

Office of School Board Members
Board Meeting of February 15, 2012

February 14, 2012

Dr. Wilbert "Tee" Holloway, Board Member

**SUBJECT: THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE
BLACK HISTORY ESSAY CONTEST WITHIN THE
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

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

The first national observance of Black history was initiated by American historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson who established Black History Week in February 1926 to commemorate and celebrate the contributions to our nation made by African Americans. In 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial, the week was expanded to Black History Month. The Association for the Study of African American Life and History, founded by Dr. Woodson, selects a theme each year for the observance of Black History Month. This year's national theme is "Black Women in American Culture and History."

The purpose of Black History Month is to call attention to the many educational, cultural, social, spiritual and economic contributions of African Americans to the United States. Black history is studied and woven into all subjects throughout the year in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). Despite the District's efforts, there has been a decrease in the number of schools developing programs and activities that recognize February as Black History Month. M-DCPS' is committed to equity in education for all students and to providing a learning environment that is reflective of the cultures, traditions, customs and historic legacies that comprise the District's population. Given the importance of the instruction of Black history, the Division of Social Sciences and Life Skills has created instructional materials and academic competitions that are aligned with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and designed to promote reading and writing across the curriculum. These competitions include but are not limited to; the 2012 Black History Month Essay contest.

It is appropriate that the School Board endorse National Black History Month by encouraging its celebration in the month of February but, also recommending that all schools participate in the 2012 Black History Month Essay contest.

**GOOD CAUSE
H-27**

To support the National Black History Month theme, "Black Women in American Culture and History," and the District's reading and writing initiatives, the Division of Social Sciences and Life Skills, in cooperation with the United Teachers of Dade and 99 JAMZ radio, is sponsoring a Black History Month Essay Contest. This contest is open to elementary, middle, and senior high school students who will compete in separate categories. The Black History Essay contest will be extended until, February 28, 2012 to meet this requirement. All schools will be required to submit their top three essays. The Black History Essay prompt and criteria for the essay are available on the District's Division of Social Sciences and Life Skills website.

This item does not appear on the published Agenda. There exists a good cause to vary from the published Agenda in order to allow schools to participate in the 2012 Black History Month Essay Contest which will be extended until February 28, 2012.

**ACTION PROSED BY
DR. WILBERT "TEE" HOLLOWAY:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to encourage all schools and teachers to plan academically enriching instructional activities on the contributions of African Americans to the United States throughout the school year, including during Black History Month and participate annually in the District's Black History Essay Contest.