

First Place: Rawy Soliman, Grade 6
Seminole Science Charter School, City of Lake Mary

If I were elected mayor, I would work tirelessly to make my city a better place. Orlando is growing fast, with busy roads, new buildings, and families from many different backgrounds. As mayor, my responsibility would be to make sure all voices are heard and respected. Thanks to Home Rule, our city can create its own rules that best fit our community, and I would use that power to improve life for everyone who calls Orlando home. I would focus on three priorities: keeping our city safe, protecting the environment, and supporting kids and families.

First, I would make neighborhoods safer by expanding after-school programs, sports, and clubs so kids have positive, safe places to go. I would work with police, parents, and students to prevent crime, bullying, and gun violence. I would also push for safer streets, sidewalks, and crosswalks so people can walk, bike, and drive safely.

Second, I would work to protect Orlando's environment. I would add more parks, plant trees, and keep our lakes clean and healthy. I would support recycling and better public transportation, so our air stays clean and traffic moves more smoothly.

Finally, I would support families by improving schools and community centers and backing affordable housing, so more families can afford to live and thrive in Orlando. Being mayor means listening to everyone and making fair decisions that help the whole community. Together, we can build a safer, greener Orlando for all.

Second Place: Tanish Arora, Grade 7
Seminole Science Charter School, City of Lake Mary

If I were elected mayor, I would focus on youth engagement so that young voices can help shape our city's future, tackle the present-day challenges of seniors solving their unique needs, and make life easy at the same time, ensuring that my city is future-ready by integrating endurance into long-term city development.

I would use Home Rule to make local decisions without having to wait for state approval, allowing me to address the community needs efficiently. I would create a youth advisory council to let the youth share their ideas with city leaders and learn about local government, which would be made possible faster through Home Rule. I would use a mobile app that would allow citizens to share their opinions on spending. This promotes trust and transparency, and lays a strong foundation for addressing the community's challenges.

I would expand services for seniors, including affordable transportation, wellness programs and social activities to reduce isolation. I would also create intergenerational programs where youth and elderly connect through mentorship and community projects. These projects would help seniors stay active, teach young people valuable skills, and build respect, friendship and stronger community.

Florida often floods because of heavy rains and rising sea levels. I would start a sustainability program that builds green infrastructure, such as rain gardens, wetlands, and tree-grass filled sidewalks.

In conclusion, as mayor, I would unite the youth and elderly, maintain sustainability, and use Home Rule to build an inclusive, vibrant, future-ready city where every resident's voice matters.

**Third Place: Lorenzo Shadeed, Grade 6
Miami Arts Studio 6-12, City of Miami**

If I was elected mayor of Miami-Dade, I would focus on addressing problems that affect people every day of their lives, specifically in traffic, flooding, and the increasingly high cost of living. These issues make life more difficult for students, families, and workers across our county.

One major problem in Miami-Dade is traffic. Long drives waste time and harm the air and our environment. As mayor, I would improve public transportation and redesign dangerous intersections near schools. I would use local data to decide where buses, bike lanes, and traffic changes are needed most, rather than implementing one plan for every area.

Another problem is flooding, especially after heavy rain. Neighborhoods get damaged and families worry during the hurricane season. To fix this, I would improve drainage systems and make neighborhoods stronger, so families stay safe before storms hit.

The cost of living is currently very high and is pushing families out of the county. Many people who work full-time and have a 9-to-5 job still struggle to afford housing. To address this, I would invest in affordable housing and enforce strict renter protections to prevent families from being priced out of their own neighborhoods.

Home Rule makes all of this possible because it allows local officials to make local decisions. Miami-Dade has problems that need solutions created by people who live here. I would use Home Rule to listen to residents, take action that improves their daily life, and create a county where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.