

Ms. Raquel Regalado, Board Member

**SUBJECT:** REQUEST APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 16-098 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING THEATRE PROJECT "THE R+J EFFECT"

**COMMITTEE:** INNOVATION, GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT:** INFORMED, ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

"*The R+J Effect*" is an interactive 90-minute theatrical adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* that aims to bring wider attention to the issue of gun violence in Miami and cities across the nation, as well as restore trust and respect between the community and law enforcement. The cast of the production, directed by Florida International University (FIU) theatre professor Phillip M. Church, will comprise five students of Booker T. Washington Senior High representing the African-American Montague family and five students of Miami Senior High representing the bi-lingual Latino Capulet family. Four theatre graduates of FIU will mentor the students of both high schools throughout the multimedia project, which is a production of What If Works Inc.

What If Works is a nonprofit organization founded by Mr. Church that offers young artists in theatre, film, and music a creative bridge by which to transition from an academic environment to the professional world while championing the arts to bring social change.

The most significant element of "*The R+J Effect*" will be its audience, which through a moderator will engage in dialogue with local police officers on the ethical and moral decisions made by the play's characters. The show will integrate Rap and Hip-hop to tell the story and, while it focuses on gun violence, no weapon will be seen on stage. Instead, these will be represented by inventive movement and innovative sound effects.

Mr. Church aims to share the project with many more schools throughout Florida and beyond the state through the creation of a 25-min documentary and study guide. The documentary will be developed by media arts students of Booker T. Washington Senior High and Miami Senior High under the direction of What If Works Inc. Thus far, the project is expected to partner with schools in Baltimore, Chicago, New Orleans, Denver, and New York. Performances of "*The R+J Effect*" will begin in April 2017 and will be dedicated to Jada Page and all the children whose lives have been lost through gun-related violence.

The School Board commends "*The R+J Effect*" for its creative approach to calling for an end to the epidemic of gun violence that continues to kill children across the nation.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY**

**MS. RAQUEL REGALADO:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 16-098 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing theatre project "*The R+J Effect*".

**RESOLUTION NO. 16-098  
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,  
RECOGNIZING THEATRE PROJECT "THE R+J EFFECT"**

**WHEREAS**, "*The R+J Effect*" is an interactive 90-minute theatrical adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* that aims to bring wider attention to the issue of gun violence in Miami and cities across the nation, as well as restore trust and respect between the community and law enforcement; and

**WHEREAS**, "*The R+J Effect*" is directed by Florida International University (FIU) theatre professor Phillip M. Church and its cast will comprise five students of Booker T. Washington Senior High representing the African-American Montague family and five students of Miami Senior High representing the bilingual Latino Capulet family. Four theatre graduates of FIU will mentor the students of both high schools throughout the multimedia project; and

**WHEREAS**, "*The R+J Effect*" is a production of What If Works Inc., a nonprofit organization founded by Mr. Church that offers young artists in theatre, film, and music a creative bridge by which to transition from an academic environment to the professional world while championing the arts to bring social change; and

**WHEREAS**, the most significant element of "*The R+J Effect*" will be its audience, which through a moderator will engage in dialogue with local police officers on the ethical and moral decisions made by the play's characters. The production will integrate Rap and Hip-hop to tell the story and, while it focuses on gun violence, no weapon will be seen on stage. Instead, these will be represented by inventive movement and innovative sound effects; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Church aims to share "*The R+J Effect*" with many more schools throughout Florida and beyond the state through the creation of a 25-minute documentary and study guide. The documentary will be developed by media arts students of Booker T. Washington Senior High and Miami Senior High under the direction of What If Works Inc.; and

**WHEREAS**, performances of "*The R+J Effect*" will begin in April 2017 and will be dedicated to Jada Page and all the children whose lives have been lost through gun-related violence; and

**WHEREAS**, the School Board commends "*The R+J Effect*" for its creative approach to calling for an end to the epidemic of gun violence that continues to kill children across the nation.

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

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 16-098 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing theatre project "*The R+J Effect*".

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

**Presented this fifth day of October, A.D. 2016**

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary