

Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

**SUBJECT:                   REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 18-050  
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY,  
FLORIDA, HONORING TAWANA AKINS**

**COMMITTEE:           PERSONNEL,   STUDENT,   SCHOOL,   &   COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT**

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

Born and raised in the area right outside of Liberty City (Brownsburg) would appear a caring, compassionate, and constructive young teenaged parent who broke down barriers to become a phenomenal woman. Her name is Tawana Akins. She has been honored for her academic, social, and community efforts since elementary school. She became the multiplication champ in third grade, Ms. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade runner up in middle school, and in high school F.E.A. President, Class President, and graduated Number 5 in the 1994 class of Cope Center North. Despite having a child at 15, Ms. Akins still graduated on time and even was awarded with a plaque and \$100 from her former principal who is now deceased Dr. William Perry. Ms. Akins really thinks that parenthood should have been postponed until marriage, but it happened and she is grateful for her child and now granddaughter Milani Mattea.

Ms. Akins would become known as the “Diamond in the Rough at Cope.” Many teachers believed in her ability but she couldn’t understand why she had to go to college. In the face of raising a child as a single parent, Ms. Akins took on various jobs to support her child and not to depend on a system that’s intended to help but more often fails individuals. She had an AHA! Moment and decided that she would just go to school and be a lawyer. She didn’t accept her scholarship and now was forced to take out loans which she regrets to this day. A change of heart and circumstances landed her at the School of Education at Florida Memorial University. She went on to receive four college degrees since then and is in her 15<sup>th</sup> year of teaching with NO ABSENCES. She has earned spots on the President’s List, Dean’s List and also graduated Cum Laude. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Elementary Education (Florida Memorial), Master’s Degree in Reading (Florida Memorial), Specialist Degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a minor specialization in Special Education (Barry University), ESOL Endorsement, and Educational Leadership (Barry University).

She is also a Mentor to new teachers. She was Steward of the Year finalist twice and also an elected delegate with the United Teachers of Dade. She recently became the Education Transformation Office Region Teacher of the Year in which she was awarded with cash, plaque, and a trophy. Her community service dates far back as an elementary student. She’s one of the known community/ social justice activists in Liberty City.

**Replacement  
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Out of thousands of nominees countrywide, Ms. Akins was recently awarded the 2018 National Social Justice Activist of the Year in Minnesota. She is actively involved each year in feeding the homeless every Christmas morning, Toy drives for Christmas, Thanksgiving baskets, Back to School Supplies giveaway, Get out the Vote Campaign. She is the avid dance teacher of her dance company, "Pretty Girlz Rock Dance Company" where she mentors and teaches young girls how to dance from 4- 17 years old. She is the founder of "A Better ME" mentoring group that targets at risk males in five areas: Overtown, Liberty City, Brown n Sub, Miami Gardens, and Opa Locka. She is also the co-founder of a seafood and BBQ restaurant in Liberty City (Chill and Grill Smokehouse) 1807 NW 79 St. The author of three books, Ms. Akins is a force to be reckoned with: The titles of the books are: "*A Better Me!*", *Milani's First Day of school and Transformation*, and *Miraculous, Meticulous, Milani Mattea*. Ms. Akins does countless other things while being a mother to Shaprell and a Glammy (as she says) to her granddaughter Milani Mattea as well as spending time with her family. She is the Transformational Math Coach at Holmes Elementary and an aspiring future administrator.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY**

**DR. DOROTHY BENDROSS-MINDINGALL:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 18-050 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, honoring Ms. Tawana Akins.

**RESOLUTION NO. 18-050  
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,  
HONORING MS. TAWANA AKINS**

**WHEREAS**, Tawana Akins, a Miami-Dade County Public Schools teacher, has taught for over 15 years. She has worked tirelessly throughout high-poverty communities of Miami-Dade County, becoming an advocate for the voiceless and aspiring young women to become phenomenal; and

**WHEREAS**, the loving mother of Shaprell and “Glam-mother” of Milani Mattea, she was born and raised in the heart of Liberty City, Brownsburg. Ms. Akins graduated from C.O.P.E Center North in the top 1% of her class after having a child at the age of 15. Ms. Akins would continue her education at Florida Memorial University with a Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education and a Master’s Degree in Reading; graduating both years Cum Laude and as a Dean List’s recipient; and

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Akins has earned a Specialist Degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a minor specialization in Special Education from Barry University. She also has an ESOL endorsement and Educational Leadership from Barry University as well; and

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Akins has been selected as a Stewart finalist twice and an elected delegate of United Teachers of Dade. She has received numerous of awards ranging from Education Transformation Office Region Teacher of the Year to 2018 National Social Justice Activist of the Year; and

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Akins is an Activist, Leader, Dance Instructor, Mentor and Renowned Author. She has started annual Christmas food drives, Toy Drives, Creating Thanksgiving Baskets, Back to School Supply Giveaways and more. She teaches dancing through her dance company “Pretty Girlz Rock Dance Company” and mentors “At-Risk” youth through her own program “A Better ME”. Akins is also the author of three books, “A Better Me!”, “Milani’s First Day of school and Transformation”, and Miraculous, Meticulous, Milani Mattea.

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

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 18-050 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida honoring Ms. Tawana Akins.

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

**Presented this twenty-fifth day of July, A.D. 2018**

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

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CHAIR

ATTEST:

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Secretary