget.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to establish a Grant Development Unit within the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. This unit is to be dedicated to the research of our schools needs, development of proposals to meet those needs and to submit proposals to appropriate sources for funding consideration for Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Superintendent to report unit's design and implementation strategy to the Board at its August 2003 meeting.