

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, February 12, 2016

Former President of the Broward Teachers Union Pleads Guilty to Defrauding the Broward County School Board and the Broward Teachers Union

On Friday, February 12, 2016, **Patrick Santeramo**, 68, of Dania Beach, Florida appeared in court in Fort Lauderdale, before U.S. District Court Judge William J. Zloch, and pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud.

Wifredo A. Ferrer, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, and Rafiq Ahmad, Special Agent in Charge, Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations (DOL-OIG), made the announcement.

According to court documents, Santeramo was the president of the Broward Teachers Union (BTU) from 2001 to 2011, and served as vice president of the BTU prior to that. The BTU and the School Board of Broward County negotiated a collective bargaining agreement in which the School Board of Broward County agreed to provide an annual payment of \$80,000 to the BTU for the BTU's Accountability Program, which was administered by the BTU.

The collective bargaining agreement required that all of the money provided by the School Board of Broward County for the Accountability Program be used to further the program's goals "in such areas as training, release time for teachers working on accountability projects, guest speakers, etc." The collective bargaining agreement also required the BTU to keep a written record of expenditures charged to the Accountability Program, and to make this information available to the School Board of Broward County.

Each year, defendant Santeramo would send a letter to the School Board of Broward County to explain how the money dedicated to the Accountability Program had been used during the previous school year. Subsequently, he would also send a letter to the School Board of Broward County requesting the next payment of \$80,000 for the Accountability Program for the upcoming school year. As a result of the letters from Santeramo explaining the use of the funds that the School Board of Broward County provided for the Accountability Program, the School Board of Broward County would mail a check for \$80,000 to the BTU.

After the BTU received the \$80,000 payment from the School Board of Broward County, Santeramo authorized payments from the Accountability Program account for himself and three other employees of the BTU to which they were not entitled. In letters from Santeramo to the School Board of Broward County, Santeramo omitted that payments from the Accountability Program account had been made to him and the other employees. Consequently, Santeramo was responsible for the misappropriating more than \$93,000 during the fraudulent scheme.

Sentencing is scheduled for April 22, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. before Judge Zloch.

Mr. Ferrer commended the investigative efforts of the Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Miami Field Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Miesha Darrough and Harry C. Wallace, Jr.

Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.