

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: REQUEST APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 22-017 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING THE VIKING FREEDOM WRITERS OF MIAMI NORLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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

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The **Viking Freedom Writers Creative Writing Club, (VFW)** began in the classroom of Dr. Precious Symonette where she inspired her students to use their voices to make a change within themselves, their school, and in their respective communities. Focusing on social injustices, civic responsibility, student voice, and experiential learning, during class and after school, students read, discuss, and practice writing different types of literary genres. In 2012, Dr. Symonette coined her students as Viking Freedom Writers to pay homage to the Freedom Walkers, Freedom Riders, and the Freedom Writers who helped to pave the way for equity and equality. Dr. Precious Symonette was trained by Erin Gruwell, the educator of the original Freedom Writers from Long Beach, California in 2014.

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The **Florida Freedom Writers Foundation** is a non-profit organization, led by C.E.O., Dr. Precious Symonette and the **Florida Freedom Writers, (FFW)**, who are collegiate, teaching artists. The work of this non-profit includes but is not limited to facilitating writing workshops and creating and participating in community, service-learning projects for students in grades K-12th. Students learn 21st Century Skills to help them to be successful academically, socially, and professionally. Using the ideologies and methodologies of the original Freedom Walkers, Freedom Riders, the Freedom Writers of the 1960's, and the students in Long Beach, California who used writing to change their lives. Students learn about these Movements to promote empathy, community, love, and social justice in modern times.

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These award-winning students have also established a championship legacy via various competitions and most recently through their participation in the Dear Freedom Writer book. "In **Dear Freedom Writer: Stories of Hardship and Hope from the Next Generation**, their legacy continues as readers are introduced to a new league of Freedom Writers-50 students from around the globe-sharing deeply personal and powerful stories in letters addressed to the original Freedom Writers and dedicated Freedom Writer Teachers."

**Revised Good Cause
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The students wrote, responded to, revised, and edited letters within the book. They also composed poetry entries. Miami Norland Senior High School Principal David Ladd, Dr. Symonette and the talented Viking Freedom Writers are to be commended for inspiring more young people to choose writing and poetry to showcase their creative prowess.

This item does not appear on the published agenda. There exists good cause to vary from the published agenda in order to properly recognize the achievements of the Viking Freedom Writers of Miami Norland Senior High School for their contribution to **Dear Freedom Writer: *Stories of Hardship and Hope from the Next Generation***.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. STEVE GALLON III:**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 22-017 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing The Viking Freedom Writers of Miami Norland Senior High School for their contribution to **Dear Freedom Writer: *Stories of Hardship and Hope from the Next Generation***.

**RESOLUTION NO. 22-017
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA RECOGNIZING
THE VIKING FREEDOM WRITERS OF MIAMI NORLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

WHEREAS, The **Viking Freedom Writers Creative Writing Club, (VFW)** began in the classroom of Dr. Precious Symonette where she inspired her students to use their voices to make a change within themselves, their school, and in their respective communities. Focusing on social injustices, civic responsibility, student voice, and experiential learning, during class and after school, students read, discuss, and practice writing different types of literary genres. In 2012, Dr. Symonette coined her students as Viking Freedom Writers to pay homage to the Freedom Walkers, Freedom Riders, and the Freedom Writers who helped to pave the way for equity and equality. Dr. Precious Symonette was trained by Erin Gruwell, the educator of the original Freedom Writers from Long Beach, California in 2014; and

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WHEREAS, The **Florida Freedom Writers Foundation** is a non -profit organization, led by C.E.O., Dr. Precious Symonette and the **Florida Freedom Writers, (FFW)**, who are collegiate, teaching artists. The work of this non- profit includes but is not limited to facilitating writing workshops and creating and participating in community, service-learning projects for students in grades K-12th. Students learn 21st Century Skills to help them to be successful academically, socially, and professionally. Using the ideologies and methodologies of the original Freedom Walkers, Freedom Riders, the Freedom Writers of the 1960's, and the students in Long Beach, California who used writing to change their lives. Students learn about these Movements to promote empathy, community, love, and social justice in modern times; and

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WHEREAS, these award-winning students have also established a championship legacy via various competitions and most recently through their participation in the Dear Freedom Writers book. "In **Dear Freedom Writer: *Stories of Hardship and Hope from the Next Generation***, their legacy continues as readers are introduced to a new league of Freedom Writers-50 students from around the globe-sharing deeply personal and powerful stories in letters addressed to the original Freedom Writers and dedicated Freedom Writer Teachers."; and

WHEREAS, the students wrote, responded to, revised, and edited letters within the book. They also composed poetry entries. Miami Norland Senior High School Principal David Ladd, Dr. Symonette and the talented Viking Freedom Writers are to be commended for inspiring more young people to choose writing and poetry to showcase their creative prowess.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 22-017 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing The Viking Freedom Writers of Miami Norland Senior High School for their contribution to **Dear Freedom Writer: *Stories of Hardship and Hope from the Next Generation***.

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

Presented this thirteenth day of April, A.D. 2022

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CHAIR

ATTEST:

Secretary