

FROM CLASSROOM TO BOARDROOM: DR. BERNARD W. H. JENNINGS LIFE'S WORK HAS PREPARED HIM TO HELP LEAD MIAMI-DADE'S SCHOOLS

Building Bridges in Education—Locally and Globally - Chairman, Florida Memorial University Board of Trustees | Candidate for School Board District 1

MIAMI GARDENS, FL, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- By any measure, the race for the Miami-Dade County School Board is about more than campaign slogans. The nine elected members who oversee one of the nation's largest public school districts are entrusted with governing an educational enterprise that serves hundreds of thousands of students, employs tens of thousands of professionals, manages billions of taxpayer dollars, and helps shape the future workforce of South Florida.

For [Dr. Bernard W. H. Jennings](#), the decision to seek a seat representing District 1 is not presented as a departure from his career. Rather, it is the continuation of a lifetime spent in educational leadership, public service, mediation, nonprofit governance, and community development.

Those who know Jennings often point to a consistent theme running through his professional life: institutions matter. Whether the institution is a university, a neighborhood organization, a government agency, or a community nonprofit, he has repeatedly sought roles centered on governance, accountability, and expanding opportunity.

A Product of Miami-Dade Public Schools

Jennings' educational journey began in the very school system he now hopes to help govern.



Dr Bernard Wh Jennings

He attended Biscayne Gardens Elementary School, Thomas Jefferson Junior High School, and North Miami Senior High School before continuing [his education at Florida Memorial University, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration.](#) He later completed a master's degree in Applied Social Science with a concentration in Public Administration at Florida A&M University and received an honorary doctorate recognizing his work in entrepreneurship and community leadership.

Supporters say this progression from local public schools to higher education leadership gives Jennings a perspective rooted in firsthand experience. He has often noted that he and his wife raised three children who also attended public schools, reinforcing his view that strong K-12 education is the foundation of lifelong opportunity.

Learning Leadership Before Holding Office

Long before serving on university boards, Jennings gravitated toward leadership.

As a student and young adult, he served in organizations including the North Miami Police Explorers, the City's Youth Opportunity Board, the Mayor's Economic Task Force, and youth athletics through the Optimist Football Program, the Foundation for Youth & Economic Development. He is a Mentor for Congresswoman Fredricka Wilson's 5000 Role Models of Excellence volunteering his time at public schools and having gone camping with hundreds of children providing leadership and positive role modeling.

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Our students are competing in an international workforce, Jennings has often observed. "Our educational thinking must become equally global"

*Dr. Bernard W.H. Jennings,
Candidate Member District
School Board*

These experiences exposed him to issues extending beyond academics public safety, youth development, recreation, mentorship, and civic engagement. They also

introduced him to the practical reality that educational outcomes are shaped by families, neighborhoods, and community institutions as much as by classrooms.

From Student to Chairman

Perhaps the defining chapter of Jennings' career has been his relationship with Florida Memorial

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University.

After serving the institution as a student leader, he later joined its Board of Trustees, eventually becoming Vice Chairman and now Chairman of the University's 19-member governing board.

The significance of that role extends well beyond ceremonial leadership.

University trustees oversee institutional strategy, financial stewardship, presidential accountability, long-term planning, policy adoption, fundraising support, and accreditation. The chairman must build consensus among trustees with diverse perspectives while working collaboratively with university leadership, faculty, alumni, students, donors, and community stakeholders. Florida Memorial University has a \$91.3 million dollar impact to the local community.

In many respects, those are the same responsibilities assigned to members of the Miami-Dade County School Board.

Rather than viewing a school board seat as an entry point into educational governance, Jennings presents it as the next step in a career already devoted to governing educational institutions.

Governing Through Collaboration

Colleagues frequently describe Jennings as someone who prefers collaboration over confrontation.

That style may stem from another defining aspect of his career.

