

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member

**SUBJECT: THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
JOIN IN RECOGNIZING MS. ASHLEY C. R. VANGATES, 2021
CENTRAL REGION TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
BLUEPRINT: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS, LEADERS AND STAFF**

Out of the many careers society has to offer, education is the path that Ms. Ashley C. R. Vangates most admires and respects. It is the quintessential career in which she is able to dedicate herself to the community, help students set and achieve their goals, realize their dreams, and reach their full academic potential. Her hard work and dedication was recognized both regionally and district-wide, selected as the teacher of the year for the Central Region and a Miami-Dade County Public Schools Francisco R. Walker 2021 teacher of the year finalist. Ms. Vangates was scheduled to be recognized at the School Board meeting of March 18, 2020, however, because of the cancellation of the Board meeting due to COVID-19, this acknowledgement did not occur at the time.

Ms. Vangates is an honors graduate of Miami Northwestern Senior High School, class of 2006. Upon graduation, Ms. Vangates successfully completed the 5-year ProTeach Program where she earned a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Elementary Education at the University of Florida.

Ms. Vangates is currently an instructional leader at George Washington Carver Elementary School where she has been recognized as a "highly-effective" teacher for at least three consecutive years. She has also been acknowledged by the Florida Department of Education as one of the highest impact teachers in the state. Her student learning gains were among the most statistically-significantly positive in the State of Florida. She was also recognized as her school's "Rookie Teacher of the Year," underscoring her phenomenal ability to encourage and engage the minds of our youth.

Ms. Vangates has had many opportunities to participate in various service projects, thus extending her commitment far beyond the classroom. She has always found serving others a worthy journey throughout her lifetime: As an intern with the Overtown Youth Center, a student Page with the Florida Senate selected to serve by the Honorable Frederica S. Wilson, a graduate of the Junior Leadership Miami Program sponsored by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, providing tutoring services to the Boys and Girls Club of Gainesville, and mentoring students at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School in Liberty City. She has been fortunate to have previously worked with young girls at the Kristi House Child Advocacy Center, a safe haven for sexually abused students.

Additionally, Ms. Vangates created a service project called the ButterF.L. Y (First Love Yourself) Girls Mentoring Program with “Little Carver’s” very own young ladies. The purpose of the ButterF.L. Y Girls Mentoring Program is to guide a cohort of girls beginning in third grade and ending in grade five, through a journey of self-discovery that inspires them to lead honorable lives with extraordinary confidence. Each young girl is encouraged to use her unique talents, gifts, and abilities to pursue excellence and inspire her peers.

Above all, Ms. Vangates is dedicated to her students. She is a firm believer in building student connections: Her motto is *once my student, always my student*. She is often seen in the evenings at Carver’s park rooting for current and former students in their respective sports, at student’s dance recitals and award presentations, giving hugs and counseling sessions in the hallways, or dancing on stage at her school’s pep rally.

Although the world of education is challenging, Ms. Vangates is a passionate teacher and continues to walk in her calling knowing that to whom much is given, much is required.

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 Ms. Ashley C. R. Vangates, 2021 Central Region Teacher of the Year.