

Dr. Martin Karp, Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF INTENSIFYING AND EXPANDING CURRENT EFFORTS MADE IN THE NEW TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAM AND BROADENING SUCH EFFORTS BY DEVELOPING A RETIRED EDUCATORS MENTORING PROGRAM (REMP) WHICH WOULD INCLUDE RETIRED ADMINISTRATORS

COMMITTEE: SCHOOL SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY

At the December 2005 Board meeting, Operation Fast Track was discussed. As an initiative of the Office of Professional Development, the plan was created to accelerate the level of district professional development provided to administrators and teachers. Under initiative 2, accelerating the development and implementation of critical professional development services included an update regarding new teacher/early career support where 15 retired teachers were recruited, trained and assigned to mentor 52 beginning teachers through the New Teacher Mentor Program in partnership with The Education Fund. Using data from 1986-2006, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Division of Retirement reports that there are 7,649 retired teachers and 1,063 retired administrators, and recognizing that most administrators once taught, a considerable pool of valuable resources exist.

There are numerous ways retired teachers and administrators with their education degrees and experience could assist our teachers and administrators and positively impact children's lives. Intensifying and expanding current efforts in the New Teacher Mentoring Program and broadening such efforts by developing a Retired Educators Mentoring Program (REMP) can lend support to the initiative created by the Office of Professional Development. We should utilize the skills of interested retired educators and make them aware of opportunities to help teachers, administrators and students in our public school system.

Many retired teachers would make for excellent mentors for new teachers and teachers in the early stages of a teaching career. A quarter of new teachers leave the profession in the first two years, and one third leave after three years. Within the first five years of teaching, nearly 50 percent of beginning teachers exit the profession and those with a significant number of years of service may be able to provide valuable support that could help mitigate such losses.

In addition to providing support to teachers, children can greatly benefit from retired education professionals and the expertise they offer. Retired teachers and administrators can serve as mentors in professional development services, volunteers at local schools, helpers for teachers with special needs students in their classes, assistants to counselors responsible for addressing students' social issues and career choices, advisors to parents in The Parent Academy, and resources for coaches of athletic teams, but they must be informed that such opportunities exist.

Educators choose to retire for a variety of reasons including a desire to no longer work full-time, signing up years earlier to participate in the DROP retirement program, or recognizing they cannot effectively teach the same subject at the same location after so many years in the district.

Many retired educators would like to continue contributing in some way to our public school system and making a difference in the lives of children, but need a temporary break or a new challenge. Possibilities include providing retired educators easy access to information and various options about mentoring activities and making volunteer and paid positions available. Services may include:

- A web page for retired teachers and administrators that can be searched by zip code or by interests listing the latest mentoring opportunities. The page could also give many teacher and children-oriented organizations an opportunity to advertise.
- A booklet of REMP opportunities distributed as part of teacher and administrator retirement packages;
- Mentoring fairs,
- Grouping the local REMP effort with other school districts where a teacher and administrator retiring from any place in the United States can search for mentoring opportunities in our school district, and;
- Rewards given out recognizing those who participate.

Potential Partnerships include United Teachers of Dade, Dade Association of School Administrators, Big Brothers Big Sisters, additional business organizations, and children related organizations for students.

ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. MARTIN KARP:

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

1. Explore the feasibility of intensifying and expanding current efforts made in the New Teacher Mentoring Program and broadening such efforts by developing a Retired Educators Mentoring Program (REMP) which would include retired administrators, and;
2. Submit a report to the Board no later than August 2006.