

Ms. Lucia Baez-Geller, School Board Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 22-001 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING THE STUDENTS OF TAPIZTREE FOR THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY EFFORTS THROUGHOUT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED, & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Tapiztree is an environmental group founded by high school students from several Miami-Dade County Public Schools. The Tapiztree Organizing Committee members are Carolyn Bartroff, Billie Joan Hill-Baldauf, Jorik Garcia, Krislarie Vallejo-Menes, Naomi Eshghi, and Joshua Epstein. The group is committed to expanding the use of trees and nature in the design of schools, parks, and communities.

Tapiztree was formed in the spring of 2021 when a group of students got together to talk about their experiences during the pandemic. Though remote schooling and quarantining was difficult, the students felt that going outside to enjoy outdoor activities helped maintain mental and physical health and connection to others. As a result, the students found that access to nature is important for everyone. They did research and learned about biophilic design principles and joined the Biophilic Cities network.

Biophilic design is the idea of using elements of nature and promoting interaction with nature in all buildings and public places. Biophilic design positively affects education by improving cognitive skills and academic performance; supporting development of creativity, problem solving, and intellectual capacity; and reducing stress. More generally, biophilic design can create healthier cities by helping reduce the heat island effect, increasing energy efficiency, inviting exploration and exercise, improving air and water quality, and reducing food insecurity.

The students reached out to the Miami-Dade County Resiliency Office, which taught them more about urban heat islands. In Miami-Dade County, lower-income communities of color have less tree canopy and parks. Students and schools in these neighborhoods suffer most from the urban heat island effect. To address this problem, Tapiztree is advocating for a Biophilic Campuses program to engage students, environmental clubs, teachers, and District officials in designing and implementing biophilic projects. These projects would expand tree canopy and greenery on school campuses and would educate students, staff and community members about the health and energy benefits of reducing heat. With the help of District officials, Tapiztree had its first webinar with environmental clubs from multiple schools throughout the district, and the group is moving forward with the goal of promoting Biophilic Campuses everywhere.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. LUCIA BAEZ-GELLER:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 22-001 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing the students of Tapiztree for their environmental advocacy efforts throughout Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

**APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 22-001
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
RECOGNIZING THE STUDENTS OF TAPIZTREE FOR THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL
ADVOCACY EFFORTS THROUGHOUT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

WHEREAS, Tapiztree is an environmental group founded by high school students from several Miami-Dade County Public Schools. The Tapiztree Organizing Committee members are Carolyn Bartroff, Billie Joan Hill-Baldauf, Jorik Garcia, Krislarie Vallejo-Menes, Naomi Eshghi, and Joshua Epstein; and

WHEREAS, the group is committed to expanding the use of trees and nature in the design of schools, parks, and communities to promote greater mental and physical health, energy efficiency; and

WHEREAS, Tapiztree was formed in the spring of 2021, when a group of students got together to talk about their experiences during the pandemic. Though remote schooling and quarantining was difficult, the students felt that going outside to enjoy outdoor activities helped maintain mental and physical health and a connection to others. As a result, the students found that access to nature is important for everyone; and

WHEREAS, in Miami-Dade County, lower-income communities of color have less tree canopy and parks. Students and schools in these neighborhoods suffer most from the urban heat island effect. To address this problem, Tapiztree is advocating for a Biophilic Campuses program to engage students, environmental clubs, teachers, and District officials in designing and implementing biophilic projects. These projects would expand tree canopy and greenery on school campuses and would educate students, staff and community members about the health and energy benefits of reducing heat; and

WHEREAS, with the help of District officials, Tapiztree had its first webinar with environmental clubs from multiple schools throughout the district, and the group is moving forward with the goal of promoting Biophilic Campuses everywhere.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 22-001 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing the students of Tapiztree for their environmental advocacy efforts throughout Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

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

Presented this twelfth day of January, A.D. 2022

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CHAIR

ATTEST:

Secretary