

NEWS

AS PROPOSED BY VICE CHAIR PERLA TABARES HANTMAN, SCHOOL BOARD UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES COMMEMORATION OF 106th ANNIVERSARY OF CUBAN INDEPENDENCE

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NEWS RELEASE FROM PERLA TABARES HANTMAN

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As proposed by Vice Chair Perla Tabares Hantman, the Miami-Dade School Board unanimously voted to join the Cuban-American community as it commemorates May 20, 2008, as the 106th anniversary of the Independence of Cuba and to celebrate civic values and democratic principles throughout the District.

It was on May 20, 1902, after a long and courageous battle against Spain and a brief occupation by the United States, that Cuba gained its independence. Throughout the late 1800's, Cuban patriots, including Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, Antonio Maceo, Máximo Gómez, Calixto García, Tomás Estrada Palma and José Martí, fought for Cuban independence from Spain's colonial rule.

Martí, the most well-known voice for Cuban independence, organized the Cuban Revolutionary Party. He, along with several other patriots, garnered support for the cause from around the island colony and throughout Latin America, the U.S. and Europe. Martí paid the ultimate price for freedom with his life during a battle against Spanish troops at Dos Ríos, Cuba, on May 19, 1895 – seven years and one day before Cuba achieved independence. Martí's death served as inspiration to the cause for freedom and inspired feelings of nationalism throughout the island.

By commemorating the 106th anniversary of Cuban Independence, the District also celebrates the rich Cuban culture and the long historical ties between Cuba and the United States. Following the Spanish-American War, our nation assisted Cuban nationals in their efforts to develop a strong and independent country. The U.S. contributed to Cuba's economic recovery and to the restructuring of Cuba's government, including its judicial and educational systems. Since 1959, Cubans have received refuge and protection by the U.S. and, in turn, have contributed much to our country and community.

"Our students need to understand and learn about the many cultures represented in our community," said Hantman. "As a school district, we must promote meaningful relations among our diverse student and staff populations. By honoring Cuban Independence, we give students a better understanding of the history and culture of the Cuban people."

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