

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF EXPANDING THE WALKSAFE PROGRAM TO BENEFIT CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, AND STATUS REPORT ON THE 2009 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Expansion of the WalkSafe Program to benefit Children with special needs

The "WalkSafe" pedestrian safety program was developed by the Ryder Trauma Center at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine/Jackson Memorial Medical Center to reduce pediatric pedestrian injuries and fatalities. The WalkSafe educational Program is implemented every year to coincide with the "Walk Our Children to School Day" event in October.

In November 2009, the Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) National Partnership released a "Final Position Paper on Students with Disabilities", recommending strategies to serve students with disabilities through the Safe Routes to School programs. Based on this report, WalkSafe is proposing to expand its program and modify its curriculum to include physically and intellectually impaired children in Miami-Dade County. Field assessments will be performed by WalkSafe staff in collaboration with Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Division of Special Education (SPED) to develop a pilot curriculum for implementation at a selected school within each Region.

The schools were chosen on the basis of service to the disabled population and the feasibility of offering the program in that school. The selection was a joint effort of the WalkSafe program staff and members of the SPED. All materials created will be evaluated according to the current standards of the SRTS program.

| Region | School Name |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| Region I | Amelia Earhart Elementary |
| Region II | Biscayne Gardens Elementary |
| Region III | Auburndale Elementary |
| Region IV | Tropical Elementary |
| Region V | Gulfstream Elementary |

Status Report on the 2009 implementation of the WalkSafe program efforts and accomplishments in Miami-Dade County Public Schools:

- Educational Component:
The WalkSafe™ three-day educational curriculum is designed to develop and instill important pedestrian safety and health skills in K-5 grade students. In Miami-Dade County, 233 public and charter elementary schools taught the WalkSafe curriculum in 2009, which represents a 65% increase in the number of students reached since 2008 (see chart below).

| | |
|------|---------|
| 2007 | 70,531 |
| 2008 | 87,467 |
| 2009 | 144,061 |

- Pedestrian Safety Interventions:
WalkSafe targeted two elementary schools in Homestead to implement a Neighborhood Pedestrian Watch program. The pilot was effective in increasing participants' knowledge of traffic rules and pedestrian safety skills. WalkSafe is also planning to conduct "Pedestrian Safety Town Hall Meetings" for parents of elementary school students in Liberty City, Little Havana, and Little Haiti. These meetings will aim to equip community members with the information necessary to take action on pedestrian issues in their neighborhoods.
- Advocacy:
WalkSafe continued to advocate for pedestrian safety infrastructure improvements at elementary schools by presenting incident reports to the Division's Division of Safety and other community teams. Walkability for students was also improved by presenting data on crossing guard deficiencies to community teams and political officials.

WalkSafe program plans for the 2010-2011 school year:

- WalkSafe intends to maintain its presence in all public schools and improve its reach in charter schools during the upcoming year. The program will continue providing curriculum training and technical assistance to all elementary schools in an effort to improve pedestrian safety for all children in Miami-Dade County.
- WalkSafe staff members are also planning to develop pedestrian safety and health curriculums for students with orthopedic impairments and cognitive disabilities. The new curriculums will be piloted at five public elementary schools during the 2010-2011 school year, and will be available for widespread use in 2011.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. Endorse expanding the WalkSafe Program to benefit children with special needs; and
2. Receive the WalkSafe Status Report on the 2009 Implementation of the Program in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.