

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member

**SUBJECT: THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, JOIN IN RECOGNIZING MR. CARLOS A. GIMENEZ, FORMER MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, AND UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONGRESSMAN-ELECT, DISTRICT 26, FOR HIS DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE**

**COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

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

Former Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez served as Miami-Dade County's highest-ranking elected official and chief administrator, overseeing a metropolitan government with more than 28,000 employees, with an annual budget of approximately \$8.9 billion, serving over 2.8 million residents. Since assuming office in 2011 after a special election, Mr. Gimenez continued to consistently hold the line on tax increases while pressing for more technology and innovation in County initiatives. He further championed and secured approval for the largest tax cut in County history eight years ago, and collectively Miami-Dade taxpayers saved more than \$1.9 billion during his tenure. To date, the average homeowner in the County has saved approximately \$1,700 in property taxes.

Mr. Gimenez was re-elected as Mayor in 2012 and again in 2016 for two consecutive four-year terms. He brought with him more than 40 years of public service experience.

Among the County's 25 departments that Mr. Gimenez directed were the two largest economic engines in South Florida – the Port of Miami and Miami International Airport. Together, between the airport and seaport, Miami-Dade County (MDC) welcomes more than 50.5 million passengers a year, and the two facilities have supported more than 610,000 jobs throughout the South Florida community either directly or indirectly. He also oversaw the County's public safety departments, including Miami-Dade Police (MDPD), Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, Corrections, and the Medical Examiner's office.

As County Mayor, Mr. Gimenez had direct responsibility overseeing the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – the largest in County history. Entering its seventh year, the multi-year CIP was forecasted to invest \$7.5 billion in department infrastructure improvements. Utilizing state-of-the-art technologies, the upgrades are expected to improve not only the reliability and environmental sustainability of the community's water and sewer system, but also the plans for the future as they relate to resiliency, sea-level rise, and climate change. This program is anticipated to contribute thousands of new jobs to the community over the course of the construction, as well as billions of dollars in positive economic impact to Miami-Dade County.

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**(Withdrawn – 12/04/20)**

Prior to becoming Mayor, Mr. Gimenez served on the Board of County Commissioners for seven years. He was first elected in 2004 and subsequently re-elected for a second term without opposition in 2008. As Commissioner for District 7, he represented the City of Miami, the Village of Key Biscayne, the City of Coral Gables, the City of South Miami, and the Village of Pinecrest, as well as unincorporated areas. He also served as Chairman of the Government Operations Committee and Chairman of the Regional Transportation Committee, which oversaw Miami-Dade County's transportation systems.

From May 2000 to January 2003, Mr. Gimenez was Manager of the City of Miami and was credited with helping restore financial stability and integrity to that organization. As Miami's chief administrative officer, he was responsible for an annual budget of \$500 million, a 4,000-employee workforce and provision of services to almost 400,000 residents. During his tenure as Manager, the City's bond rating went from "junk" to investment grade and the tax rate dropped to its lowest in 40 years. At the same time, Miami was able to establish more than \$140 million in reserves.

Mr. Gimenez spent 25 years with the Miami Fire-Rescue Department before becoming City Manager. In his final nine years with the department, he served as Chief, during which time he was credited with modernizing the department and overseeing the largest reorganization in the department's history.

During his tenure as Mayor of Miami-Dade County, Mr. Gimenez was instrumental in working cooperatively and collaboratively and securing the approval of the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners to provide services and support to Miami-Dade County students including some of the following:

**Head Start** – Since 2011, more than 900 children have been able to participate in Head Start programs with a new model that puts nonprofits in charge of education goals. For every \$1 of local tax money spent, Miami-Dade County's Community Action and Human Services Department (CAHSD) leveraged more than \$3 from outside funders.

**Early Head Start** – Through a \$10 million grant, more than 500 families were added to the Early Head Start program. In 2019, this created more than 160 new jobs. It also introduced the Montessori Method into neighborhoods that normally would not have access to this highly successful teaching model.

**Sports and Fitness** – Engagement in healthy recreation increased in recent years, thanks to the Mayor's Sports Championship Series. The County's Fit-2-Lead Youth Development program led to a 31 percent reduction in juvenile arrest in ZIP Codes where it has been offered. This resulted in Fit-2-Lead receiving a \$1.8 million grant from the Children's Trust in 2019.

