

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Vice Chair

**SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF GRANT PROPOSAL TO ENCOURAGE AND EVALUATE BICYCLE HELMET USE AT THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL, TO BE SUBMITTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI LEONARD M. MILLER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

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

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

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that childhood injuries from bicycle use are the highest among all modes of transportation, second only to automobiles, with head injuries leading the cause of death and permanent disabilities. In Florida during 2004 to 2008, traumatic brain injuries accounted for 61% of bicycle-related injury deaths and 26% of bicycle-related injury hospitalizations among children ages 5 to 14.

A well-fitted bicycle helmet is the most effective safety device available to reduce injuries and fatalities. Statistics show that non-helmeted riders are 14 times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash than helmeted riders. In fact, during 2008 in Florida, 85 of the 118 bicycle fatalities (72%) were not using helmets, and 3,719 of the 4,380 bicycle injuries (85%) were not using helmets. That year, less than 1% of the bicyclists under 16 were using helmets, as required by Florida law.

In an effort to help reverse current trends and increase helmet use, the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine (University of Miami), in collaboration with the School District, is proposing a study to encourage and evaluate bicycle helmet use in high school age students. A similar study is currently underway in Bordeaux, France, targeting adults 18 years and older.

Three to four high schools will be chosen, and student volunteers will be selected to participate during a 4-month period. These students will receive information on road safety rules and benefits of helmet use, along with free helmets. Risk behaviors of participating bicyclists will be monitored by an intelligent camera system, designed to unobtrusively and objectively capture safety-related behaviors. The camera system will be strategically installed at traffic locations to capture interactions between the student volunteers and the drivers of other vehicles, as well as traffic and safety infringements.

The grant proposal is being developed by the University of Miami for submittal to the National Institutes of Health, a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, for initial seed funds. Future proposals will expand the study and create a substantial impact on the reduction of adolescent bicycle injuries and fatalities.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse a grant proposal to encourage and evaluate bicycle helmet use at the senior high school level, to be submitted by the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine.