Legislation Details

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Title:	PROPOSED RESOLUTION				

HONORING MEGHAN RICE FOR RECEIVING THE GOLDEN APPLE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

WHEREAS, Meghan Rice is a kindergarten teacher at Willard Elementary School in Evanston, Illinois. Willard is part of Evanston/Skokie School District 65. On May 3, 2021, she received the prestigious Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching, one of only ten teachers in Illinois to be so honored this year; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Rice was selected out of a record-setting 708 nominations of Pre-K to third-grade teachers. “These outstanding teachers transform the lives of students, schools, and communities over the course of their careers. Their resilience and perseverance in this past year - and their career - has been nothing short of amazing,” said Golden Apple President Alan Mather; and

WHEREAS, in announcing the award, Golden Apple noted that Rice builds a classroom of respect and inclusion and looks for ways to expand her capacity as an educator to support and uplift the livelihoods of the children and families that she serves. To ignite student interest, she shares a connection to bridge their previous learning or lived experiences. For example, her students relate to the classroom mascot Mabel the Elephant and she’ll use Mabel in an example to share a teaching point - using words, gestures, and visual charts. She is intentional in including multiple learning modalities to help support both language acquisition and the application of skills. She sees her students thrive when they know what they are doing and why they are doing it. Rice worked to ensure her school’s literacy curriculum was culturally responsive and relied on that framework to build a system to support both monolingual and bilingual K-2 teachers, especially with the shift to remote learning during the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, when asked about what motivated her during the pandemic, Rice responded the resilience of children and the “connectedness” that she feels with her students. She acknowledged mornings when it was hard to get out of bed but knew not just that the students needed her, but that she needed them as well. She describes her magic power as being able to help children feel loved, even when she couldn’t be with them in person. She knows and incorporates the value of making learning fun through singing, dancing, and playing; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Rice is also an independent recording artist. She loves to sing and makes up songs from the things the students are learning in class. When she is working on her own music, she brings it to class and during free times, asks the students if they like the melody or whether she should sing something this way or another way. When she uses their suggestions, the music becomes theirs; and

WHEREAS, Rice received the award from Golden Apple representatives in a surprise meeting at the school with her fellow teachers, administrators, staff, District 65 Superintendent Devon Horton, and Illinois state representative Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz. Her husband, Marques Rice, and five-year-old son Jaxon, who will start kindergarten in the fall, were also on hand to share the celebration; and

WHEREAS, as a 2021 Award recipient, Ms. Rice will join the ranks of Master Teachers supporting the

increased workforce and improved teaching in our schools. Award recipients become Fellows of the Golden Apple Academy of Educators, a community of educators who play an important role in preparing the next generation of teachers in the Golden Apple Scholars and Accelerators programs; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County, honors Meghan Rice, and herewith expresses its sincere gratitude for the invaluable contributions she has made to her students and education community and, by extension, to the Citizens of Cook County, Illinois; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this Resolution be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that an official copy of the same be tendered to Ms. Meghan Rice.

Sponsors: LARRY SUFFREDIN, TONI PRECKWINKLE (President), FRANK J. AGUILAR, ALMA E. ANAYA, LUIS ARROYO JR, SCOTT R. BRITTON, JOHN P. DALEY, DENNIS DEER, BRIDGET DEGNEN, BRIDGET GAINER, BRANDON JOHNSON, BILL LOWRY, DONNA MILLER, STANLEY MOORE, KEVIN B. MORRISON, SEAN M. MORRISON, PETER N. SILVESTRI, DEBORAH SIMS

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