

**First Place: Jasmine Perez, Grade 7  
South Miami K-8 Center, City of Miami**

If I were elected Mayor, I would diligently work to form our city into a better place. My responsibility is to ensure that a variety of voices are heard. With the help of Home Rule, it grants our city the capability to make rules without asking for the state or federal approval. We were able to determine what to do with issues such as: affordable housing and healthcare access.

As the Mayor, I would highlight the need for affordable housing. High rent prices are the leading cause of families struggling to find houses that they can afford. To start off, I would be collaborating with public-private partnerships in building affordable houses to lower prices. Lastly, I would be enhancing housing vouchers by increasing assistance to help low-income families.

My following is healthcare access. I would be addressing the growing concern about healthcare access by investing in expanding more mobile clinics, making it more accessible to individuals in areas that may not have access to care. Finally, high healthcare costs. I would decrease the costs to help people get the treatment they need. My focus would be on preventive care to seize issues early. Prioritizing routine check-ups, screenings and vaccinations can help avoid health issues before they become expensive to treat.

As your Mayor, I would sort out issues such as affordable housing and healthcare access using Home Rule to make our city a better place. As Mayor, I would hope to provide my city with a voice.

**Second Place: Eduard Malaescu, Grade 7  
Indian Ridge Middle School, Town of Davie**

If I were elected Mayor, it would be a great honor to serve the people in my community who entrusted me to represent their interests and make critical decisions on their behalf.

The first thing I would focus on coming into the job is to ensure there are adequate channels of communication with my community to share their needs, ideas and perspectives. Regular communication through town hall meetings, online platforms and frequent public appearances will would me to build trust and strong relationships with my constituents.

Just as important would be building a team of talented and motivated people to help shape the vision of the city and help me execute it. The vision for my city would be citizen-focused, emphasizing improved standards of living, equal opportunities, safety and sustainability.

As Mayor, I would use the power Home Rule provides to us. Together with my team, we would implement a local housing program meant to support low-income families because 15 percent of the people in Fort Lauderdale are homeless. Furthermore, I would incentivize the development of mixed-income housing and redesign bus and shuttle routes to serve underserved neighborhoods. Finally, I would prioritize funding for programs that promote community policing and address the root causes of crime.

Barack Obama once said "We did not come to fear the future. We came here to shape it." I fully agree with this sentiment, we should not fear the future, it is in our hands to decide what comes next.

**Third Place: Natalie Hernandez, Grade 8  
Henderson Hammock Charter School, City of Tampa**

If I were elected Mayor, my primary goal would be to improve the quality of life for all residents by establishing a thriving, safe and inclusive community. I would prioritize investing in education, building a strong local economy and promoting environmental sustainability.

To begin with, education is a key aspect of any successful area. I would work closely with schools to improve educational outcomes by increasing school funding, enhancing teacher training and promoting tutoring programs. By fostering a strong educational system, we empower future generations to contribute to the community and succeed.

Secondly, I would focus on economic growth by attracting new businesses, supporting entrepreneurs and ensuring that all citizens have access to jobs. By offering motivation to businesses and investing in workforce development programs, we can create a more prosperous city. Additionally, I would work to ensure that roads, public transit and technology are updated to meet the needs of all citizens and businesses.

Lastly, prioritizing environmental sustainability is crucial for all citizens. My administration would work to reduce the city's carbon footprint by recycling, increasing the use of renewable energy and creating more green spaces. By implementing urban planning, we can ensure the city grows in a way that benefits both people and the environment.

In conclusion, as Mayor, my vision would center on creating a thriving, inclusive and sustainable community where all residents can prosper. Through collaboration, planning, and commitment, we can build resilient, brighter futures for our community.