

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Office of the City Manager
Letter to Commission No. 114-2005



To: Mayor David Dermer and
Members of the City Commission

Date: May 3, 2005

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jorge M. Gonzalez".

Subject: **MIAMI BEACH SCHOOLS USED AS ELECTION VOTING LOCATIONS**

On February 15, 2005, Ms. Wendy Hart, Chairperson of the Miami Beach Committee for Quality Education, and on behalf of the Committee, sent a letter to the Mayor and City Commission regarding using public schools as election voting locations. See Attachment "A".

On February 22, 2005, Commissioner Bower sent a Memorandum to Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager, with copies to Bruno Barreiro, Miami-Dade County Commissioner, and Dr. Rudolph F. Crew, Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, requesting the City of Miami Beach work with both Miami-Dade County Government and Miami-Dade County Public School system regarding using public schools as election voting locations. See Attachment "B".

On March 1, 2005, the Administration, under my signature, sent a letter to Ms. Constance Kaplan, former Supervisor of Elections, forwarding both Ms. Hart's letter and Commissioner Bower's Memorandum and asked Robert Parcher, City Clerk, to work with the Elections Department to see if alternative voting locations could be found. See Attachment "C".

Attached for your review is the response letter from Mr. Lester Sola, Supervisor of Elections, Miami-Dade County Elections Department indicating that the current facilities have provide area voters with a history of familiarity, stability and reliability. Unless the City of Miami Beach is able to identify available and accessible facilities by July 15, 2005, the Elections Department's recommendation would be to not make any change at this time. See Attachment "D".

Please advise if there is any further action you would like the Administration to take.

Handwritten initials "JMG/REP" in black ink.
JMG/REP

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RECEIVED
05 MAY -4 AM 11:02
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

Miami Beach Committee of Quality Education

1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Fl. 33139
<http://ci.miami-beach.fl.us>



Telephone (305) 673-7193
Facsimile (305) 673-7772

DATE: February 15, 2005

TO: Mayor and Commission

FROM: Wendy Hart – Chair for Committee of Quality Education
Committee Members

SUBJECT: Public Schools Voting Locations

Dear Major and Commissioners:

On behalf of the Miami Beach Committee for Quality Education, I am writing to you today with a request for your assistance in improving our children's education. In order to enhance our students' safety while at school we have laws requiring notification of convicted sexual predators living near our schools, requiring volunteers at school to have background checks, and strict consequences against weapons brought to school. We strongly support all of these safety measures. Additionally, we strongly support voter education in our schools and community, and firmly believe that a well-educated voting populace is essential for our society.

However, we must request for your assistance in improving our children's education this was clearly brought to focus after our recent presidential election. After witnessing firsthand some of the disruptions and then speaking to several of our feeder pattern's principals and teachers, the feedback was unanimous against this practice. We are inviting the entire populace into our schools for an entire day at a time without any extra security precautions, extra parking, or regard for the effect upon our students, teachers, and administrators. Some of the issues raised were lack of coordination between the poll workers and administration, requiring one principal to spend over an hour of time insuring that things went smoothly during the last election. Students had to be prevented from using bathrooms or going from class to class without escorts. Classes had to be shifted from one location to another to segregate the voting location, which caused a domino effect on other classes' locations as well. Bathrooms had to be accommodated to voters. Some Physical Education fields get used for parking, so PE classes are kept inside, etc. Of course, no weapons checks are done, and tempers can get short occasionally when its hot, lines are long, and an important election is being held. Clearly all of this is highly disruptive to our children's learning environment.