**Officers** – The Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD), in partnership with Miami-Dade Schools Police (MDSP), placed officers at more than 100 public primary schools so that all schools in unincorporated areas of the County would have police protection at all times. With approval from former Mayor Gimenez, MDPD initiated the School and Youth Safety Unit, which is comprised of six officers who are assigned to elementary schools throughout MDC, along with a supervisor. The officers provide for a safe environment within their assigned schools and receive specialized training in mitigating potential threats. The officers also work closely with school staff on their emergency response plans and emergency drills.

**Preventive Programs** – MDPD has placed an added emphasis on its youth programs, such as the Drug Abuse Resistance Education training program (DARE), a 10-week curriculum taught by police officers to 5th grade students for the purpose of teaching positive alternatives to substance abuse and gang violence. DARE seeks to build student's self-esteem, interpersonal skills, positive choices, and ability to avoid or overcome bullying. The DARE program is taught to more than 10,000 students a year in Miami-Dade County Schools.

**Crossing Guards** – The School Crossing Guard Program (SGGO) is responsible for the administration of the Department's School Crossing Guard Unit, which provides school crossing guards for schools in unincorporated Miami-Dade County, as well as those municipalities entering into legal agreements for services. The SGGO is used in 80 Public Elementary Schools, 32 K-8 Centers, four Middle Schools, three Primary Learning Centers, two High Schools, and four Charter Schools and facilitates to ensure the safe crossing of children at 307 busy crosswalk posts throughout Miami-Dade County.

**Joint Roundtable on Youth Safety** – After the horrific deadly shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, Connecticut, in 2013, Mayor Gimenez and Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho joined community leaders across the County to create an action plan developed around our schools and other public places to keep children safe by combating gun violence.

**My Brother's Keeper (MBK)** – In 2016, Mayor Gimenez together with United States (U. S.) Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson accepted President Barack Obama's MBK Challenge on behalf of Miami-Dade County to address the challenges facing boys and young men of color. It was an initiative that encourages community leaders across the nation to develop plans to improve life outcomes and opportunities for children.

**Together for Children** – This is an innovative collaboration between government, education, business, law enforcement, and justice entities, along with community-based organizations, individual community members, and investment partners. The mission of Together for Children is to leverage resources, experiences and ideas to create data-driven, neighborhood action plans to address, reduce, and prevent youth violence.

**Miami-Dade Civil Citation** -- Miami-Dade's Civil Citation has served more than 20,000 families since its inception in 2007 and has a success rate of 83%. The program provides misdemeanor juvenile offenders with targeted treatment services without the stigma of an arrest. Evidence-based assessments, linkage to services, and case-management services continue to be provided to participants.

**Multi-Disciplinary Staffings** -- Professionals from Law Enforcement, the Department of Children and Families, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice have implemented a coordinated process for children 12 years of age and younger who are at-risk or have already entered the juvenile justice system. This process is sensitive to the unique developmental needs of this population and addresses their risk to re-offend. The children receiving services have numerous risk factors and must be given every opportunity to succeed. Additionally, the multi-disciplinary staffing has been implemented within the Miami-Dade County Public Schools for children who are at-risk and in need of Prevention services.

**New Units** -- In collaboration with MDPD, in response to the tragic shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas Senior High School on February 14, 2018, Mayor Gimenez implemented several programs to combat violence in our schools to protect our future, including the Priority Response Team (PRT), a specially trained unit that was formed in direct response to the Parkland shootings to respond quickly to incidents that can result in mass casualties. This unit currently bolsters 82 certified Officers spanning throughout all of Miami-Dade County.

**CARES Act Health Initiative** –The CARES Act federal funds made during the COVID-19 pandemic have provided thermometers for every student’s household and have been used to hire more school nurses.

Born in Cuba, Mr. Gimenez and his family moved to the United States in 1960. He has been a Miami-Dade County resident ever since. He graduated from Christopher Columbus High School and earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Public Administration from Barry University. In 1993, he completed the Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government.

On November 3, 2020, the voters of District 26, serving communities in Miami-Dade County and Monroe County, elected Mr. Gimenez as Congressman-elect in the United States House of Representatives. A new chapter in a career of dedication, commitment, and support to public service is just beginning for Congressman-elect Carlos A. Gimenez.

Mr. Gimenez is married to the former Lourdes Portela. They have three adult children, Carlos, Julio, and Lourdes, and six grandchildren.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney’s office as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, join in recognizing Mr. Carlos A. Gimenez, former Mayor of Miami-Dade County, Florida, and United States House of Representatives Congressman-elect, District 26, for his dedication and commitment to public service for over 40 years.