

Mr. Carlos L. Curbelo, Board Member

**SUBJECT: FEASIBILITY STUDY ON TESTING STUDENT ATHLETES
FOR HEART DISEASE**

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

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK: FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY/STABILITY**

Recent studies research has shown that sudden cardiac death (SCD) is far more prevalent among young athletes than previously thought. The American Academy of Pediatrics estimated that each year in the United States, 2,000 people under the age of 25 die from sudden cardiac arrest. Competitive athletes pose up to three times greater the risk; some estimates noting deaths in high school students as a result of cardiac arrest occurring as often as every three days. SCD is now regarded as the number 1 killer of young athletes, yet most statistics do not include the student athletes that collapse on the field and saved by the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), which suggests that actual numbers could be even higher.

Although statistics vary, it is clear that the vast majority of SCD's occur in athletes with a pre-existing, detectable condition that if identified could be treated. Routine medical history and physical examinations, generally fail to identify 60 to 80 percent of at-risk student athletes, conversely, multiple studies confirm over 90 percent of at-risk student athletes can be identified when an electrocardiogram (EKG) and/or echocardiogram (ECG) is added to a routine physical examination.

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As the fourth largest school district in the United States, our school system is flooded with talented student athletes. Studies have consistently shown that students who participate in school activities and athletic programs make higher grades and have better attendance; while encouraging our students to participate in these programs, it is our duty to ensure that those at risk do not put their health in harm's way. Currently, all students taking part in the interscholastic athletic program must participate in a Board-approved insurance program; although this is a step in the right direction, we must find ways to directly target heart disease. This item seeks to direct the Superintendent conduct a feasibility study on testing student athletes for heart disease.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MR. CARLOS L. CURBELO: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to conduct a feasibility study on testing student athletes for heart disease.