

Ms. Raquel Regalado, Board Member

**SUBJECT:** REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 14-048 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING SCIENCE TEACHER BERTHA VAZQUEZ OF GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER MIDDLE SCHOOL

**COMMITTEE:** INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:** STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

George Washington Carver Middle School was recently named one of five grand prize winners in the 2014 Samsung *Solve for Tomorrow* contest. The competition was created in 2010 to raise awareness and interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) among U.S. public school students. The winners were chosen from more than 2,300 schools across the nation. Participants were challenged to apply their classroom learning to solve issues in their communities and create videos to showcase their solutions to the challenges. Carver Middle won the Community Choice Award with close to 11,000 public online votes. The school received more than \$140,000 in technology products such as smart boards and laptops and was honored at an awards assembly in Washington, D.C.

Carver Middle's video submission titled, *Old Smokey's Dirty Secret*, detailed how students aspired to gather scientific evidence to bring attention to a community environmental challenge, the city's former garbage incinerator, in order to compel public action. Under the leadership of science teacher Bertha Vazquez, a team of seven students researched the long lasting effects of Old Smokey, which faced the school's athletic field. It contaminated the surrounding areas until it was closed in 1970. The student team includes Sophie Barry, Emma Bennett, Connor Drucker, Rodney Michel, Bibi Moghani, Carolina Novy and Sophie Sepehri.

The project was inspired by Sophie Barry's science project about local parks closing due to contamination. She tested soil for arsenic and lead at the school's field, Merrie Christmas Park, Jaycee Park and her own backyard. In addition, the student team attended a City of Miami public hearing, consulted with the engineer who tested samples for the city as well as invited the attorney for the University of Miami Law Environmental Justice Project who also worked with the city to visit the classroom.

Bertha Vazquez is to be commended for her exemplary service to the students and parents of George Washington Carver Middle School. Her commitment to science and the community sparked the curiosity and passion of her students and will shape them into responsible and caring citizens of the world.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
MS. RAQUEL REGALADO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 14-048 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing science teacher Bertha Vazquez of George Washington Carver Middle School.

**RESOLUTION NO. 14-048  
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,  
RECOGNIZING SCIENCE TEACHER BERTHA VAZQUEZ OF GEORGE WASHINGTON  
CARVER MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**WHEREAS**, George Washington Carver Middle School was recently named one of five grand prize winners in the 2014 Samsung *Solve for Tomorrow* contest. The competition was created in 2010 to raise awareness and interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) among U.S. public school students; and

**WHEREAS**, Carver Middle won the Community Choice Award with close to 11,000 public online votes. The school's video submission titled, *Old Smokey's Dirty Secret*, detailed how students aspired to gather scientific evidence to bring attention to a community environmental challenge, the city's former garbage incinerator, in order to compel public action; and

**WHEREAS**, under the leadership of science teacher Bertha Vazquez, a team of seven students researched the long lasting effects of Old Smokey, which faced the school's athletic field. It contaminated the surrounding areas until it was closed in 1970; and

**WHEREAS**, the student team includes Sophie Barry, Emma Bennett, Connor Drucker, Rodney Michel, Bibi Moghani, Carolina Novy and Sophie Sepehri; and

**WHEREAS**, the student team attended a City of Miami public hearing, consulted with the engineer who tested samples for the city as well as invited the attorney for the University of Miami Law Environmental Justice Project who also worked with the city to visit the classroom; and

**WHEREAS**, Bertha Vazquez is to be commended for her exemplary service to the students and parents of George Washington Carver Middle School. Her commitment to science and the community sparked the curiosity and passion of her students and will shape them into responsible and caring citizens of the world;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 14-048 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing science teacher Bertha Vazquez of George Washington Carver Middle School.

A copy of this resolution is placed in the permanent records of this Board.

**Presented this seventh day of May, A.D. 2014**

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

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CHAIR

ATTEST:

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Secretary