

Frigo, Victoria (COE)

From: Frigo, Victoria (COE)
Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2010 2:00 PM
To: 'Vecchione, Mary'
Cc: 'Xiques, Veronica'
Subject: RE: DMCS Governing Board Seat

Ms. Vecchione,

You asked if Meredith Nation has any ethics conflicts based on her simultaneous service as—

- a City of Miami employee who functions as the Deputy Executive Director to the City of Miami Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

and

- a voluntary Governing Board Member of the Downtown Miami Charter School, Inc.—a charter school that is privately managed by Charter Schools USA.

You stated that Ms. Nation, as part of her responsibilities with the DDA, is in a position to recommend that the DDA provide grants to the Downtown Miami Charter School. Charter schools are public schools of choice that are state-funded but privately operated. Ms. Nation receives no income for her service as a Governing Board Member of the Downtown Miami Charter School and has no financial interests in the Downtown Miami Charter School or its parent company, Charter Schools USA.

Based on the facts you presented, Ms. Nation has no ethics conflicts under the City of Miami or Miami-Dade County ethics codes. Ms. Nation is not transacting business or entering into any contracts with the City through her voluntary service on the Governing Board of the Downtown Miami Charter School. Additionally, Ms. Nation would not be directly or indirectly affected by any grant provided to the Downtown Miami Charter School.

Although these facts do not present a per se violation of the ethics codes, Ms. Nation may wish to avoid appearances of impropriety by demonstrating how her recommendations are based on objective criteria and by underscoring that her employer requires a DDA representative to serve on the Downtown Miami Charter School Governing Board.

Sincerely,

Victoria Frigo, Staff Attorney
 Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics
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References: **INQ 10-11**, City of Miami Code at Sec. 2-611 et seq. and Miami-Dade County Code at Sec. 2-11.1 (c), (d), (g).

From: Vecchione, Mary [mailto:mvecchione@charterschoolsusa.com]
Sent: Monday, January 25, 2010 11:36 AM
To: Frigo, Victoria (COE)
Cc: Nation, Meredith; GorsonM@gtlaw.com
Subject: DMCS Governing Board Seat

Victoria,

Thank you for speaking with me today. As previously discussed, it has been brought to our attention that the relationship between the Downtown Development Authority and a Downtown Miami Charter School, Inc. Governing Board member might be in conflict and we were asked to clarify this concern.

Meredith Nation, an employee for the DDA, holds a seat on the Downtown Miami Charter School, Inc. Governing Board. She was approached that this might be a conflict of interest and asked that I assist her in researching this. I provided you the details in our conversation and you were gracious enough to respond in writing.

Thank you and I look forward to your response.

Mary Vecchione

Mary Vecchione
Governing Board Liaison
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