ATTACHMENT "A"

It is the opinion of this Committee that practically any other public locations are better suited for the task of voting locations than are our public schools. Aside from all of the above security issues, the parking considerations of voters alone could be argued for not using public schools, as most schools in our feeder pattern do not have any or many public parking lots nearby. In the strongest possible way, we urge you to please review the available locations for voting and make the necessary law changes to prevent this regular commotion from affecting our students' safety and educations in the future. If this reasonable and responsible choice is somehow not an option, than we at least request that you would consider making teacher workdays on the days that voting would be held at school locations. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Wendy Hart, Chair
Committee Members
Miami Beach Committee for Quality Education



CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR & COMMISSION
MEMORANDUM

TO: JORGE M. GONZALEZ
CITY MANAGER

CC: BRUNO BARREIRO
COUNTY COMMISSIONER

DR. RUDOLPH F. CREW
SUPERINTENDENT OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

FROM: MATTI H. BOWER 
COMMISSIONER

DATE: February 22, 2005

RE: Miami Beach Committee for Quality of Education- Use of Miami
Beach school as Voting Locations

Attached please find a letter from the Miami Beach Committee for Quality of Education requesting that the City of Miami Beach look into using public facilities other than the local schools as voting locations. They are concerned for the safety of the children as well as the disruption caused by the influx of voters into the schools on Election Day.

I understand that the assignment of voting locations is controlled by Miami-Dade County, and I would like to request that the Administration work along with Miami-Dade County and Miami-Dade County Public Schools in determining the best solution for both our students and our voters.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (305) 673-7105.

Thank you.

MHB/lw

RECEIVED
CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
FEB 23 2005

ATTACHMENT "B"

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH

CITY HALL 1700 CONVENTION CENTER DRIVE MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 33139
www.miamibeachfl.gov



City Manager's Office

Telephone 305-673-7010

March 1, 2005

Ms. Constance Kaplan
Miami-Dade Elections
2700 NW 87th Ave.
Miami, Florida 33172

Dear Ms. Kaplan:

Attached for your perusal is a letter from Ms. Wendy Hart, Chair of the Committee for Quality Education in Miami Beach Schools and a Memorandum from Miami Beach City Commissioner Matti H. Bower regarding using Miami Beach Schools as voting locations.

The Miami-Dade Elections Department is presently utilizing five (5) schools in Miami Beach as voting precincts: 11-Biscayne Elementary School, 24-Nautilus Middle School, 29-North Beach Elementary School, 40-South Pointe Elementary School and 42-Feinberg-Fisher Elementary School.

In trying to address the concern expressed by both the Committee for Quality Education in Miami Beach Schools and Commissioner Bower, the City of Miami Beach will be happy to work with your staff to try to secure replacement voting locations.

I know that the Elections Department has a difficult time securing voting locations. I have asked Robert Parcher, Miami Beach City Clerk, to contact you and work with your staff to try to identify replacement sites.

Sincerely,


Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

JMG/Rep

c: Matti H. Bower, Miami Beach City Commissioner
Bruno Barreiro, Miami-Dade County Commissioner
Dr. Rudolph F. Crew, Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Robert Parcher, Miami Beach City Clerk

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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

ATTACHMENT "C"



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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

miamidade.gov

April 6, 2005

Mr. Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager
City of Miami Beach – City Hall
1700 Convention Center Drive
Miami Beach, Florida 33172

Dear Mr. Gonzalez:

This correspondence is in response to your March 1, 2005 letter to Ms. Constance Kaplan regarding Miami Beach Schools utilized as voting facilities. Your letter identifies five (5) schools in the Miami Beach area that you would like for Miami-Dade County Elections Department to discontinue using as polling places – Precinct 11-Biscayne Elementary School, Precinct 24-Nautilus Middle School, Precinct 29-North Beach Elementary School, Precinct 40-South Pointe Elementary School, and Precinct 42-Feinberg-Fisher Elementary School.

In consideration and appreciation for the concerns expressed by the Committee for Quality Education in Miami Beach Schools, and Commissioner Bower, I directed my staff to explore the possibility of relocating the polling places at issue. Our findings are detailed below:

**Precinct 11 – Biscayne Elementary School
800 - 77 Street**

Precinct Term: 25 years (established as precinct in 1980)
Surrounding Precinct(s): Precinct 13 (North Shore Library – 7501 Collins Ave) – too small to double up) – within Precinct 14 boundaries.
Precinct 14 / 21 (North Shore Community Center – 7251 Collins Ave) – within boundaries.
Area Facilities: North Shore Recreation Center (501 72 Street – within Precinct 14 boundaries).
Option: Move Precinct 11 to North Shore Library and move Precinct 13 to North Shore Recreation Center.

