

# VALUES MATTER MIAMI

January 2018

Volume 2, Issue 5

Pursuit of Excellence: Doing your best with the talents you have, striving toward a goal and not giving up.

## *Pursuit of Excellence*

This month we are challenging schools to think about creating an environment where excellence thrives. A “never give up” attitude can be instrumental in one’s drive for success. It is important for students to understand the power they have over their own success. All of us were born with strengths and talents. It is important to help our students find their strengths and help them pursue them to the best of their ability. Even when there are roadblocks along the way, we must encourage students to ask for help and learn from their mistakes.

The January focus on the Pursuit of Excellence is a great time to teach students about a growth mindset. It is important to understand that one’s thoughts and beliefs greatly impact their ability to achieve. Students who engage in negative self-talk will have a hard time pursuing excellence. Now more than ever, the pursuit of excellence matters.

The beginning of a new year is a great time for students and staff to pursue excellence through the establishment of new goals and the revisiting of old ones. Encourage your school community to persevere in the pursuit of their goals. Teaching children about setting and achieving goals is a powerful lesson that they can carry with them throughout their lives. Help students to stay focused on the pursuit of their goals and to plan action steps to attaining their desired outcomes. As you begin 2018, continue to make values matter in your school and welcome the new year by making the pursuit of excellence a priority.



## *Congratulations*

### *Pursuit of Excellence School of the Year 2016-2017*

Jose Marti MAST 6-12 Academy is a magnet school that was recently named to the U.S. News and World Report’s Top 100 Schools. The school constantly sets high goals for their student body and finds creative ways to challenge the students to strive for excellence in meeting these goals.

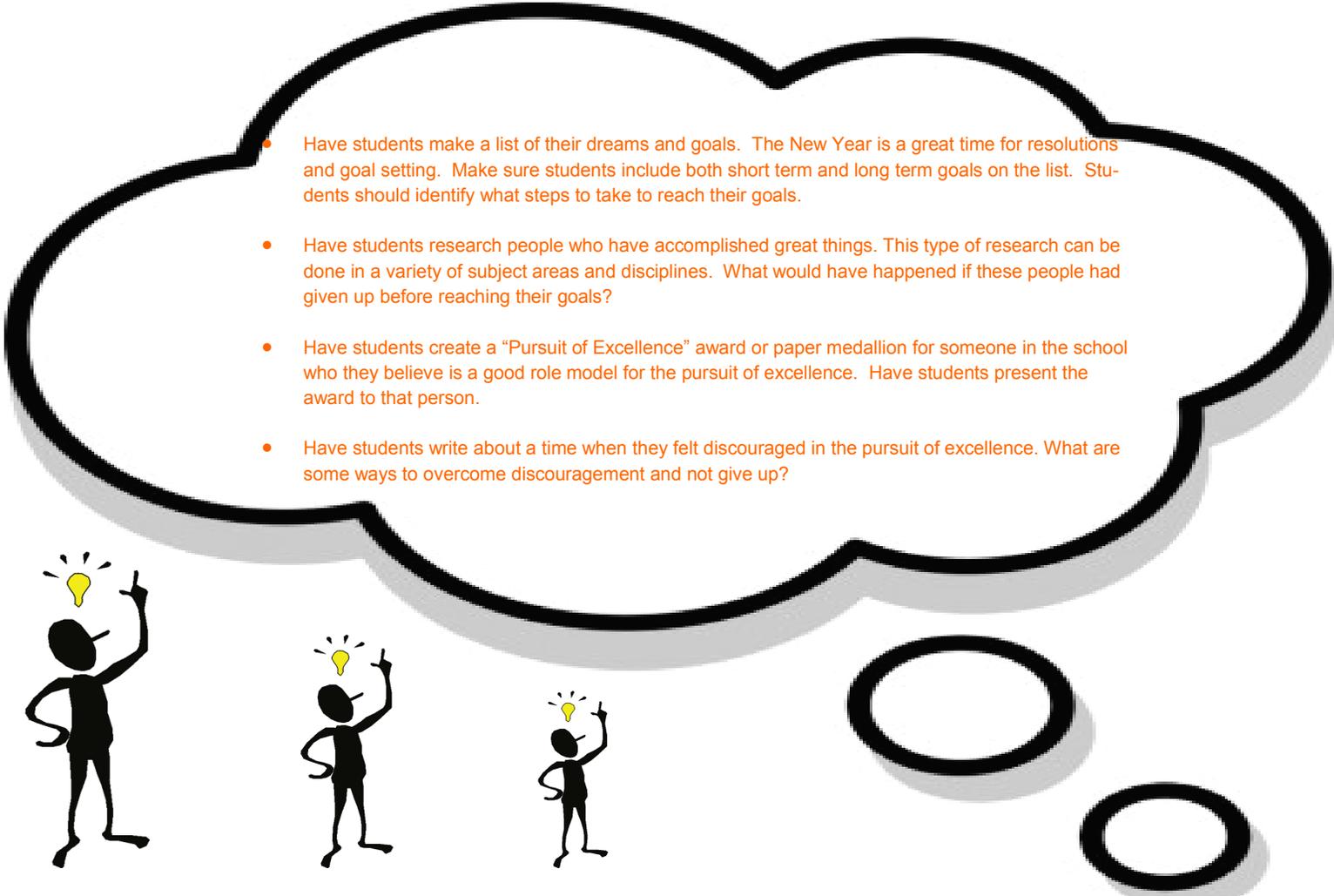


- Florida Jewish History Month
- Human Trafficking Prevention Month
- National Thank You Month
- January 15 - Dr. Martin Luther King Day

Excellence is the  
gradual result of  
always striving to  
do better.

