

Ms. Luisa Santos, Board Member

**SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE
 COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZE WOMEN OF DISTRICT 9**

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
PLAN: SAFE, HEALTHY, & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

National Women’s History Month provides the opportunity to recognize the achievement, impact, and influence of women in our society as they continue to lead the way towards gender equality. This year’s theme for National Women’s History Month is “Women Providing Healing, Promoting Hope.” With this area of focus, we are taking time to honor and recognize some of the women who have spent their entire careers providing healing and promoting hope to countless District 9 students and community members.

Ms. Brandy Ramirez is a powerful connector in our South Dade community. As the daughter of migrant workers who graduated from Homestead Senior High School, she made it a goal to always take care of the wellbeing of her community. From starting her career working at the Miami Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), Title 1 Migrant Program to becoming the first Mexican American President of the *Homestead Women’s Club*, she creates opportunities to engage, educate, connect, and provide resources to our neighbors who are most in need.

Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins continuously gives back to our community through service. As a product of M-DCPS, she has spent her career as a civil litigation attorney and has served on various boards. Her focus on children and families is evident through her involvement in health and youth mentorship, as well as focus on housing affordability, environmental sustainability, and bringing effective transit solutions to the residents of her district.

Ms. Deborah Billings is a woman who believes that fairness, equality, justice, and basic human rights are the cornerstones of our society. Her investment in the betterment for all women and children has led her to serve as the Director of Prevention Education at *Kristi House*, a Child Advocacy Organization dedicated to eradicating child abuse and child sex trafficking through *Kristi House*, she works to create solutions at the national and local scale to help heal survivors.

**Replacement
B-7**

Ms. Flor Arzuaga has learned the power of healing through her experiences. As a survivor and later advocate, she has been helping women overcome domestic violence for over 23 years. Her roles at *Mujer and Start of Smart, Inc.*, integrate social services with Homestead law enforcement to provide women and children with access to important resources. She has been able to directly transform the lives of countless families as she guides them down the path towards recovery, safety, and independence.

Dr. Nancy Lawther is an education advocate who is fueled by her passion for continuous learning. Serving not only as an educator of 18th century women and politics, but she has also been an advocate for citizen engagement in the legislative process through her involvement in the PTSA. She continues to serve on various Education Advisory Councils, M-DCPS Citizen Participant Groups, and regularly attends legislative sessions in Tallahassee, Florida, to advocate for the educational needs of M-DCPS students.

Ms. Romania Dukes has managed to turn her pain into passion. As a mother who lost her two year old son to senseless gun violence, she is on a mission to help grieving mothers care for each other and for their communities by raising awareness. As the founder of Mothers Fighting for Justice, Romania hosts and attends gatherings, panel discussions, and government meetings to discuss putting an end to senseless gun violence. She also organizes backpack, toy, and holiday food drives to gather resources to support families who have lost loved ones.

Reverend Vanessa Tinsley centers hope in everything she does. Based on the inhumane experiences she underwent at food pantries as she sought food for her children, she vowed to change the experience for those who need help the most. For over 30 years, she has provided fresh and nutritious food through her non-profit, *Bridge to Hope*. Each month, she helps over 10,000 people who are experiencing hardship or crisis gain access to nutritious, healthy food, and personal hygiene products.

These women all embody the proverb “it takes a village to help a child.” Today, we honor them, recognize their work, and draw strength from their remarkable dedication to our community.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. LUISA SANTOS:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognize Ms. Brandy Ramirez, Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins, Ms. Deborah Billings, Ms. Flor Arzuaga, Dr. Nancy Lawther, Ms. Romania Dukes, and Reverend Vanessa Tinsley during National Women’s History Month for being outstanding leaders in M-DCPS District 9.