

Ms. Raquel Regalado, Board Member

SUBJECT: CONDUCT MEETING WITH THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, THE JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND THE PUBLIC DEFENDER TO ESTABLISH A PARTNERSHIP, GOALS AND A FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO PROTECT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has taken a first step in safeguarding the mental health of students by partnering with the American Psychiatric Foundation; but more measures are needed. Specifically, a meaningful partnership with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Juvenile Justice Department and the Public Defender would help create a system of coordinated mental health care focusing on prevention, early intervention and treatment, and ensure continuance of services after diagnosis.

Communities need to be educated on mental health, aiming to bring hope to the children and families who believe their lives are permanently defined by a medical condition, which often can, with efficient intervention, be overcome or successfully managed.

There is a need to consider our legal ability to expand the right to assessment and intervention, and ensure there are no misuse of restraints and the unnecessary use of the Baker Act.

A functional partnership with DCF, the Juvenile Justice Department and the Public Defender would help Miami-Dade County Public Schools achieve this and prevent and positively treat mental health illnesses in our students, thus reducing crime rates, human suffering and recidivism.

This partnership could also serve as a model for our districts that seek to have a better relationship with DCF.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MS. RAQUEL REGALADO: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to conduct a meeting with the Florida Department of Children and Families, the Juvenile Justice Department and the Public Defender to establish a partnership, goals and a five-year plan to safeguard the mental health of students.