

Mr. Roberto J. Alonso, Board Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 24-030 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING PRINCIPAL DR. TAMARA MOODIE FROM DISTRICT-MANAGED SOUTH FLORIDA AUTISM CHARTER SCHOOL

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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

Dr. Tamara Moodie, a pioneering educator, is the founder and current leader of the South Florida Autism Charter School (SFACS), a District-managed charter school and a landmark institution in special education. Since founding SFACS in 2009, she has been at the forefront of innovation in the field of autism education. With over 27 years of experience, Dr. Moodie has proven to be a staunch advocate for equitable educational opportunities for children with autism and a committed ally to providing them with experiences akin to their neurotypical peers. Under her leadership, SFACS has become a nurturing environment where students with unique needs can flourish and realize their full potential.

Opened in the summer of 2009 with 81 students, SFACS caters to students on the severe end of the autism spectrum. Dr. Moodie's dedication has seen the school grow significantly, marked by the opening in early 2021 of a state-of-the-art, 60,000-square-foot academic building on a 5-acre campus in the City of Hialeah. This expansion reflects Dr. Moodie's deep commitment to enhancing educational and behavioral programs for her students, while also reaching out to the broader autism community in South Florida through various initiatives like counseling, advocacy, and community workshops.

In 2015, Dr. Moodie expanded her mission by founding three non-profit organizations: South Florida Autism Center (SFA-CTR), Villages of South Florida Autism (VSFA), and Friends of South Florida Autism (FSFA). Together, these organizations realize her vision of a comprehensive support system for individuals with autism and their families. SFA-CTR, co-located with SFACS, currently offers out-of-school services and adult day training, with plans for further expansion.

Dr. Moodie's efforts extend beyond SFACS, as she actively explores opportunities to grow the charter school in Dade County and form partnerships with local nonprofits for employment opportunities for her students. She has also formed partnerships with local nonprofits, including Ken's Crew, to provide jobs to our young adults. In addition, she is exploring partnerships with local organizations and municipalities to create residential opportunities. Her commitment to research is evident in her doctoral thesis on communication methods in autism and her ongoing research endeavors. She continues to explore research opportunities to further the study of the best interventions for this population. Dr. Moodie recently created and will soon publish, *Flexible Instruction in the Natural Environment (F.I.N.E.)*.

Dr. Moodie's leadership extends to the broader educational community. She serves on various committees and boards, contributes to the Educational Advisory Committee for Miami Dade College

**REPLACEMENT
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and the Parent Advisory Board for the University of Alabama, and is the Vice Chair of the National Autism Accelerator for Autism Charter Schools (NAACS). She is also a member of CHIEF, a private network upon which executive women rely to raise their leadership status.

Dr. Moodie's work has garnered significant recognition, including the Educational Leadership Award from the UM NSU Card Center (2021). She has been recognized as one of South Florida's Most Influential & Prominent Black Women in Business by Legacy Magazine (2011). She is also an author who continues her advocacy through literature, including her first book, "I am Still Like You: Autism Through My Point of View," which offers personal insights into the autism experience and her upcoming children's book, "Walking in My Shoes, Through My Eyes."

This resolution recognizes the outstanding work of South Florida Autism Charter School and its remarkable leader and founder Dr. Tamara Moodie in support of students and families touched by autism.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MR. ROBERTO J. ALONSO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 24-030 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing Principal Dr. Tamara Moodie from District-Managed South Florida Autism Charter School.

**RESOLUTION NO. 24-030 OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING
DR. TAMARA MOODIE FROM DISTRICT-MANAGED SOUTH FLORIDA AUTISM CHARTER SCHOOL**

WHEREAS, Dr. Tamara Moodie, a pioneering educator, is the founder and current leader of the South Florida Autism Charter School (SFACS), a District-managed charter school and a landmark institution in special education. Since founding SFACS in 2009, she has been at the forefront of innovation in the field of autism education. With over 27 years of experience, Dr. Moodie has proven to be a staunch advocate for equitable educational opportunities for children with autism and a committed ally to providing them with experiences akin to their neurotypical peers. Under her leadership, SFACS has become a nurturing environment where students with unique needs can flourish and realize their full potential; and

WHEREAS, opened in the summer of 2009 with 81 students, SFACS caters to students on the severe end of the autism spectrum. Dr. Moodie's dedication has seen the school grow significantly, marked by the opening in early 2021 of a state-of-the-art, 60,000-square-foot academic building on a 5-acre campus in the City of Hialeah. This expansion reflects Dr. Moodie's deep commitment to enhancing educational and behavioral programs for her students, while also reaching out to the broader autism community in South Florida through various initiatives like counseling, advocacy, and community workshops; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, Dr. Moodie expanded her mission by founding three non-profit organizations: South Florida Autism Center (SFA-CTR), Villages of South Florida Autism (VSFA), and Friends of South Florida Autism (FSFA). Together, these organizations realize her vision of a comprehensive support system for individuals with autism and their families. SFA-CTR, co-located with SFACS, currently offers out-of-school services and adult day training, with plans for further expansion; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Moodie's efforts extend beyond SFACS, as she actively explores opportunities to grow the charter school in Dade County and form partnerships with local nonprofits for employment opportunities for her students. She has also formed partnerships with local nonprofits, including Ken's Crew, to provide jobs to our young adults. In addition, she is exploring partnerships with local organizations and municipalities to create residential opportunities. Her commitment to research is evident in her doctoral thesis on communication methods in autism and her ongoing research endeavors. She continues to explore research opportunities to further the study of the best interventions for this population. Dr. Moodie recently created and will soon publish, *Flexible Instruction in the Natural Environment (F.I.N.E.)*; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Moodie's leadership extends to the broader educational community. She serves on various committees and boards, contributes to the Educational Advisory Committee for Miami Dade College and the Parent Advisory Board for the University of Alabama, and is the Vice Chair of the National Autism Accelerator for Autism Charter Schools (NAACS). She is also a member of CHIEF, a private network upon which executive women rely to raise their leadership status; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Moodie's work has garnered significant recognition, including the Educational Leadership Award from the UM NSU Card Center (2021). She has been recognized as one of South Florida's Most Influential & Prominent Black Women in Business by Legacy Magazine (2011). She is also an author who continues her advocacy through literature, including her first book, "I am Still Like You: Autism Through My Point of View," which offers personal insights into the autism experience and her upcoming children's book, "Walking in My Shoes, Through My Eyes;"

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 24-030 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing the outstanding work of South Florida Autism Charter School and its remarkable leader and founder Dr. Tamara Moodie in support of students and families touched by autism.

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

Presented this seventeenth day of April, A.D. 2024

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR

ATTEST:

Secretary