

Dr. Martin Karp, Board Member

SUBJECT: STAND-UP DESKS

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, EVALUATION, AND TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC

BLUEPRINT: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS & INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS

The research is clear that standing is far healthier than sitting. Doctors are urging the millions of people who work at a desk all day to stand up or walk around the office. Dr. Max Gomez reported, "Our couch-potato lifestyle is killing us at about the same rate as smoking." A number of studies have shown that prolonged sitting is linked to an increased risk of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, cancer and even early death.

"Smoking certainly is a major cardiovascular risk factor, and sitting can be equivalent in many cases," said Dr. David Coven, a cardiologist at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center. Some people have begun using combination treadmill desks at work in an effort to contract muscles and improve blood flow.

As a result of these statements by medical professionals and the latest research findings, stand-up desks are becoming a popular choice in school classrooms. Stand-up school desks help students remain focused while allowing them to stand and burn-off energy. For students, it's not sitting or standing, but a position that enables improved breathing and leg movement. Test scores are showing 10 to 15 percent increases in schools with standing desks as an option. Even the White House has started using stand-up desks for their employees.

Across the nation, schools are experimenting with the stand-up desk where students can lean against adjustable stands. A stand-up desk is a tool for students who tend to be more active. With growing numbers of students who take medication to address hyperactivity, stand-up desks may help address hyperactivity as well. Researchers have found that the best learning takes place when students are able to move their bodies throughout the day, consistently and frequently.

Standing "actually improved attention, on-task behavior, alertness and classroom engagement," said Dr. Monica Wendel, director of the Center for Community Health Development at the Texas A & M Health Science Center. Also, desks, called "stand-biased" because they encourage standing, have been paired with stools that match the height of each desk allowing students to be at the same height, regardless of whether they were sitting or standing. "With a stand-biased desk, you walk in and you're at the right height," Dr. Wendel said. "You can change between sitting and standing with little effort...transitioning between postures frequently."

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. MARTIN KARP:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to:

1. Explore on a limited basis the feasibility of using stand-up school desks; and,
2. Provide a response before the July 13, 2016 Miami-Dade School Board Meeting.