EXPERIENCE • LEADERSHIP • DEDICATION

Dr. Bernard
WH JENNINGS

★ ★ ★

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Touch #153 to Elect Dr Jennings

For more than a decade, he has served as a Florida Supreme Court Certified Circuit Civil Mediator, helping businesses, government agencies, and private citizens resolve disputes outside the courtroom. He holds a unique Loss Mitigation Specialist (CLMS) certification from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). His work has included service with the American Arbitration Association, the Florida Department of Financial Services, and local court-connected mediation programs. Through his loss mitigation



Dr Jennings Mentors 5000 Role Models of Excellence Children

practice he has helped save many homeowners from foreclosure in north Miami-Dade County. He once served as the Executive Director of the Opa-Locka Airport Tenants Association having negotiated the largest Fixed Base Operator(FBO) lease in the State of Florida for J.P. Aviation, Inc. Dr Jennings negotiation skills saved many tenants from going out of business during the 40 re-certification mandate.

Mediation is built on listening, identifying shared interests, and finding practical solutions when parties disagree.

Those skills could prove valuable in a school district where elected board members routinely balance competing viewpoints from parents, teachers, employee organizations, administrators, municipal leaders, and state officials.

Jennings argues that governing effectively requires more than casting votes. It requires building durable consensus. Dr. Bernard W. H. Jennings spearheaded the community effort to petition the Miami-Dade County Commission to place before the residents of Biscayne Gardens the question of whether the community should incorporate as Miami-Dade County's 35th municipality. While the incorporation referendum was ultimately defeated by the voters, Jennings' leadership sparked a meaningful countywide dialogue about the future of unincorporated communities, local self-governance, and equitable access to municipal services. His efforts continue to influence conversations about long-term planning, economic development, and improving the quality of life for residents in Miami-Dade County's unincorporated neighborhoods.

Understanding Public Accountability

Throughout his career, Jennings has served in roles demanding impartiality and accountability.

As a Miami-Dade County Hearing Officer and Special Magistrate, he adjudicated contested code enforcement matters. His professional background also includes mortgage banking, HUD-certified loss mitigation, contract administration, procurement, and financial analysis.

While those fields may appear unrelated to education, they share a common thread: stewardship of public trust, careful interpretation of policy, and responsible decision-making involving significant financial and legal consequences.

School board members face many of the same challenges when overseeing budgets, capital projects, procurement decisions, labor agreements, and district policy.

Experience Working With Government

Unlike candidates whose public service begins with a campaign, Jennings has spent decades working alongside government.

His résumé reflects service as:

- Miami-Dade County Hearing Officer (Special Magistrate)
- Florida Supreme Court Certified Circuit Civil Mediator
- Mediator for the American Arbitration Association
- Mediator for the Florida Department of Financial Services
- HUD Certified Loss Mitigation Specialist
- Contract administrator
- Government consultant
- Public policy advisor

Each role required understanding statutes, administrative rules, ethics requirements, due process, and public accountability.

Those are the same principles that govern school board decision-making.

Building Educational Bridges Across Continents

Among Jennings' more distinctive accomplishments is his involvement in expanding educational partnerships beyond the United States.

Working with Florida Memorial University's leadership, he has supported asynchronous learning initiatives designed to provide students in South Africa with access to American higher education while allowing them to remain in their home communities.

More recently, discussions have expanded to include similar opportunities in the Republic of Angola where FMU has just signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The next nation

on Dr Jennings agenda for the university is Ghana West Africa.

These initiatives required collaboration across governments, educational institutions, cultures, and regulatory environments.

They also reflect a broader philosophy: that geography should not determine access to quality education.

For Miami-Dade County a district where students represent an extraordinary range of nationalities, languages, and cultures Jennings believes international educational partnerships reinforce the importance of preparing students for a global economy.

Strengthening Families as Educational Partners

Jennings is perhaps best known publicly for initiating Florida's Ethan Good Dad Act, legislation enacted to strengthen parental responsibility following the establishment of paternity.

While the legislation operates within family law, Jennings consistently frames it through an educational lens.

He argues that schools achieve their greatest success when educators and families work together. His advocacy has grown into a national movement encouraging responsible fatherhood and greater parental involvement, reflecting his belief that student achievement and family engagement are closely connected.

Community Leadership Across Multiple Sectors

Jennings' résumé reflects leadership in civic organizations, business associations, nonprofit institutions, youth programs, and public service. He founded the New Biscayne Gardens Chamber of Commerce, served in executive roles with community organizations, hosted educational radio programming, and maintained longstanding involvement in neighborhood initiatives.

