

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - (6,000 Characters and spaces)

In Miami Dade County, two out of every three children ages five to seventeen are living in poverty. Research shows that students living in persistent poverty are more likely to demonstrate low academic performance and suffer from conditions that impede their learning, including lack of access to the educational resources provided by *computers and access to broadband internet services*. If we are to improve academic performance and reduce poverty in this community, we must increase our efforts to conquer the digital divide; particularly among our most vulnerable student/families. We must increase awareness of broadband technology and its' benefits. We need to demonstrate affordable options and educate on how to incorporate and sustain the use of broadband technology.

Miami-Dade County has a population of 2,464,292 people spread across 2,000+ sq. miles. **Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS)** our nation's fourth largest school district, serves over 336,000 students and 36,000 employees in 400 facilities throughout the county. Our student population is one of the poorest nationally, with one out of three living at/below poverty level. The South Florida Workforce reported the June 2009 unemployment rate for the county at 11.3%, with 145,039 residents out of work. The current economic downturn has resulted in the loss of over 28,000 jobs, mostly "blue-collar" low-income wage jobs, affecting the most vulnerable populations. The only industries to gain (+900) jobs were the education and health fields; both requiring advanced education plus Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills, to include computer usage and broadband connectivity; skills which continue to elude our most vulnerable students due economic need.

M-DCPS wants to address the need for Sustainable Broadband Adoption through our project: **"Get Connected – Go Global"**. Through this project, we aim to close the gap within the "knowledge divide" – as the lack of technology creates a lack of useful information and knowledge. It's not so much about *access to*, but rather *the benefits derived from access*. This project will advance BTOP statutory purpose No. 3 - *Provide broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment and support to the vulnerable populations*; particularly our disadvantaged students and families, thus improving their quality of life.

With these funds we will provide: broadband awareness to over 336,000 students and their families countywide; provide 6,000 students/families with computers; provide 10,000 families with "free"/"reduced" price broadband internet service along with technology skills training for the targeted sub-group of **30,000 Free/Reduced Lunch students/families** from the 35 Intervene/Correct II district schools in need of improvement.

The development of M-DCPS student/parent/ teacher and community portals is one of the most innovative, useful and productive educational tools available. Students/Parents and Teachers can access 24/7. This project will also connect families to the innovative **Links to Learning** initiative. These "on-line" learning paths are designed to help with a student's unique needs, while providing skills practice and enrichment for students 3-11. By giving these families after-hours access to the applications, the district maximizes its investments and increases opportunities for at-risk student improvement. The project also demonstrates innovation by maximizing current resources and relationships to get families connected immediately.

M-DCPS is focusing on providing direct services for the 30,000+ students from among the 35 low performing schools, located throughout heavily populated **Overtown** and **Liberty City** within City of Miami; mid-northern quadrant of the county; and through the southeastern end of Unincorporated Dade to include City of Homestead. ***Both quadrants register 20% to 30% broadband connectivity usage with a few blocks showing a 30%-40% usage*** . Both Quadrants register a majority of below poverty level, minority households – with 66% Black, 28% Hispanics and 2% Other average demographic breakdown, with median household incomes of \$11,500 to \$20,000 for the Mid-town, City of Miami northern quadrant. The southeastern quadrant registers a demographic breakdown of 56% Black, 32% Hispanic and 5% Other with the City of Homestead registering 22% Black, 52% Hispanic and 4% Other. Median Household Income varies from \$17,000 to \$30,000 in the southeast. The entire school district population of 336,000 students and the whole Miami-Dade county population of 2,464,292 people will receive Broadband Awareness through our countywide marketing campaign.

M-DCPS ITS department; who will supervise this project, provides information systems and network infrastructure for over 400 facilities and schools, 120,000-networked devices, 45,000 employees, and over 350,000 students. The Department has over 300 employees and an annual \$40 million technology budget. The fact that school district built and operated one of the most comprehensive microwave systems in the country for 20 years is documentation and proof of the technical viability and ability to manage a complex technological project that can accommodate the needs of our ***“Get Connected – Go Global”*** campaign. Currently, M-DCPS manages, monitors and reports on over **254 federal, state, local and foundation Programs**.