

Roger C. Cuevas, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION FOR ACCEPTANCE AS THE FIRST SCHOOL DISTRICT TO BE ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN, A PRIVATE, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

Authorization is sought for acceptance as the first school district to be adopted by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to locating and recovering missing children and raising public awareness about ways to prevent child abduction, molestation, and sexual exploitation. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) would distinguish itself, through this adoption, as the first school district in the country to establish an official linkage with the nation's resource center for child protection. There is no charge to the district for adoption by this landmark organization.

John and Reve Walsh founded the Adam Walsh Child Resource Centers in 1982 in tribute to their son, Adam. In 1990, the Adam Walsh Centers merged with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. John Walsh, Adam's father and an advocate for child protection and victims' rights, called upon the organization to become "a strong, loud voice for children."

Established in 1984, NCMEC operates under a Congressional mandate and works in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in coordinating the efforts of law enforcement, social service agencies, elected officials, judges, prosecutors, educators, and public and private sectors to break the cycle of violence that historically has perpetuated needless crimes against children. The President and Chief Operating Officer of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is Mr. Ernest E. Allen.

The proposed adoption would result in a spectrum of programmatic resources and services to M-DCPS and the Dade County Council PTA/PTSA. NCMEC would provide a distribution network to M-DCPS staff and parents for various publications aimed at child safety prevention and protection. The organization would design and assemble "back-to-school" kits for children and parents. Significantly, this partnership would link the M-DCPS web site to the NCMEC web site for Education and Resources. NCMEC also proposes to provide training for M-DCPS teachers and counselors at periodic intervals during the school year, on topics relating to child safety prevention and protection. Further, the organization aims to provide parents and community leaders with Internet safety and exploitation seminars.

Through the adoption by this prestigious organization, M-DCPS will distinguish itself as a state and national leader in programs aimed at child safety and welfare. The resources available by this adoption will have a significant impact on the prevention of violence and exploitation among children. This partnership will enable M-DCPS to remain abreast of the best practices in preventive programming while it will also send a strong message to the community, state, and nation about the district's commitment to child safety.

RECOMMENDED:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the acceptance as the first school district to be adopted by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, a private, nonprofit organization.

There is no cost to the district.

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