

Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO WAIVE AND SUSPEND PROHIBITIONS SET FORTH IN SCHOOL BOARD RULE 6GX13- 1C-1.09 (PUBLIC ACTIVITIES INVOLVING STAFF OR STUDENTS) AND RULE 6GX13- 1C-1.15 (PUBLIC ACTIVITIES INVOLVING STAFF OR STUDENTS) IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR FUNDRAISING AND/OR OTHER CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF RELIEF EFFORTS IN RESPONSE TO THE HAITIAN EARTHQUAKE DISASTER; AND TO AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT TO OFFER THE FORMER NORTH MIAMI SENIOR HIGH BUILDING AS A STAGING/RECEIVING AREA FOR DONATIONS TARGETED TO THE RELIEF EFFORT

Just after 5:00 p.m. yesterday the country of Haiti was struck by the strongest earthquake to hit Haiti in 200 years. The loss of life and property is catastrophic. Many of our students, employees, and members of our community have strong ties to Haiti, including family members who reside there. As a result, there is a strong desire to participate in the relief efforts.

As you are aware, humanitarian organizations including the Red Cross and local Haitian organizations will be participating in and/or coordinating these relief efforts. As such, it is appropriate to vary from School Board Rule and allow schools and work locations to post information and/or collect funds or supplies in support of these relief organizations.

In authorizing this fundraising activity set forth herein, the School Board waives any prohibitions set forth in Board Rules, including limitations on fundraising and solicitation of donations set forth in School Board Rule 6Gx13- 1C-1.09 (Public Activities Involving Staff or Students) and Rule 6Gx13- 1C-1.15 (Public Activities Involving Staff or Students).

In support of our community, we are setting up several sources to answer questions and let individuals know how they can help. These include an email address, HelpHaiti@dadeschools.net, where questions may be sent; a website, <http://helphaiti.dadeschools.net>, where information regarding programs and resources will be posted as it becomes available; and an information line, 305-995-3000, which will be staffed beginning at 1:00 p.m. today.

In recognition of the many family relationships which exist between our students, staff, and community members and those affected in Haiti, we will be providing grief and crisis counseling for those in need. Crisis teams will be dispatched to schools at the request of principals. Additionally, the District's Office of Mental Health and Crisis Management Services will be staffing the crisis hotline, 305-995-CARE (2273).

Good Cause

This Friday I was to have left for Haiti to participate in an annual humanitarian mission following up on efforts begun last year in response to devastation caused by the hurricanes which struck the island nation in 2008. Tragically, the recovery which had begun has been decimated by the earthquake and its aftershocks.

It is important for students to learn and understand that service extends beyond their local communities to other countries and regions. Participation in this relief effort will teach students the importance of global citizenship and agency-to-agency collaboration in providing support and assistance to those in need worldwide.

As such, schools and work locations across the District are encouraged to hold emergency relief drives, raise funds, and/or collect non-perishable food items. Other items needed include first aid supplies and tents or camping equipment. The District has identified the former North Miami Senior High School building as a potential staging and drop-off site.

This item does not appear in the published Agenda. There is good cause to vary from the Agenda because the tragedy that struck Haiti occurred on January 12, 2010, after the publication of the Agenda, and the need to begin a relief effort cannot wait until the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

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

1. waive and suspend prohibitions outlined in School Board Rule 6Gx13- 1C-1.09 (Public Activities Involving Staff or Students) and Rule 6Gx13- 1C-1.15 (Public Activities Involving Staff or Students) in order to allow for fundraising and/or other charitable activities in support of relief efforts in response to the Haitian earthquake disaster; and
2. authorize the Superintendent to offer the former North Miami Senior High building as a staging/receiving area for donations targeted to the relief effort.