

# Protocol Guidelines for Official School Board Events

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

Office of Public Relations  
February 2009

**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS**

**The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida**

Dr. Solomon C. Stinson, Chair

Dr. Marta Pérez, Vice Chair

Mr. Agustin J. Barrera

Mr. Renier Diaz de la Portilla

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman

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Dr. Wilbert “Tee” Holloway

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**Superintendent of Schools**

Mr. Alberto M. Carvalho

**Student Advisor**

Ms. Angelique Gayle



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## PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS

### INTRODUCTION

Good manners are invisible, subtle, silent and effortless. It's knowing what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. Having "etiquette and protocol intelligence" gives you the edge by allowing you to focus on substantive issues.

Source: [www.protocolplus.net](http://www.protocolplus.net)

By definition, protocol generally refers to customs and rules of politeness and courtesy between individuals and society. For government, nations and provinces, protocol is a system of conventions, procedures and symbols, which express their identity and facilitate relationship between them. Following protocol makes our interactions with others more predictable and provides a basic social framework to follow.

The following guidelines are provided to ensure uniformity and propriety at official School Board of Miami-Dade County events. The information neither supersedes Board Rules nor applies to any type of School Board meeting.

Thank you in advance for serving as a role model of courtesy and respect for the children of Miami-Dade County. If you have any questions about appropriate protocol, please contact the Office of Public Relations, 305-995-4638.

## PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS

### HOST

For all official District events, the School Board Chair is considered the host. In the School Board Chair's absence, the Vice-Chair becomes the official School Board host. In the absences of both the School Board Chair and Vice-Chair, the Office of the School Board Chair will designate an official School Board host. For official, District events, the Superintendent or his/her designee may serve as Master of Ceremonies (MC).

For all local events, the School Board Member that represents the voting district where the event is being held is the host. For example, a ground-breaking ceremony for a school in voting district "X" would be hosted by the School Board Member for voting district "X". Please note that all other School Board Members must be recognized in the Order of Precedence. In addition to School Board Members, the Superintendent, local elected officials - such as Mayors, Commissioners, and County Officials - and departments with responsibilities related to the event should be invited.

### ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

Order of precedence is the order in which School Board Members and other dignitaries should be acknowledged, seated, and/or placed in procession.

#### *Order of Precedence*

School Board Chair  
School Board Vice-Chair  
School Board Members (listed in alphabetical order)  
Superintendent of Schools  
School Board Student Advisor

#### *Order of Precedence for External Guests*

Senior Elected Official of local municipality (e.g. Mayor Diaz if event occurs in City of Miami)  
Federal Officials (by rank)  
State (by rank)  
Local Officials (by rank and/or alphabetical if more than one person of the same rank such as two County Commissioners)  
Other External Guests (please verify title and correct pronunciation of names; recognize/list in alphabetical order)

### HONORIFICS AND TITLES FOR OFFICIALS

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida extends the courtesy of "The Honorable" to all elected officials. "The Honorable" is used in addressing, rally, and in writing, elected officials at the federal, state, county, and city levels. Staff members should not be addresses as "The Honorable," unless they also hold elected offices. "The Honorable" is used before an elected official's name, not title and may be used to address former elected officials, though without their former titles.

When addressing a School Board Member in public, use the appropriate title to demonstrate respect for the office. (e.g., Good afternoon School Board Member Johnson)

#### *Introductions:*

The Honorable (FULL NAME), Chair of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida  
Chair (FULL NAME)

## PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS

The Honorable (FULL NAME), Vice-Chair of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida  
Vice-Chair (FULL NAME)

The Honorable (FULL NAME), Member of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida  
School Board Member (FULL NAME)

*At meetings, forums and hearings:*

Mr. Chair or Madam Chair (FORMAL USAGE)

Chair (SURNAME), (INFORMAL USAGE)

Mr. Vice-Chair or Madam Vice-Chair (FORMAL USAGE)

Vice-Chair (SURNAME), (INFORMAL USAGE)

School Board Member (SURNAME)

### *Correct Usage in Correspondence*

When addressing business and social correspondence for elected officials, "The Honorable" should be spelled-out and placed on the line before the officials' name. The title should be on the second line.