— Pat Riley

# Idea CORNER

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- Have students make a list of their dreams and goals. The New Year is a great time for resolutions and goal setting. Make sure students include both short term and long term goals on the list. Students should identify what steps to take to reach their goals.
  - Have students research people who have accomplished great things. This type of research can be done in a variety of subject areas and disciplines. What would have happened if these people had given up before reaching their goals?
  - Have students create a "Pursuit of Excellence" award or paper medallion for someone in the school who they believe is a good role model for the pursuit of excellence. Have students present the award to that person.
  - Have students write about a time when they felt discouraged in the pursuit of excellence. What are some ways to overcome discouragement and not give up?

- Ask students to brainstorm ideas for encouraging others to keep trying. Include self-encouragement in the conversation and discuss ways people can motivate themselves through positive self-talk.
- Have students interview leaders in their community or school to determine what it took for them to get to where they are today. Have the students discuss how the pursuit of excellence played into the leader's success.
- Have students brainstorm problem behaviors that they may exhibit which get in the way of their success. Have students write the behaviors on a piece of paper (cursing, skipping, tardiness, procrastination, etc.) of what they need to stop doing in order to be successful. Then walk around the room with a garbage can and have students throw away their negative behaviors. Check in with the students the following week to assess how they are doing with their goals.
- The beginning of a new calendar year is a good time for goal setting. Have students fill out a goal setting form and place it where they can frequently see it.
- Create an excellence chart with your class. On the left side write "Excellence is..." and on the right side write "Excellence is not..." After you have completed the two sides, decorate the chart and hang it up.
- Pair students up to be pursuit of excellence partners. Have the students create goals for the month together. At the end of each week have the students work together to review the progress toward the goal and give feedback and encouragement for staying focused on the goal.

## Great Reminders for Children:

- Always give 100%.
- Let go of negative thoughts.
- Keep persisting no matter how difficult things become.
- If it's worth having, it's worth working for.
- Remove "can't" from your vocabulary.
- Practice the skills you want to do well.
- Learn from your mistakes.
- Never, never, never give up.

# Congratulations!

Values Matter Miami Pursuit of Excellence Winners 2016-2017



2016-17

**Elementary Student Winner**

**Sean Merritt**

**Greenglade Elementary School**



2016-17

**Secondary Student Winner**

**Augusto Munoz**

**Hialeah Senior High School**



2016-17

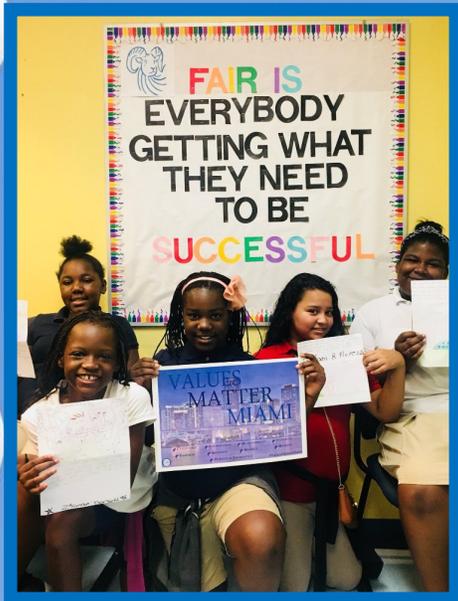
**Staff Winner**

**Ms. Cynthia Cooper**

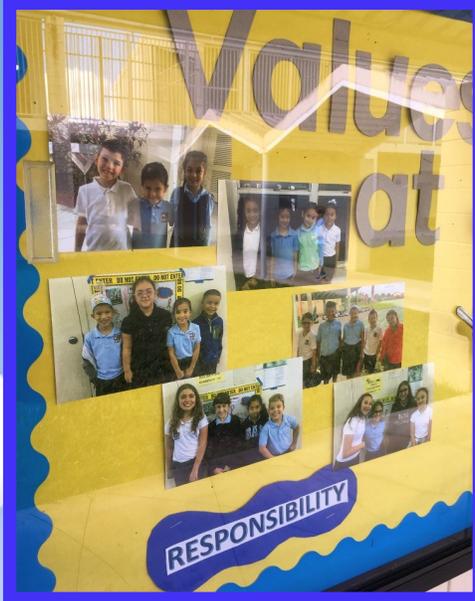
**Redland Middle School**



# Values Matter Miami in Action December 2017



Arcola Lake Elementary School



Jane S. Roberts K-8 Center



Phillis Wheatley Elementary School



Howard Drive Elementary



David Lawrence Jr. K-8 Center



Henry S. West Laboratory School



Miami Lakes Educational Center