

Mr. Demetrio Perez, Jr., M.S., Member

**SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 00-18 PROPOSED BY MR. DEMETRIO PEREZ, JR., M.S., SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER, RECOGNIZING MAY 26, 2000, AS WELL AS THE SUBSEQUENT FRIDAY PRIOR TO EVERY MEMORIAL DAY, AS COMMUNITY UNITY DAY IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools educate 355,000 students, of which 52.8 percent are Hispanic; 33 percent are African-American; 12.4 percent are Anglo; and 1.8 percent are of American-Indian, Asian, or multi-racial heritage that originate from 164 different countries. These children speak over 90 different languages and we instruct them in 16 different languages. The diversity of our community is a unique and enriching aspect of our society. However, it also creates a duty in each of us to forge ahead and build bridges of understanding and respect so that we may all live in harmony.

Miami-Dade is currently going through a very sensitive period in its history. It is disheartening to see our area described as being divided, fractured or tense and referred to in other depreciative terms. As members of this community, and furthermore as its educational leaders, we have an obligation to step forth and make a concerted effort to heal the wounds that have been opened and help our friends and neighbors come together in the spirit of peace and unity. To help achieve this goal, I propose that we direct the Superintendent to call on every student, teacher, and administrator in our school system to join hands in a moment of silent meditation at 11 a.m. on Friday, May 26, 2000.

Prior to this event, students should be informed, through appropriate means (e.g.: homeroom announcements and/or, history, civics, and government classes), about the importance of mutual respect and understanding. The purpose of this silent meditation would be to have the 355,000 students we educate each day and our 41,000 employees, each of whom plays a vital role in carrying out our educational mission, realize the importance of unity and look beyond our individual characteristics to join together for the benefit of our entire community. Following this event, workshops and other educational activities can be arranged, as appropriate, to discuss the students' feelings about our diversity and address their concerns as members of our community.

The timing of this silent meditation is significant because of the recent events that have taken place in Miami-Dade County. It is also the last day of school before Memorial Day, when we honor those brave souls who valiantly died to preserve our freedom. Many times the significance of this occasion is lost in the midst of leisure activities, but we must all take the time to give thanks for being able to live in the land of the free. If feasible, this event should be established as an annual activity to instill the true meaning of Memorial Day in all of our students and to promote the notion of a society united in equality and mutual understanding, qualities that are vital to our future as a community.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
MR. DEMETRIO PEREZ, JR., M.S.:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. Approve Resolution No. 00-18 of the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, proposed by Mr. Demetrio Perez, Jr., M.S., School Board Member, recognizing May 26, 2000, as well as the subsequent Friday prior to every Memorial Day, as Community Unity Day in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and
2. Direct the Superintendent of Schools to call for students, faculty, staff, and administrators to observe a moment of silent meditation at 11:00 a.m. on that day to promote the need for unity, respect, and mutual understanding in our community.

**RESOLUTION NO. 00-18 OF  
THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
PROPOSED BY MR. DEMETRIO PEREZ, Jr., M.S., SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER,  
RECOGNIZING MAY 26, 2000, AS WELL AS THE SUBSEQUENT FRIDAY PRIOR TO  
EVERY MEMORIAL DAY, AS COMMUNITY UNITY DAY IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS, AND DIRECTING THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS TO CALL FOR  
STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATORS TO OBSERVE A MOMENT OF  
SILENT MEDITATION AT 11 A.M. ON THAT DAY TO PROMOTE THE NEED FOR UNITY,  
RESPECT, AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING IN OUR COMMUNITY**

**WHEREAS**, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools educate 355,000 students, of which 52.8 percent are Hispanic; 33 percent are African-American; 12.4 percent are Anglo; and 1.8 percent are of American Indian, Asian, or multi-racial heritage; that originate from 164 different countries. These children speak over 90 different languages and we instruct them in 16 different languages, and

**WHEREAS**, the diversity of our community is a unique and enriching aspect of our society, that creates a responsibility in each of us to forge ahead and build bridges of understanding and respect so that we may all live in harmony; and

**WHEREAS**, instead of dwelling on issues that may separate us, we must strive to focus on those qualities that bring us together and build upon them to achieve community unity; and

**WHEREAS**, Anita Meyer and Miriam Klein who wrote in their book "Memories of the Night: a Study of the Holocaust," "You do not have to have a Jewish heart to listen to the message of the Holocaust; you have to have a human heart," to show that tragedy does not only affect particular races or cultures, but humanity as a whole; and

**WHEREAS**, Jose Marti, recognizing the harm of divisiveness, stated: "Everything that divides [people], everything that sorts, separates, and categorizes them is a sin against humanity;" and

**WHEREAS**, Martin Luther King said, "We must learn to live together as brothers and sisters, or perish together as fools," emphasizes the importance of coming together as a society; and

**WHEREAS**, Abraham Lincoln said, "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves," stresses equality and freedom for all; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the mission of this school system to educate this community's most precious asset: our children; and

**WHEREAS**, given that hallowed mission, it is our responsibility to assume a position of leadership to overcome our differences, to help heal our community as a whole, and to set an example for those whom we are charged with educating;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida approve Resolution No. 00-18 of the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, proposed by Mr. Demetrio Perez, Jr., M.S., School Board Member, recognizing May 26, 2000, as well as the subsequent Friday prior to every Memorial Day, as Community Unity Day in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and directing the Superintendent of Schools to call for students, faculty, staff, and administrators to observe a moment of silent meditation at 11:00 a.m. on that day to promote the need for unity, respect, and mutual understanding in our community.

A copy of this resolution is placed in the permanent records of this Board.

Presented this seventeenth day of May, 2000 A.D.

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

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CHAIR

ATTEST:

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Secretary