*Examples of correct usage:*

The Honorable (FULL NAME)

Chair

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida  
(ADDRESS)

The Honorable (FULL NAME)

Vice-Chair

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida  
(ADDRESS)

The Honorable (FULL NAME)

School Board Member

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida  
(ADDRESS)

### INVITATIONS

For District events, please coordinate to ensure that School Board Members and the Superintendent can attend. For local events, it is a courtesy to invite all School Board Members. However, given their busy schedules, School Board Members may need to send a designee or his/her regrets. See Appendix A.

If you are planning a District event, please coordinate with the Office of the School Board Chair to ensure that he/she is able to serve as host. If the School Board Chair cannot serve as host he/she will designate the School Board Vice-Chair or another School Board Member. Please contact the individual School Board Members office to request attendance. Given that School Board Members have many community engagements, please allow as much lead time as possible.

To request the Superintendent's attendance at a school or community event, please submit the 'Request for Superintendent's Appearance' form, FM-6598. Please allow as much lead time as possible. A minimum of four weeks is required for speaking engagements.

## PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS

At a minimum, please be prepared to provide the following information:

- School/Group/Individual Making the Request
- Contact Name and Information
- Name, Type, Date, Time and Location of Event
- Purpose of Event
- Board Member's/Superintendent's Role
- Will School Board Member/ Superintendent be asked to speak?

### PROGRAMS

This section offers an overview of typical program content and participants. Please feel free to adapt to your specific event. Organizers and planners who adapt this format should consider variables such as the weather and seating arrangements in determining the ideal program length and time limits for speakers and presenters. If the audience is standing outdoors in inclement weather, the program should be brief and time limits implemented. Please also refer to the School Operations 2008-09 Opening of Schools Handbook, Appendix H: *Protocol Guidelines for Program Introductions of School Board Members and School Board Administrative Assistants*.

#### *Program Format*

Call to Order	Master of Ceremonies
Presentation of Colors	Honor Guard
National Anthem and/or Pledge of Allegiance	Chair or Designee
Moment of Silence	Chair or Designee
Retire Colors	Honor Guard
Welcome and Opening Remarks	Chair or Designee
Introduction of Honored Guests	Master of Ceremonies
Speeches and Presentations	Guest Speakers
Special Activities (Ribbon-Cutting, Groundbreaking, Unveiling)	Chair or Designee
Concluding Remarks	Master of Ceremonies

#### *Program Participants*

##### Master of Ceremonies

Likely candidates to be master of ceremonies or to make presentations at District-sponsored events include the following elected officials in the designated order:

- Chair, The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida
- Vice-Chair, The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida
- School Board Member in whose voting district the event is held
- School Board Member most involved in the project, type of activity, issue and/or celebration at hand
- School Board Member selected in alphabetical order

If a District staff member is to serve as Master of Ceremonies, candidates should be considered in the following order:

- Superintendent
- Deputy Superintendent
- District senior staff member most involved in the project, type of activity, issue and/or celebration at hand

##### Duties of a Master of Ceremonies

- Begin and end the program in a timely manner

## PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS

- Manage transitions between speeches and activities
- Direct the audience as appropriate (e.g., different location for meals, ribbon-cutting, etc.)
- Assist program participants in understanding their role, purpose and time limits

For printed programs please include the most current “School Board of Miami-Dade County” insert page. Please see Appendix B for a copy. The Office of Communications and Public Relations is available to provide assistance in developing talking points and speeches for School Board Members and the Superintendent. Please allow sufficient time if you request their assistance.

