

Ms. Evelyn Langlieb Greer, Board Member

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 08-29 OF
THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
RECOGNIZING APRIL 27 THROUGH MAY 4, 2008 AS DAYS
OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST
TO BE OBSERVED IN ALL OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLAN: INCREASE STUDENT EXPOSURE AND UNDERSTANDING
OF GLOBAL ISSUES AND ECONOMY**

The deliberate and systemic extermination by Germany and other European countries during World War II of six million people, from babies to the frail elderly, solely because they were born Jewish and the murder of millions of other people simply because they were considered "unworthy" to live is one of the most horrifying events in human history. It is an event as to which civilized people around the world say "Never Again."

Each year, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools recognize and study the Holocaust in order to understand how people justify committing "crimes against humanity". The purpose of such study is to teach children tolerance so that such crimes are not repeated against any group.

The United States Congress established the Days of Remembrance as our nation's annual commemoration of the Holocaust, just as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is our permanent living memorial to the victims. This year Holocaust Remembrance Day is Friday May 2, 2008. The Museum has designated "*Do Not Stand Silent: Remembering Kristallnacht 1938*" as the focus for the 2008 observance.

Seventy years ago, on November 9-10, 1938, the German Nazis staged vicious pogroms, which are state approved, anti-Jewish riots, against the Jewish community of Germany – these nights are called *Kristallnacht*. The name *Kristallnacht* or "Night of Broken Glass" refers to the untold numbers of broken windows of synagogues, Jewish-owned stores, community centers, and homes plundered and destroyed during the pogroms. For over 48 hours, violent mobs—made up of German Nazi Party officials, German Nazi storm troopers, and Hitler Youth dressed in street clothes and joined by

ordinary Germans civilians— rampaged through the streets of German cities assaulting Jews and vandalizing their property. They destroyed hundreds of synagogues, setting many of them on fire. Under orders to let the fires burn but to prevent the flames from spreading to other buildings, firefighters stood by.

Many ordinary people looked on as Nazi mobs assaulted Jews and Jewish-owned property. Many disapproved but took no action. Some, especially young men, were drawn to the wanton violence and plunder and joined in the destruction. Some few individuals attempted to provide aid and support to the victims of the riots. Their actions were a reminder of the many opportunities for individuals to show compassion and concern, without necessarily endangering themselves or their families.

Kristallnacht was a turning point in history. The pogroms marked a shift from anti-semitic talk to violent, aggressive anti-Jewish measures that would result in the Holocaust—the systematic, state sponsored murder of 6 million Jewish men, women and children. The violence shocked the world, but the world stood by and watched without offering much aid. Boats filled with desperate Jewish immigrants from Europe were turned back by the United States and other countries, even though the government knew that the immigrants faced certain death in Europe. One country – Cuba – accepted Jewish refugees and saved thousands of lives by doing so.

The events of Kristallnacht and of the Holocaust remind us about the need to support democratic institutions in a pluralistic society and raises questions about fairness, justice and the protection of civil rights for all. It also reminds us of the need to take action when genocide threatens today and to respect and honor those who do not share our religion, beliefs or customs.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MS. EVELYN LANGLIEB GREER:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 08-29, recognizing April 27 through May 4, 2008 as Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust to be observed in all of Miami-Dade County's public schools.