Office of School Board Members
Board Meeting of December 10, 2014

December 8, 2014

Mr. Carlos Curbelo, Board Member

SUBJECT: **REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 14-115 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, SUPPORTING THE FLORIDA TAX SCHOLARSHIP AND EDUCATIONAL CHOICE**

COMMITTEE: **INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) is a leading innovator in a state whose Strategic Education Plan establishes a goal to "expand choice options" to all students. MDCPS offers a rich array of learning options, including magnet and choice schools, charter schools, and career and professional academies.

MDCPS has one of the most diverse student populations in the country including a high percentage of students from low-income families who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship was created in 2001 to provide a unique learning option for students from low-income families. The Tax Credit Scholarship now serves thousands of students attending numerous private schools in Miami-Dade; students who come from households with an average income below the poverty line.

According to standardized tests required by the state, scholarship students statewide are among the worst performers in their public schools when they leave them, but then once on the program they achieve learning gains similar to students of all incomes, including those from higher-income families. Independent research from Northwestern University has shown that public schools statewide most impacted by the loss of scholarship students are themselves showing significant test-score gains among low-income students.

While MDCPS has been nationally recognized for its great strides in improving the quality of education and educational choices for low-income families, other Florida school districts lag far behind. After 13 years of successful Tax Credit Scholarship operations, the Florida Education Association, Florida School Boards Association, Florida Association of School Administrators and others filed a lawsuit on August 28, 2014, seeking to shut down the program and potentially remove nearly 69,000 low-income students from the schools of their choice.

This item merits good cause due to the fact that it is imperative for The Board to address this legal action which could aggrieve thousands of low-income families in Miami-Dade County.

Good Cause
H-15

ACTION PROPOSED BY MR. CARLOS CURBELO:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 14-115 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, opposing the lawsuit, *McCall v. Scott*, and respectfully urges the above-named plaintiffs to withdraw it for the good of the students and low-income families who depend on the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship to attend the schools of their choice.

RESOLUTION NO. 14-115
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
SUPPORTING THE FLORIDA TAX SCHOLARSHIP AND EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

WHEREAS, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) is a leading innovator in a state whose Strategic Education Plan establishes a goal to "expand choice options" to all students; and

WHEREAS, MDCPS offers a rich array of learning options, including magnet and choice schools, charter schools, and career and professional academies; and

WHEREAS, MDCPS has one of the most diverse student populations in the country including a high percentage of students from low-income families who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship was created in 2001 to provide a unique learning option for students from low-income families; and

WHEREAS, the Tax Credit Scholarship now serves thousands of students attending numerous private schools in Miami-Dade; students who come from households with an average income below the poverty line; and

WHEREAS, according to standardized tests required by the state, scholarship students statewide are among the worst performers in their public schools when they leave them, but then once on the program they achieve learning gains similar to students of all incomes, including those from higher-income families; and

WHEREAS, independent research from Northwestern University has shown that the public schools statewide most impacted by the loss of scholarship students are themselves showing significant test-score gains among low-income students; and

WHEREAS, while MDCPS has been nationally recognized for its great strides in improving the quality of education and educational choices for low-income families, others Florida school districts lag far behind; and

WHEREAS, after 13 years of successful Tax Credit Scholarship operations, the Florida Education Association, Florida School Boards Association, Florida Association of School Administrators and others filed a lawsuit on August 28, 2014, seeking to shut down the program and potentially remove nearly 69,000 low-income students from the schools of their choice.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

The Miami-Dade County School Board opposes this lawsuit, *McCall v. Scott*, and respectfully urges the above-named plaintiffs to withdraw it for the good of the students and low-income families who depend on the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship to attend the schools of their choice.

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

Presented this tenth day of December, A.D. 2014

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

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CHAIR

ATTEST:

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Secretary