### *Precautions*

Always have “Plan B” ready in case participants are late or unable to attend. Guests designated to perform special activities such as cutting ribbons or breaking ground must be informed in advance to ensure their presence and preparedness.

### EVENTS

The following is to be done by the person in charge of the event. There must be one lead person in charge of the event. Typically, this person is a senior staff member with a vested interest of responsibility in the event. For example, the School Principal would be the lead person at his/her school opening. For definition purposes, the term dignitaries refers to all VIPs, elected and non-elected.

Confirm attendance of program participants and dignitaries. Make sure you have a list of all School Board Members and/or dignitaries who will attend the event, even if they are not part of programs, School Board Members and/or dignitaries who attend briefly still need to be recognized by the Master of Ceremonies. Make sure to find out approximate time of arrival, if participant will need to leave early, and any special needs he/she might have.

Fill out confirmation of attendance form. See Appendix C.

### *Prior to Event (at least 48 hours in advance)*

- Reconfirm attendance
- Provide confirmation of attendance for again
- Provide directions to location, including potential traffic/construction issues
- Provide parking information, including parking permits, decals, or special instructions
- Location where School Board Members/Superintendent will be greeted

### *Day of Event – to be done by person in charge of event or specific designee*

- Establish a “greeting” location – an area where all program participants and dignitaries know to go to meet person in charge or designee.
- Greet all event participants and dignitaries. Please always use formal address. (e.g., Good Morning Board Member Smith, Thank you for coming Dr. Medrano).
- Introduce event participants and dignitaries to each other if necessary. Secure photographs of participants and dignitaries attending if you are unfamiliar with people’s appearance.
- Ensure all event participants and other dignitaries are comfortable – provide seating, beverage, inform them of location of restrooms, and provide any special needs as requested.
- Walk event participants through program so that they understand progression of events and their role (e.g., when they will speak, where will they sit/stand, length of program, if/when they will be presented with a plaque/flowers, how they can exit event).

## PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS

- Let School Board Members and/or dignitaries not participating in event know when/how they will be acknowledged by MC or Chair/Designee. Ensure you have correct title and pronunciation of name.
- Personally thank program participants and dignitaries for attending event before they leave.

### *Audience Seating*

- Always reserve seating for School Board Members, Superintendent, dignitaries, School Board Administrative Assistants, and Senior Staff
- These seats should provide easy access to the stage, especially if there is no stage seating
- Mark the seats with “reserved” signs to ensure that they are kept available
- If needed, seat people needing to leave the event early close on the aisle and/or close to an exit

### *After the Event*

- Send a ‘Thank You’ letter to each program participant and/or dignitary who attended event within one week of the event.
  - If original program participant was unable to attend, make sure to send thank you to person who substituted.
- If ‘Thank You’ letter requires School Board Members’ and/or Superintendent’s signature please allow sufficient time for processing. **DO NOT ASSUME A BRIEF TURN AROUND TIME.**
- If program participants and/or dignitaries asked for additional information or made a request, please provide a response within one week.

## SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

### *Receiving Lines*

Receiving lines are generally reserved for formal events and their purpose is to afford each guest the opportunity to greet the host, hostess, and honored guests. The receiving line should be kept as small as possible. In the case that there is no guest of honor, the Superintendent of Schools may stand on line. A designated staff member may introduce each guest or guests may introduce themselves. The receiving line should be located in an area that allows guests to pass through it smoothly and proceed directly to the event. Designated staff members should help the host attend to the guests by greeting them as they finish the receiving line, accompanying them to the refreshments, and integrating them into conversations. At the end of the event, the host should be available near the exit to say good-bye to guests.

The following are examples of two potential receiving lines:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Host<br/>(e.g., Board Chair, Vice-Chair, Board Designee)</li><li>• Guest of Honor</li><li>• Spouse of Host</li><li>• Spouse of Guest of Honor</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Host<br/>(e.g., Board Chair, Vice-Chair, Board Designee)</li><li>• Guest of Honor</li><li>• Spouse of Guest of Honor</li><li>• Spouse of Host</li></ul> |
|---|---|

See Appendix D.

## PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS

### *Stage/Dais Seating*

Guests are seated according to order of precedence and other considerations. Emphasis should be to ensure that guests are placed in their proper seats.

For seating arrangements, you should note the following:

- Board Members, elected officials, guests of honor, dignitaries, and the Superintendent should be seated in the front row.
- To avoid any confusion, seats can be pre-assigned with name cards placed on each seat or on back of the seat.

The guest of honor normally is seated to the left of the host. Other guests should then be seated according to the order of precedence. Please see Appendix E for sample seating arrangements.

### *Table Seating*

Table seating is a necessary procedure for formal breakfasts, luncheons, and dinners.

- Order of precedence determines the seating arrangement for all official events.
- The head table is usually reserved for people who will speak, such as School Board Chair or Vice-Chair, the Superintendent, and/or a key note speaker/guest of honor.
- Guests of honor sit to the right of the host.
- At official dinners, the host and his/her spouse may sit opposite each other
- At formal events, alternate women and men
- At an official dinner where there are guests that are not elected officials or high-ranking staff, the seating may be based on personal or scholastic achievement, mutual interest, linguistic ability, and closeness of acquaintance
- Reserve additional tables for other School Board Members and, if appropriate, their spouses, Board Members Administrative Assistants, Cabinet/Senior Staff, and external dignitaries. Unless it is a formal event, seating does not have to be assigned
- At events that involve foreign dignitaries, please consult with the US State Department of Embassy to ensure diplomatic sensitivity

Please see Appendix F for sample seating arrangements.

### *Thank you letters*

Never underestimate the importance of a Thank You letter. Thank you letters convey your appreciation to the people who helped make your event a success. All official School Board events require that Thank You letters be sent under either the appropriate School Board Member's or Superintendent's signature.

## PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS

- Send a 'thank you' letter to each program participant and/or dignitary who attended event within one week of the event.
  - If original program participant was unable to attend, make sure to send thank you to person who substituted.
- When writing more than one letter try to personalize at least one sentence to each participant.
- Make sure the Thank You letters are polite, brief, and error-free.
- If 'Thank You' letter requires School Board Members' and/or Superintendent's signature please allow sufficient time for processing. DO NOT ASSUME A BRIEF TURN AROUND TIME.
- Thank you letters requiring School Board Members' and/or Superintendent's signature should follow traditional business letter format and be printed on appropriate District stationery.
- Thank you notes not sent under the School Board Members' or Superintendent's signature may be neatly handwritten on school or personal stationery.

Please see Appendix G for sample Thank You letters and notes.

Please refer to these websites listed below and the Office of Communications and Public Relations if you need more information.

White House Office of Protocol  
[www.state.gov/s/cpr/](http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/)

Miami-Dade County Office of Protocol  
<http://www.miamidade.gov/officeofthechair/protocol.asp>

Protocol Plus  
[www.protocolplus.com](http://www.protocolplus.com)

**PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS**

**APPENDIX A**

Sample Invitations

Example 1

Chair (NAME)  
And Members of  
The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

Request the pleasure of your company at a reception for

(EVENT NAME)

Tuesday, May 25, 2006  
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
Parrot Jungle  
1234 Parrot Jungle Way

Regrets Only: 305-995-1000  
Business Attire

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You are cordially invited to attend the  
(EVENT)

Presented by The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida  
and the Superintendent of Schools

Wednesday, December 14, 2006  
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Miami Art Museum  
300 N.E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Miami, Florida

Cocktail Attire

Regrets Only  
305-995-1000

APPENDIX B

## **Miami-Dade County Public Schools**

### **The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida**

Dr. Solomon C. Stinson, Chair  
Dr. Marta Pérez, Vice Chair  
Mr. Agustin J. Barrera  
Mr. Renier Diaz de la Portilla  
Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman  
Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman  
Dr. Wilbert “Tee” Holloway  
Dr. Martin Karp  
Ms. Ana Rivas Logan

