

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK: SCHOOL/DISTRICT LEADERSHIP**

Recent media reports about incidents of alleged domestic and sexual violence involving players in the National Football League and other high-profile incidents in our own community, have highlighted the importance of education, awareness and victim assistance in order to reduce these incidents. As we know, domestic and sexual violence can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, income or other factors and it seriously affects children.

In fact, every year more than 3 million children witness domestic violence in their homes. Children who live in homes where there is domestic violence also suffer abuse or neglect at high rates (30 – 60%) and they are more likely to have health problems including becoming sick more often and being more tired, lethargic and depressed. In addition, one in four women will experience domestic or sexual violence in their lifetime causing lost work time, higher health care costs, and other serious consequences for their own quality of life. Clearly, these types of violence have an impact on students and our employees who may be involved in them.

There are many resources available in this community for victims of domestic and sexual violence, including a 24-hour Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Hotline, shelters for victims and their children, and a special domestic and sexual violence division of the Miami-Dade Circuit Court. School Board employees also may use Domestic and Sexual Violence Leave if necessary pursuant to School Board Policy. There are also numerous government agencies and non-profit advocacy organizations who are engaged in outreach and awareness programs in addition to providing assistance to domestic and sexual violence victims.

This item requests that the School Board direct the Superintendent and School Board Attorney to review current domestic and sexual violence laws and School Board policies, as well as the District's awareness and educational efforts, and provide a report with recommendations to enhance or improve our efforts to assist in reducing domestic and sexual violence and its effects in our community and upon our students and employees. Additionally, this item asks that the District's Code of Student Conduct be reviewed and recommendations be made that address any concerns that exist as a procedural, or otherwise, barrier to ensuring a safe learning environment for all students.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent and School Board Attorney to:

- a) review current domestic and sexual violence laws and School Board policies, as well as the District's awareness and educational efforts, and provide a report with recommendations to enhance or improve our efforts to address this issue on behalf of our students and employees; and
- b) review the District's Code of Student Conduct and make recommendations that address any concerns that exist as procedural, or otherwise, barriers to ensuring a safe learning environment for all students and employees.