

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: STUDENT NUTRITION EDUCATION

**COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL
RELATIONS**

**LINK TO DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPROVE STUDENT HEALTH**

Throughout the years, the Miami-Dade County School Board has approved numerous initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of our students. From the vision and hearing screening for all students, which I first proposed in 1997, to the comprehensive Wellness Policy implemented in 2006, the District has been at the forefront of student health issues. Additionally, Miami-Dade County Public Schools has taken steps to prevent childhood obesity by improving the healthy food options offered to our students, increasing physical education requirements, and incorporating family nutrition classes in the Parent Academy health and wellness subject strand.

Along with these measures, the review of nutrition education requirements, particularly at the elementary school level, should be updated to incorporate current nutritional findings and new state requirements. House Bill 967 passage in 2007 stated that physical education means and should include" the development of knowledge and skills regarding nutrition and physical fitness as part of a healthy lifestyle; and the development of positive attitudes regarding sound nutrition and physical activity as a component of personal well-being."

As we know, national statistics on obesity clearly define an epidemic that experts predict will result in perhaps the first generation of Americans that will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Experts point to the fact that our youth are inactive and do not eat well. Unhealthy food choices and lack of physical activity can lead to disease, learning problems in school and school-related problems that can continue into adulthood. Teaching students at an early age the importance of a healthy diet and exercise sets the foundation for a lifetime of good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle.

This agenda item proposes to review and strengthen nutrition education requirements at the elementary school level as an important measure in preventing childhood obesity and to ensure that resource materials be provided for teachers to incorporate nutrition education into the curriculum. Additionally, elementary teachers especially should be provided opportunities for professional development in order to know how to best incorporate these skills into the curriculum.

H-7

**ACTION PROPOSED BY VICE CHAIR
PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida direct the Superintendent to:

1. review, update and strengthen the nutrition education curriculum at the elementary level, provide resource materials for teachers in the area of nutrition, incorporate professional development on nutrition education requirements as feasible; and
2. submit a report and any recommendations to strengthen the nutrition education curriculum for elementary level students, as delineated above, at the December 10, 2008 School Board meeting.