**Precinct 24 – Nautilus Middle School
4301 North Michigan Avenue**

Precinct Term: 13 years (established as precinct in 1992)
Surrounding Precinct(s): None
Available Facilities: None
Area Facilities: La Gorce Golf Course – 5680 Alton Road (Private Club - not available for use)
Indian Creek Fire Station – 6880 Indian Creek Drive. Previously used – out of boundaries. Relocated to school because fire station presented a safety hazard.
Option: None

ATTACHMENT "D"

**Precinct 29 – North Beach Elementary School
4100 Prairie Avenue**

Precinct Term: 6 years (established as precinct in 1999)
Surrounding Precinct(s): None
Available Facilities: None
Area Facilities: St. Patrick Catholic Church – 3885 Meridian Avenue
In boundaries. Previously used – Permission withdrawn twice because
scheduled activities, solicitors, and parking problems.

Mt. Sinai Medical Center – 4300 Alton Road
In boundaries. Previously used – Relocated because voter access was difficult
and hard to find.

St. John’s on the Lake United Methodist Church – 4760 Pinetree Drive – In
boundaries. Previously used – Permission withdrawn because of solicitation
and daycare activities.
Option: None

**Precinct 40 – South Pointe Elementary School
1050 – 4 Street**

Precinct Term: 6 years (established as precinct in 1999)
Surrounding Precinct(s): None
Available Facilities: None
Area Facilities: South Bay Towers – 800 West Ave. – Previously use – withdrew permission
because of parking (gated condos) – voter raised safety concerns.

South Shore Hospital – Previously used – Relocated because of voter complaints
that hospital was not suitable for voting process.
Option: None

**Precinct 42– Fienberg Fisher Elementary School
1420 Washington Avenue**

Precinct Term: 3 years (established as precinct in 2002)
Surrounding Precinct(s): None
Available Facilities: None
Area Facilities: Miami Beach Police Athletic League – 999 11 Street
Denied use in 2002 because of scheduled activities.

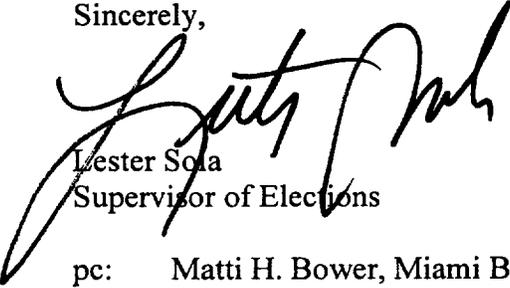
Miami Beach Senior Center – 610 Espanola Way – Previously used. Permission
withdrew because voting process interfered with senior citizen activities and
concern for seniors’ safety.
Option: None

Jorge M. Gonzalez
April 7, 2005
Page 3 of 3

Conducting voting in our local schools provides an invaluable opportunity for adult parents to create positive civic experiences for their youth by exemplify voting as vital to American life and fostering the development of active, engaged and well-informed citizens. My staff has met with members of Miami-Dade School Board who have supported the Elections Department's utilization of Miami-Dade schools to conduct elections, while ensuring a safe, secure and non-disruptive environment for students.

The current facilities have provided area voters with a history of familiarity, stability and reliability. Changes will undoubtedly result in complaints to the Elections Department, the City of Miami Beach, and other organizations involved. While our canvassing efforts have been unsuccessful, my staff is working with the Miami Beach City Clerk to identify area facilities in close proximity to the precincts. Unless the City of Miami Beach is able to identify available and accessible facilities by July 15, 2005, the Elections Department's recommendation would be to not make any changes at this time.

Sincerely,



Lester Sola
Supervisor of Elections

pc: Matti H. Bower, Miami Beach City Commissioner
Bruno Barreiro, Miami-Dade County Commissioner
Dr. Rudolph F. Crew, Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Robert Parcher, Miami Beach City Clerk
Alina Tejeda-Hudak, Assistant County Manager
Penelope Townsley, Deputy Supervisor of Elections Operations