

Frank J. Bolaños, School Board Member

**SUBJECT: POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF STAFF**

**COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

School Board Rule 6Gx13- 1C-1.06 states: "No employee shall directly or indirectly coerce or attempt to coerce, command or advise any other employee to contribute any money or anything else of value to any party, committee, organization, agency or person for political purposes."

School Board Rule 6Gx13- 4A-1.213, Code of Ethics, states: "An employee shall not solicit, directly or indirectly any payments or other benefits under circumstances that would create in the mind of a reasonable person in the community the belief that such payments or benefits were provided with the intent to improperly influence the employee's actions" was ushered in under the leadership of former Superintendent Merrett Stierheim and unanimously approved by the School Board to remedy the excesses and abuses of the past.

School Board Rule 6Gx13- 1C-1.06 was revised under the sponsorship of School Board Member Frank Bolaños and unanimously approved by the Board in December of 2002 after questionable activity by the United Teachers of Dade, to specifically prohibit the use of email communications and other resources in support of a candidate.

While we recognize the individual's right to participate in political activities, special attention must be given to prohibiting activities that create a conflict of interest and potential liability to the school district, such as the involvement of M-DCPS senior staff in School Board and other political campaigns and the use of district resources by interested parties, such as the United Teachers of Dade.

It has been brought to my attention that the Superintendent and Senior Staff have actively participated in the fundraising activities of several board members' political campaigns in recent weeks and that some M-DCPS employees felt pressured to contribute to these political campaigns and that political donations were requested and received on School Board property. These individuals do not wish to be identified for fear of reprisal by the Administration. Also, on June 12, 2006 *El Nuevo Herald* reported that Superintendent Rudolph Crew participated in a \$1,000 per plate fundraiser hosted by Bill and Hillary Clinton on behalf of the Democratic party's candidate for Senator, Bill Nelson.

These activities may be seen by some as a setback to the positive reforms enacted by this School Board in attempting to set a new standard for ethical behavior by eliminating favoritism and cronyism.

The request for political campaign donations from individual vendors by school system senior and mid-level administrators goes against the tenets of ethical standards and could further raise the specter of the questionable award of contracts, leaving the school district open to potential liability and vendor bid protests.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
MR. FRANK J. BOLAÑOS:**

That the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, remind the Superintendent, Executive Staff, UTD and all employees of existing board rules that promote high ethical standards and prohibit improper political activity and campaign solicitation and ask that they govern themselves accordingly.