

Office of School Board Members  
Board Meeting of October 7, 2014

September 30, 2014

Ms. Raquel Regalado, Board Member

**SUBJECT: HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT**

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

Hispanic Heritage Month in the United States is the period from September 15 to October 15 and was originally approved by President Lyndon Johnson as Hispanic Heritage Week. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan expanded it to a month for the purpose of recognizing the contributions of Hispanics in the United States and celebrating Hispanic culture. The date of September 15 was chosen as the commencement of Hispanic Heritage because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mexico, Chile and Belize also celebrate their independence days during the Hispanic Heritage period, which also includes Columbus Day (Dia de la Raza), October 12.

But instead of talking about the contributions and achievements of Hispanics in the United States, Hispanic Heritage Month is presently characterized in schools and the media by flags, ethnic costumes and food from different Central and Latin American Countries. And while said focus may be fine for young children and/or older children living in areas where there is little to no diversity, in Miami-Dade what is currently "celebrated" during Hispanic Heritage Month is readily accessible to parents, students and teachers every day.

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While currently in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), Hispanic Heritage Month is supported by instructional resources provided by the Department of Social Sciences for elementary, middle, and senior high schools along with an annual Hispanic Heritage Month essay contest (See <http://socialsciences.dadeschools.net>), these resources are not being utilized to their full potential.

Given that Miami-Dade County Public Schools is richly diverse, especially in terms of its Hispanic population, this item seeks to encourage administrators, teachers and students to move beyond traditional cultural celebrations during Hispanic Heritage Month, which may include emphasis on the musical and/or culinary contributions of Hispanic cultures, to a more rigorous academic analysis of Hispanic contributions to U.S. history - thus utilizing the resources created and distributed by M-DCPS's Department of Social Sciences.

Recognizing that the demands on teachers to be inclusive of all instructional mandates are stringent, and following the model already in place supporting the infusion of the African-American History mandate, it is highly encouraged that staff request schools to appoint a teacher volunteer/advocate to support the infusion of the mandate to provide instruction about Hispanic contributions to U.S. History. Inevitably, having this volunteer advocate in place at each school will maximize the use of existing instructional resources and advocate for the utilization of best instructional practices accordingly. By doing so, academically rich celebrations are more likely to be implemented across the district during Hispanic Heritage Month.

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Additionally, this item requests that M-DCPS's legislative agenda for the 2015 legislative session include a request for the creation of a task force under the Commissioner of Education for Hispanic Heritage Education modeled after the existing Commissioner of Education's African American History Task Force. Presently, "the Commissioner of Education's African American History Task Force is an advocate for Florida's school districts, teacher education training centers, and the community at large, in implementing the teaching of the history of African peoples and the contributions of African Americans to society. Said Task Force works to ensure awareness of the requirements, identify and recommend needed state education leadership action, assist in adoption of instructional materials by the state, and build supporting partnerships." <http://afroamfl.org/>

The creation of said task force would enhance M-DCPS's current resources for Hispanic Heritage; 1. Promoting awareness, understanding, and the infusion of the required instruction that addresses Hispanic Heritage into the curriculum of Florida's schools; 2. Aid in the development of instructional guidelines, standardized framework, and supplemental materials/resources for Hispanic Heritage; 3. Provide pre- and in-service training for implementation of the required instruction using various technologies and materials; and finally 4. Make recommendations to the Commissioner of Education and the appropriate Florida Department of Education leaders that would support a robust implementation of Hispanic Heritage curriculum.

Therefore, this item requests that the Superintendent establish the framework to highly encourage that schools appoint a teacher volunteer/advocate to support the infusion of the mandate to provide instruction about Hispanic contributions to U.S. History in the same manner that it is done for African-American History Month. Additionally, that M-DCPS's legislative agenda for the 2015 legislative session include a request for the creation of a task force under the Commissioner of Education for Hispanic Heritage Education modeled after the existing Commissioner of Education's African American History Task Force.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, through the Superintendent, establish the framework to highly encourage that schools appoint a teacher volunteer/advocate to support the infusion of the mandate to provide instruction about Hispanic contributions to U.S. history in the same manner that it is done for African American History Month; and that M-DCPS's legislative agenda for the 2015 legislative session include a request for the creation of a task force under the Commissioner of Education for Hispanic Heritage Education modeled after the existing Commissioner of Education's African American History Task Force.

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