

Ms. Betsy H. Kaplan, Member

**SUBJECT: RECOGNITION OF MRS. JOANNA LOPEZ, REGIONAL WINNER  
OF THE BARBIE ARTS TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

**COMMITTEE: EDUCATION AND SCHOOL OPERATIONS**

Mrs. Joanna Lopez, one of twenty regional winners of the Barbie Arts Teacher of the Year Award, was nominated for the honor by Blue Lakes Elementary School fourth-grader Andrea Betancourt, who wrote the winning inspirational essay that explained why her teacher should win the honor. As a result, Andrea won a \$100 Mattel toy prize package for herself, a \$5,000 grant for Blue Lakes Elementary School's arts program and national recognition for her teacher.

The Barbie Arts Teacher of the Year Award, sponsored by the Entertainment Industry Foundation (EIF) and "Barbie Cares Supporting Children in the Arts," recognizes outstanding arts teachers whose talent and creativity have a lasting impact on children. The initiative is intended to raise awareness and funds to support arts education for children in schools and communities throughout the nation.

Andrea's essay was selected from 4,000 entries submitted by elementary school students ages 6 to 12 who explained in their writings why their teachers should win the title. "Mrs. Lopez has taught us so much about being confident and not feeling scared to try anything .... always believe in yourself no matter what," Andrea wrote.

As a regional finalist, Mrs. Lopez will compete for the National Barbie Arts Teacher of the Year Award and an additional \$10,000 grant for the arts program at Blue Lakes Elementary School. The national winner will be announced in July. Therefore, it is appropriate that our School Board congratulate Mrs. Lopez for being a regional winner and wish her luck in the final competition.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
MS. BETSY H. KAPLAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognize Mrs. Joanna Lopez, regional winner of the Barbie Arts Teacher of the Year Award.

REPLACEMENT  
D-12