

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Vice Chair

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 15-072 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING CONNOR CUNNINGHAM**

**COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL SERVICES AND STUDENT AND SCHOOL SUPPORT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Neurodiversity is a concept promoted by an international movement that recognizes and respects neurological differences. Advocates of neurodiversity encourage viewing autism and other neurological differences as variations in the brain wiring of individuals who can bring exceptional value to the world. As celebrated professor and autism activist Temple Grandin so aptly puts it, "The world needs different kinds of minds." This idea has inspired Miami Palmetto Senior High School student Connor Cunningham to share his personal experiences and help others develop tolerance.

Through his organization, Stand in My Shoes™, Connor has launched a Miami-based educational campaign that provides a platform for children and adolescents to explore the wide-ranging experiences and science of autism and neurodiversity. Connor, 16, has Asperger's syndrome, a form of high-functioning autism. Throughout the last school year, Connor has spoken to more than 500 children and teachers at Sunny Isles Beach K-8 presenting to groups of elementary and middle school students. Connor shared facts, personal stories, humor and games to help students understand what life on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is like and create awareness and tolerance.

For his efforts and advocacy, Connor has been named Outstanding Student Volunteer by the University of Miami Center for Autism and Related Disabilities and was asked to speak at the UM-CARD gala. The purpose of this board item is to recognize Connor Cunningham for inspiring young people to develop tolerance and understanding of those living with ASD.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY**

**DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 15-072 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida recognizing Connor Cunningham.

**RESOLUTION NO 15-072  
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
RECOGNIZING CONNOR CUNNINGHAM**

**WHEREAS**, Connor Cunningham, a junior student at Miami Palmetto Senior High School is being recognized for his generous efforts on behalf of students suffering from autism, giving their parents hope, support and a strong sense of solidarity in their daily struggle; and

**WHEREAS**, Connor, 16, himself, has Asperger's syndrome, a form of high-functioning autism, making him more sensitive those experiencing the same syndrome; and

**WHEREAS**, throughout the last school year, Connor has spoken to more than 500 children and teachers at Sunny Isles Beach K-8 about autism and the importance of tolerance for those suffering the syndrome; and

**WHEREAS**, while conducting these presentations before groups of elementary and middle school students, Connor was able to share with them facts, personal stories, humor and games; and

**WHEREAS**, Connor has been named Outstanding Student Volunteer by the University of Miami Center for Autism and Related Disabilities;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No.15-072 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing Connor Cunningham.

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

**Presented this ninth day of September, A.D. 2015**

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

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CHAIR

ATTEST:

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Secretary