

Office of School Board Members
Board Meeting of October 17, 2007

October 17, 2007 } Revis

Renier Diaz de la Portilla, Board Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 07-57 ACKNOWLEDGING THE USPS COMMEMORATIVE STAMP CELEBRATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF MENDEZ ET AL. V. WESTMINSTER SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ORANGE COUNTY ET AL. IN OBSERVANCE OF HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH } Revis

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY, & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

LINK TO DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN:

A World War II-era legal case in which a group of civic-minded parents in California successfully sued to end segregation in their schools based on national origin, the *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County et al.* court case, will be remembered on a U.S. postage stamp during its 60th anniversary.

On March 2, 1945, Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez and four other Hispanic families sued four school districts in Orange County, California on behalf of more than 5,000 children, citing that the school districts' practice of segregating schools violated their Constitutional rights. In California and throughout the Southwest, children of Mexican descent attended specially designated 'Mexican schools,' frequently in inferior facilities.

On February 18, 1946, a federal district judge ruled that merely providing the same textbooks, courses, and comparable facilities in separate schools did not give students equal protection under the law, and that social equality is 'a paramount requisite' in America's public school system. The school district appealed, but the decision was upheld when the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruled on April 14, 1947, that the schools could not segregate on the basis of national origin. The Mendez decision set an important legal precedent for cases in other states and at the national level.

In celebration of the 60th anniversary of *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County et al.* and in observance of Hispanic Heritage Month, the U.S. Postal Service has created a commemorative stamp honoring the courage of these parents in this groundbreaking case, which opened the door to equality in our public schools.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MR. RENIER DIAZ DE LA PORTILLA: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 07-57 acknowledging the USPS commemorative stamp celebrating the 60th anniversary of *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County et al.* in observance of Hispanic Heritage Month. } Revis

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**RESOLUTION NO. 07-57 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
ACKNOWLEDGING THE USPS COMMEMORATIVE STAMP CELEBRATING THE 60TH
ANNIVERSARY OF MENDEZ ET AL. V. WESTMINSTER SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ORANGE
COUNTY ET AL. IN OBSERVANCE OF HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**

Whereas, the *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County et al.* was a World War II-era legal case in which a group of civic-minded parents in California successfully sued to end segregation in their schools based on national origin; and

Whereas, Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez and four other Hispanic families sued four school districts in Orange County, California on behalf of more than 5,000 children; and

Whereas, a federal district judge ruled that merely providing the same textbooks, courses, and comparable facilities in separate schools did not give students equal protection under the law; and

Whereas, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruled on April 14, 1947 that the schools could not segregate on the basis of national origin, a ruling which set an important legal precedent for cases in other states and at the national level; and

Whereas, in celebration of the 60th anniversary of *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County et al.* and in observance of Hispanic Heritage Month, the U.S. Postal Service has created a commemorative stamp honoring the courage of these parents in this groundbreaking case, which opened the door to equality in our public schools;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 07-57 acknowledging the USPS commemorative stamp celebrating the 60th anniversary of *Mendez et al. v. Westminster School District of Orange County et al.* in observance of Hispanic Heritage Month. } Revisec

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

Presented this seventeenth day of October, A.D. 2007

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CHAIR

ATTEST:

SECRETARY