

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 454

By Herron

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Elisa Luna, principal of Inskip Elementary School, on receiving her doctorate degree in education from the University of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pay tribute to those courageous Tennesseans who have persevered through tragedy and overcome obstacles to attain the ultimate degree in their chosen professions; and

WHEREAS, Elisa Luna, principal of Inskip Elementary School, recently received her doctorate degree in leadership studies in education from the University of Tennessee after seven years of hard work and dedication, with personal and professional tragedy intervening; and

WHEREAS, on February 10, 2010, Ms. Luna was the victim of senseless violence while working in her job as principal of Inskip Elementary School in Knoxville; through determination and fortitude, Ms. Luna overcame many obstacles and returned to her duties at Inskip within six months for the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year; and

WHEREAS, a mere fifteen months after the incident, Ms. Luna and her colleague, Amy Brace, who was also a victim of violence in the same incident, participated in the graduate hooding ceremony at the University of Tennessee and officially received their doctorate degrees, a truly inspirational ending to an affair that began so tragically; and

WHEREAS, having worked extensively in the full-service school program that provides much needed services to at-risk students in elementary schools and pre-schools, Ms. Luna naturally chose full-service schools as the subject of her dissertation; this bright, creative

woman was so thorough in drafting her dissertation that not one single correction was made in her final defense of it; and

WHEREAS, Elisa Luna has served the students of Inskip Elementary School in Knoxville with integrity and compassion as their principal since January 2004; and

WHEREAS, during her productive tenure at Inskip, Ms. Luna has demonstrated incredible enthusiasm and an uncanny ability to relate to children from all walks of life, and she is widely credited with turning the once failing school around; and

WHEREAS, Elisa Luna distinguished herself as an innovative leader who triumphed in her quest to bring Inskip Elementary School through a difficult period and to make great strides in improving the quality of education for her students; and

WHEREAS, determined to have Inskip removed from the watch list for low-achieving schools, Ms. Luna and her dedicated staff raised standards and set goals, efforts which resulted in the removal of Inskip from the high-priority list; and

WHEREAS, throughout this process, Inskip students made more than twenty-percent increases in their TCAP achievement scores in reading, math, science, and social studies, the greatest gains in Knox County and the seventh greatest in the state; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Luna graciously gave all the credit for this tremendous accomplishment to her hard-working faculty, which she calls the “best group of teachers in Knox County”; and

WHEREAS, in a selfless gesture so typical of this fine educator, Ms. Luna issued a statement following the incident to reassure her students that she was alright, that they should not be afraid, and that their lives would soon return to normalcy; and

WHEREAS, Elisa Luna received her bachelor's degree from Middle Tennessee State University and her master's and Ed.S. degrees from the University of Tennessee; she previously served as an assistant principal at Sarah Moore Greene Magnet School, an administrative assistant at Inskip, the curriculum and instruction facilitator at Christenberry Elementary, and a special education teacher at Green Academy; and

WHEREAS, in a most fitting gesture, a new award recognizing Tennessee principals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty for their schools will be named in Elisa Luna's honor; and

WHEREAS, sponsored by the Education Consumers Foundation, the Luna Award will recognize principals "who have helped students to be all they can be," in addition to honoring Ms. Luna for her ongoing service as an academic leader; and

WHEREAS, the Luna Award represents Ms. Luna's second affiliation with the Education Consumers Foundation, as she was one of eighteen principals statewide recognized in 2008 by the Foundation for excellence in advancing students academically, as measured by the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System; and

WHEREAS, the Luna Award is a fitting testimonial to this noble and gifted educator and her life of purpose and commitment to quality education for all children; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Elisa Luna on receiving her doctorate degree in education from the University of Tennessee, praise the example of courage, perseverance, and fortitude that she has provided for her students, colleagues, and fellow Tennesseans, commend her exemplary service as principal of Inskip Elementary School, and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.