

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Board Member

SUBJECT: DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO DETERMINE THE BEST COURSE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF A QUALITY BIRTH TO 3 PROGRAM

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

Early research dating back to the 1930s suggested that there was little use in teaching children how to read until they had already conquered specific readiness skills, such as certain fine motor skills and the ability to tell right from left. Today, researchers know more. They know that growing up to be a reader depends mostly on the child's knowledge about language and print. A wide range of experiences with printed and spoken language, from infancy through early childhood, strongly influences a child's future success in reading. Children begin to develop their language skills in infancy. Even their babbles and coos and the ways their families speak to them before they really understand can help them to become speakers of their native tongue. When an infant shows excitement over pictures in a storybook, when a two-year-old scribbles with a crayon, when a four-year-old points out letters in a street sign—all of these actions signal a child's growing literacy development.

The more children already know about the nature and purposes of reading *before* kindergarten, the more teachers have to build on in their reading instruction. Research reveals that the children most at risk for reading difficulties in the primary grades are those who began school with less verbal skill, less phonological awareness, less letter knowledge, and less familiarity with the basic purposes and mechanisms of reading. To prepare children for reading instruction in the early grades, it is best that they be exposed to high-quality language and literacy environments in their homes, day care centers, and preschools. To that end, this item seeks to direct the Superintendent to conduct a feasibility study to determine the reasonable courses and options for implementation of a quality Birth to 3 program in Miami-Dade County.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to conduct a feasibility study to determine reasonable courses and options for implementation of a quality Birth to 3 program. The study should consider and include existing local efforts, as well as documented best practices, and be brought back to the Board by the June 2013 School Board Meeting.

Revised