

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Vice Chair

**SUBJECT: MINDFULNESS PROFESSIONAL AND CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT**

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

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

Mindfulness means maintaining an ongoing awareness of our thoughts, feelings, and surrounding environment. Mindfulness involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we're sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future.

In recent years, the practice of mindfulness has entered the American mainstream in part through the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn and his Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Program, which he launched at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in 1979. Since that time, thousands of studies have documented the physical and mental health benefits of mindfulness in general and MBSR in particular, inspiring countless programs to adapt the MBSR model for schools, prisons, hospitals, veterans centers, sports, and the military.

Research studies have shown that practicing mindfulness, even for just a few weeks, can bring a variety of physical, psychological, and social benefits, regardless of age. Benefits extend across many different settings. Scientific research has found that Mindfulness changes our brains by increasing the overall density of gray matter in regions linked to learning, memory, and empathy. A variety of medical studies suggest that Mindfulness helps us tune-out distractions and improve our memory and attention skills. There's scientific evidence that teaching Mindfulness in the classroom reduces behavior problems and aggression among students and enhances their levels of happiness and ability to pay attention and focus. Further, the study and practice of Mindfulness also helps to reduce anger, hostility, and mood disturbances in teens by increasing their awareness of their thoughts and emotions.

This practice is not just for children. It has been demonstrated that teachers trained in Mindfulness also record lower blood pressure, a reduction in negative emotions, anxiety, and symptoms of depression. The converse is true in that teachers trained in Mindfulness consistently demonstrate a greater degree of compassion and empathy. Recently, The University of Miami hosted a Mindful Miami Conference featuring world-renown speakers, including our own Superintendent, who shared their various areas of expertise and applied knowledge to the task of teaching, learning, and application.

This item seeks to request the Superintendent to explore the adoption of Mindfulness practices to include professional development for administrators, teachers, and employees, as well as its use with student learners and relevant applications to classroom practices and curriculum.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida direct the Superintendent to explore the adoption of Mindfulness practices to include professional development for administrators, teachers, and employees, as well as its use with student learners and relevant applications to classroom practices and curriculum.