### **Superintendent of Schools**

Mr. Alberto M. Carvalho

### **Student Advisor**

Ms. Angelique Gayle



**PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS**

**APPENDIX C**

Confirmation of School Board Member/Superintendent Appearance

**THIS FORM TO BE PROVIDED FOR ATTENDEE  
NO LATER THEN 48 HOURS PRIOR TO EVENT**

Contact Name:	
Contact Phone:	Contact Email:
Name/Type of Event:	
Date of Event:	Time of Event:
Location: (Please provide driving directions, information regarding traffic/construction delays, and parking details)	
Where and by whom will attendee be greeted: (Please include contact number for day of event)	
Purpose of Event:	
Role of Attendee: (Please include talking points/key messages if appropriate, when s/he is scheduled to begin/end, how long s/he will speak, will there be Q&A, will s/he need to introduce anyone, any additional information needed)	
What other VIPs and/or Media are scheduled to participate:	

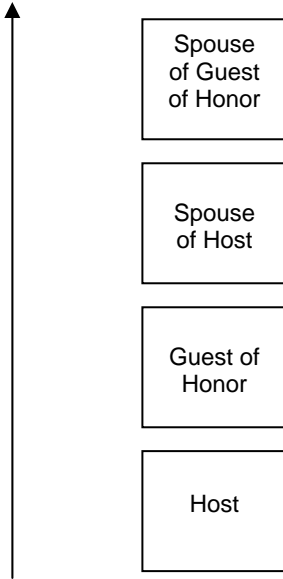
Please return this form 48 hours before the event to the appropriate attendee.

**PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS**

**APPENDIX D**

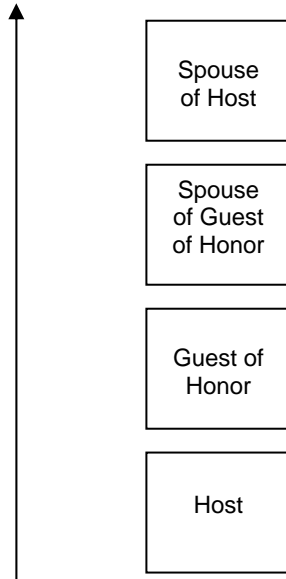
Sample Receiving Line

Option One



Guests Enter Here

Option Two



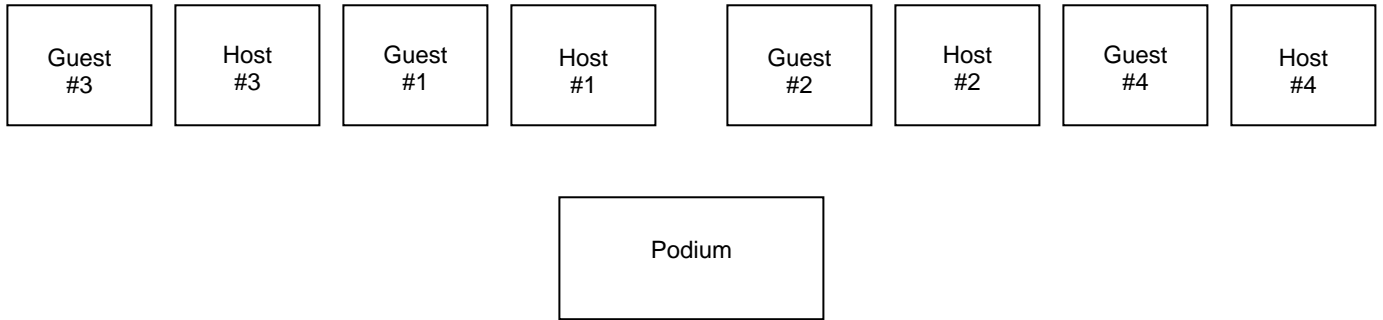
Guests Enter Here

**PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS**

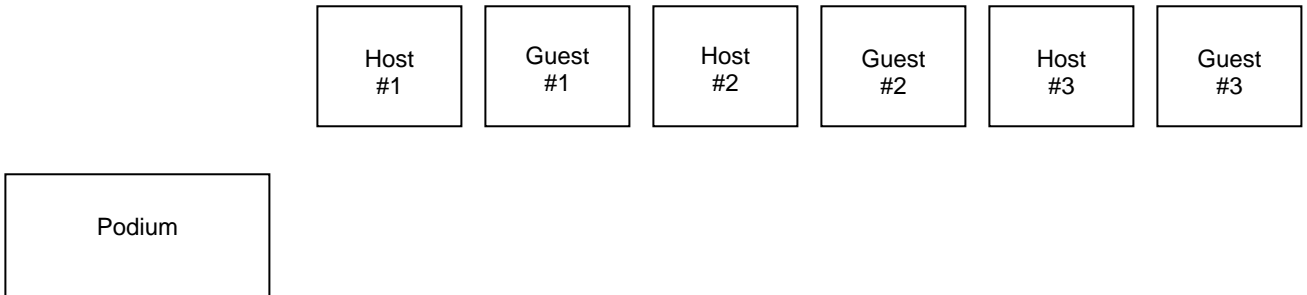
**APPENDIX E**

Sample Stage/Dais Seating

Option One



Option Two

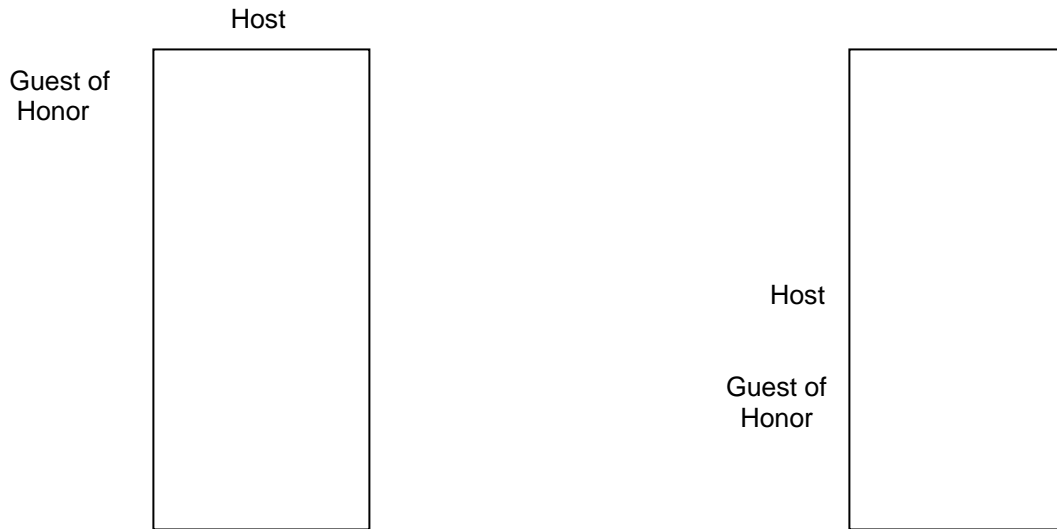


**PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS**

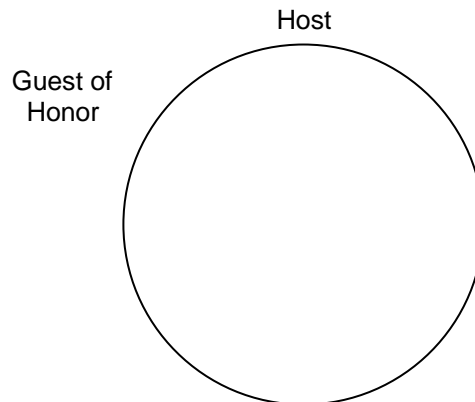
**APPENDIX F**

Sample Table Seating

Rectangular Table



Round Table



- Guest of Honor sits to the right of the host
- At official dinners, the host and his/her spouse may sit opposite each other
- At formal events, alternate women and men

**PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS**

**APPENDIX G**

Sample Thank You Letter

February 13, 2007

The Honorable William Medrano  
Chair  
The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida  
1450 N.E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Miami, Florida 33132

Dear Chair Medrano:

Thank you for your participation at the Sunshine Elementary School 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Science Technology Fair. Your remarks encouraging students to apply themselves for the “New Economy” were both timely and inspirational. I hope you enjoyed the event as much as the children enjoyed meeting you.

Thank you again for your participation. I look forward to seeing you at the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Science and Technology Fair.

Sincerely,

May Goodweather  
Principal  
Sunshine Elementary School

## PROTOCOL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD EVENTS

### DEFINITIONS

**Decorum:** Propriety of manner or conduct; grace arising from suitability of speech and behavior to one's own character, or to the place and occasion; decency of conduct; seemliness; that which is seemly or suitable.

**Etiquette:** Rules governing socially acceptable behavior; observance of the properties of rank and occasion; conventional decorum; ceremonial code of polite society.

**Honorific:** A title or form of respect. Example: "The Honorable" is an honorific or courtesy title used to indicate respect for the stature of elected officials.

**Precedence:** The right to precede in order, rank or importance, including the right to precede others in ceremonies or social formalities; the order to be observed in ceremonies by persons of different ranks, as in international diplomatic precedence.

**Dignitary:** Any elected or appointed official. Example: head of state, ministers, heads of local and municipal governments, cabinet members, diplomats.

**Protocol Order of Precedence:** An adopted order of precedence that applies to persons who are listed for the purposes and at the levels identified. Example: The Protocol Order of Precedence for the United States applies mostly at the national and international levels and is part of the recognized system of international courtesy.

**Protocol:** The customs and regulations dealing with diplomatic formality, precedence, and etiquette (in official life; comparable to etiquette used in social life).

**Rank:** An official or social position or standing.

**Seniority:** Priority, precedence or status obtained as the result of a person's length of service.

**Title:** A descriptive or distinctive appellation typically designated by right of rank, office or attainment. Example: Chair of the Miami-Dade County Public School Board.

**X:** A journalistic symbol typically used herein to indicate that a specific number is to be substituted. Example: "School Board Member, District X," indicates that the School Board Member's district number must be substituted, when known, for the "X."

Sources: Merriam-Webster's Dictionary (1996), Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary, WordNet 3.0 Princeton University 2006.

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, adheres to a policy of nondiscrimination in employment and educational programs/activities and programs/activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education, and strives affirmatively to provide equal opportunity for all as required by:

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin.

**Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended** - prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin.

**Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender.

**Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA), as amended** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of age with respect to individuals who are at least 40.

**The Equal Pay Act of 1963, as amended** - prohibits sex discrimination in payment of wages to women and men performing substantially equal work in the same establishment.

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** - prohibits discrimination against the disabled.

**Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)** - prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, public service, public accommodations and telecommunications.

**The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA)** - requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to "eligible" employees for certain family and medical reasons.

**The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978** - prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

**Florida Educational Equity Act (FEEA)** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national origin, marital status, or handicap against a student or employee.

**Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992** - secures for all individuals within the state freedom from discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, or marital status.

**School Board Rules 6Gx13- 4A-1.01, 6Gx13- 4A-1.32, and 6Gx13- 5D-1.10** - prohibit harassment and/or discrimination against a student or employee on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, political beliefs, marital status, age, sexual orientation, social and family background, linguistic preference, pregnancy, or disability.

*Veterans are provided re-employment rights in accordance with P.L. 93-508 (Federal Law) and Section 295.07 (Florida Statutes), which stipulate categorical preferences for employment.*