

Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT: INITIATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KNOW 2 GROW
SUSTAINABLE ORGANIC COMMUNITY GARDENING
PROGRAM**

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

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

In neighborhoods across the country community gardens have become a powerful tool for promoting learning, healthy living, environmental stewardship, and social and generational connections. A number of studies credit community gardens with raising the values of surrounding properties, reducing crime, and improving the diets of many whom otherwise would not have access to fresh fruits and vegetables, particularly in lower income areas.

In Miami-Dade county community gardens are beginning to emerge in neighborhoods like Miami-Beach, North Miami, Little River and Cutler Bay adding opportunities for citizens to establish relationships and strengthen neighborhood bonds across cultural barriers. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is committed to improving the communities of which we are part, and to expanding opportunities for students to engage in hands-on learning. The development of sustainable community gardens on District-owned property provides such an opportunity.

Therefore, we will be developing the Know 2 Grow Sustainable Organic Community Gardening Program. Staff will be exploring the legal, safety and liability issues associated with engaging in such a venture, at locations deemed appropriate by the District. Subject to addressing all relevant concerns, staff may launch a pilot program and/or issue a Request for Information associated with this initiative. Interest of individuals, organizations, clubs, or other entities will be sought to develop and maintain sustainable community gardens utilizing organic principles on District-owned sites and incorporating opportunities for student engagement.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida endorse the development of the Know 2 Grow Sustainable Organic Community Gardening Program utilizing appropriate District-owned properties.