Taken together, these experiences suggest an ability to work across sectors rather than within a single professional discipline.

For a school board that routinely partners with municipalities, colleges, nonprofits, businesses, and community organizations, that network of experience could become a practical asset.

Recognition Earned Over Time

Throughout his career, Jennings has received recognition including the Key to the City of North Miami, Florida Memorial University's President's Fountain of Excellence recognition, Outstanding

Young Men of America, Who's Who Among Black Americans, and recognition as the author of the Amazon best-selling book Ethan's Good Dad Act.

Awards alone do not qualify a candidate for public office.

But they can illustrate a pattern of sustained civic engagement spanning decades.

Preparing for the Next Chapter

If elected, Jennings says his priorities would include improving literacy and mathematics outcomes, supporting teachers, strengthening school safety, expanding career and technical education, embracing emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, increasing workforce readiness, and deepening partnerships between public schools, colleges, universities, employers, and families.

Supporters contend that these priorities align naturally with his experience governing a university, mediating complex disputes, managing public responsibilities, and building educational partnerships that extend beyond Florida and, increasingly, beyond the United States.

Whether voters ultimately agree will be determined at the ballot box.

What is already evident is that Dr. Bernard W. H. Jennings is presenting a candidacy grounded less in political rhetoric than in a long record of educational governance, community leadership, and institution-building.

His campaign asks voters to consider a straightforward proposition: that the skills required to guide a university, mediate difficult public issues, foster international educational collaboration, and strengthen community institutions are the very skills that can help govern one of America's largest public school systems.

If that proposition resonates with District 1 voters, Jennings' next leadership role may become the culmination of a career that began decades earlier in the classrooms of Miami-Dade County Public Schools and has since expanded to boardrooms, courtrooms, community organizations, and educational partnerships reaching across continents.

A Proven Legislative Advocate

Jennings is perhaps best known nationally as the initiator of Florida's Ethan Good Dad Act, legislation signed into law to strengthen parental responsibility following the determination of paternity.

The legislation has received attention far beyond Florida and has helped launch conversations in

numerous other states regarding father engagement and shared parenting. Six(6) states have passed versions of the Good Dad Act and an additional 25 states are considering the law in this upcoming legislative session. Dr Jennings has held 155 consecutive 8 pm Tuesday night Google Meet meetings with fathers and other parents from across the nation. He invites attorneys, judges and other professionals to speak with and motivate fathers about being involved in their children's lives at all levels despite their life's challenges.

To Jennings, however, the law has always been about children.

Educational research consistently demonstrates that students perform better when both parents are positively involved in their lives.

He believes schools should become active partners with families rather than passive participants in children's development. For more information about the Good Dad Act go to:

www.GoodDadAct.com Information about the Book at www.EthansGoodDadAct.com

Leadership Beyond Titles

Recognition throughout Jennings' career reflects consistent public service rather than isolated accomplishments.

Among the honors listed on his résumé are:

Chairman, Florida Memorial University Board of Trustees
Florida Memorial University President's Fountain of Excellence Award
Key to the City of North Miami
Outstanding Young Men of America
Who's Who Among Black Americans
Amazon Best-Selling Author
Founder of the New Biscayne Gardens Chamber of Commerce
Chairman of the Good Dad Act Committee
Numerous civic and educational recognitions.

Each award represents not simply recognition but decades of sustained community involvement.

Why This Matters

The next generation of school board members will face challenges that extend well beyond textbooks.

Artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, workforce development, international educational partnerships, career academies, teacher recruitment, mental health, parental engagement, and

fiscal accountability will define public education over the next decade.

Jennings' supporters argue that his résumé reflects preparation in each of these areas.

Rather than entering public education from outside, they see a candidate who has spent a lifetime connecting community organizations, higher education, government, nonprofit leadership, business, and families.

Whether those experiences ultimately persuade District 1 voters remains to be seen.

What appears increasingly evident, however, is that Dr. Bernard W. H. Jennings is not campaigning simply as another community activist.

He is presenting himself as an educational governor—a leader whose career has been spent building institutions, forging partnerships across communities and continents, and preparing students for opportunities that extend far beyond the classroom. `

Eric Stoller, President

The New Biscayne Gardens Chamber of Commerce

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