

Dr. Martin Karp, Board Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 16-107 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING HON. BETSY KAPLAN

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: INFORMED, ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

The Hon. Betsy Kaplan began her career as a teacher at Miami Shores Elementary School. She served on the Miami-Dade County School Board from 1988-2004 as a board member and chairperson. As a result of her work, the Arts became an important component of our education offerings. Ms. Kaplan urged school authorities to give the Arts its rightful place. Her extraordinary perseverance paid dividends for our children.

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Ms. Kaplan began volunteering in our community more than fifty years ago. In 1961, as a wife and mother, and president of the PTA's Arts in Education project, she began early morning assemblies at over 200 schools throughout the county to determine the status of the arts in the daily curriculum at those schools. During her tenure on the Miami-Dade County School Board, she achieved Certified Board Member status from the Florida School Board Association, she served as a member of the Florida School Board Association's Executive Board, and she chaired the Federal Relations Network.

She has remained active with the National Schools Boards Association, the Council of Urban School Boards' Steering Committee and New World School of the Arts. She stayed informed regarding on-going issues pertaining to the community, women and Jewish welfare.

Ms. Kaplan was a leader in adopting a tobacco free schools policy. She has been a strong supporter of special education programs for the developmentally disabled, and lobbied in Washington for more federal funds to meet the rising cost of the tremendous influx of immigrants to Miami-Dade County.

Numerous awards and honors have been presented to and bestowed upon Ms. Kaplan from the American Lung Association of Dade-Monroe for outstanding leadership, B'Nai Brith for devoted community service, and the Florida Art Education Association for distinguished service. In addition, she received the Cuban Teachers in Exile Award for Outstanding commitment to Education and Welfare of Children in Dade County, the Florida Association for Theater Education, Outstanding Service to Theater Education, Outstanding Service as Member of Education Practices Commission, and the UTD Unity Caucus Award.

Betsy Kaplan was a powerful presence on the School Board. She is sweet and small and sometimes underestimated, but with disarming charm she got her way, never flagging and never losing sight of her goal. She insisted that the arts were academic subjects, not extras. She supported elementary and middle school arts magnet schools. She championed the creation of New World School of the Arts and Design and Architecture Senior High (DASH), ensuring that the latter had both applied and fine arts components. She guarded the resources of time and money for the arts programs of every school and every grade. As public arts education became eroded throughout the United States in the 1990's, Dade County's public school system was nationally recognized as an outstanding exception.

In recognition of her vast contributions and support of high-quality Arts education for all students in our District, it is requested that we further honor Ms. Betsy Kaplan, an unparalleled champion of the Arts, by seeking to name one of the District's Arts programs, such as the Harmony Project, after her. With a commitment to achieving safer, healthier communities through music, the Harmony Project, one of Miami-Dade County Public Schools' largest initiatives, would be a program befitting the rich legacy Ms. Kaplan has left for the school system. Such a gesture would exemplify the District's gratitude for Ms. Kaplan's relentless efforts in promoting Arts education for the entire Miami community.

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**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. MARTIN KARP:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 16-107 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing Hon. Betsy Kaplan.

**RESOLUTION NO. 16-107
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
RECOGNIZING HON. BETSY KAPLAN**

WHEREAS, The Hon. Betsy Kaplan began her career as a teacher at Miami Shores Elementary School. She served on the Miami-Dade School Board from 1988-2004 as a board member and chairperson; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Kaplan began volunteering in our community more than 50 years ago. In 1961, as a wife and mother, and president of the PTA's Arts in Education project, she began early morning assemblies at over 200 schools throughout the county to determine the status of the arts in the daily curriculum at those schools. During her tenure on the Miami-Dade County School Board, she achieved Certified Board Member status from the Florida School Board Association, she served as a member of the Florida School Board Association's Executive Board, and she chaired the Federal Relations Network; and

WHEREAS, She has remained active with the National Schools Boards Association, the Council of Urban School Boards' Steering Committee and New World School of the Arts and supported special education programs for the developmentally disabled, and lobbied in Washington for more federal funds to meet the rising cost of the tremendous influx of immigrants to Miami-Dade County; and

WHEREAS, Numerous awards and honors have been presented to and bestowed upon Ms. Kaplan from the American Lung Association of Dade-Monroe for outstanding leadership, B'Nai Brith for devoted community service, and the Florida Art Education Association for distinguished service. She received the Cuban Teachers in Exile Award for Outstanding commitment to Education and Welfare of Children in Dade County, the Florida Association for Theater Education, Outstanding Service to Theater Education, Outstanding Service as Member of Education Practices Commission, and the UTD Unity Caucus Award; and

WHEREAS, Betsy Kaplan supported elementary and middle school arts magnet schools. She championed the creation of New World School of the Arts and Design and Architecture Senior High (DASH), ensuring that the latter had both applied and fine arts components. She guarded the resources of time and money for the arts. As public arts education became eroded throughout the United States in the 1990's, Dade County's public school system was nationally recognized as an outstanding exception; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of her vast contributions and support of high-quality Arts education for all students in our District, it is requested that we further honor Ms. Betsy Kaplan, an unparalleled champion of the Arts, by seeking to name one of the District's Arts programs, such as the Harmony Project, after her. With a commitment to achieving safer, healthier communities through music, the Harmony Project, one of Miami-Dade County Public Schools' largest initiatives, would be a program befitting the rich legacy Ms. Kaplan has left for the school system. Such a gesture would exemplify the District's gratitude for Ms. Kaplan's relentless efforts in promoting Arts education for the entire Miami community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 16-107 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida recognizing Hon. Betsy Kaplan.

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

Presented this twenty-third day of November, A.D. 2016

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CHAIR

ATTEST:

Secretary

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