

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION GRANT APPLICATION FOR "HEALTHY EATING RESEARCH, BUILDING EVIDENCE TO PREVENT CHILDHOOD OBESITY", SUBMITTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI MILLER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, TO BE COORDINATED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ANNUAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY/WALKSAFE PROGRAMS

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

LINK TO DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPROVED SAFETY THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT BY IMPLEMENTING PREVENTATIVE MEASURES AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Background

Throughout the years, the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine (UM), under the direction of Dr. Gillian Hotz, has partnered with the District to develop and participate in programs to improve student safety in areas of high pedestrian traffic instances. These successful programs include the annual WalkSafe and Walk Your Child To School Day events. UM, in collaboration with the School District and Miami Dade County Public Schools Community Traffic Safety Team, is seeking to continue to decrease the number of pedestrian injuries and fatalities of elementary school aged children as well as increase their physical activity levels by encouraging more children to walk to and from school every day.

Health/Safety Proposal

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has recently provided an open call for Healthy Eating Research proposals. The program supports research on environmental and policy strategies to promote healthy eating among children to prevent childhood obesity, especially among low-income and racial/ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity. UM would like to submit a grant proposal piloting a study that would increase student participation in the school breakfast program along with implementation of the WalkSafe Program, to increase physical activity levels by encouraging more children to walk to and from school as well as increase access to healthy foods. The project would be piloted in a number of schools located in the portion of Liberty City at highest risk for elementary age students walking to/from school. If successful, the goal is to implement the program on a District-wide basis.

The purpose of this grant, if awarded, would be to evaluate environmental strategies (components of the WalkSafe Program) with food related policies (the current breakfast program in the School District). The hope is to increase parent involvement that in turn would increase the amount of students participating in the school breakfast program and walking safely to school, thereby increasing physical activity.

It is recommended that the Board endorse the grant application for development and implementation of the safety program on a pilot basis, starting in October 2008.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MS. PERLA TABARES HANTMAN VICE CHAIR: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant Application for “Healthy Eating Research, Building Evidence To Prevent Childhood Obesity”, to be submitted by The University Of Miami Miller School Of Medicine. Once developed the Program will be implemented in conjunction with The Annual Walk To School Day/Walksafe Programs on a pilot program basis, starting in October 2008.