

Dr. Lawrence Feldman, Board Member

SUBJECT: DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, EVALUATION AND TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

As more and more students interact digitally with content, one another, and various communities, the concept of digital citizenship becomes increasingly important. Digital citizenship is a broad topic relating to the safe and ethical use of digital tools. There are a measure of skills required to be a part of a global society which extends into the daily use of online collaboration and communication tools. Digital citizenship includes awareness of everything from plagiarizing information found on the web, to cyberbullying and the reporting instances of such, to being aware of one's digital footprint while interacting online. Empowering students with knowledge of their rights and responsibilities online can help them avoid pitfalls that can lead to negative or even dangerous consequences now and in the future.

With the onset of the 'Bring Your Own Device' initiative and work towards reducing the digital divide in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), digital citizenship education and awareness becomes increasingly important and necessary. The classroom of today features students who are connected globally with access to classroom technology and their own personal Internet-connected devices and, as such, M-DCPS has initiated related policies to address technology use and online behavior through the development of School Board Policy 7540.03 and the Code of Student Conduct. As nation-wide leaders in creating 21st Century classrooms, M-DCPS is to be commended for a responsible roll out in terms of technology acquisition and implementation and its concurrent development of related policy. School Board Policy 7540.03 Student Responsible Use of Technology, Social Media, and District Network Systems outlines the expectations of students as digital citizens and their responsibility as users, addressing areas such as the transmission of materials in violation of local, State, and Federal laws, access to inappropriate sites or materials (to include explicit text or files), and cyber-bullying, etc. Further, the M-DCPS policy provides for a written agreement to be signed by all student users (and their parents if they are minors) annually, or at least at the time of enrollment, to abide by the terms and conditions of the policy and its administrative procedures and guidelines. Despite similar measures, students nation-wide are increasingly engaging in troubling on-line behaviors that jeopardize their safety and place their digital footprints at-risk. Students must be informed of the consequences of such behaviors, which can range from rejection of college admissions, long-term employer scrutinization, loss of possible employment, and up to the fullest extent of personal harm to themselves or others.

This item seeks to authorize the Superintendent to initiate a Digital Citizenship awareness campaign to educate all students, parents/guardians, of their rights and responsibilities as digital citizens as outlined in School Board Policy 7540.03 and The Code of Student Conduct. A highly engaging and informative campaign shall serve to fully educate and remind students of both long term and immediate risks and consequences of their online behavior. This campaign would also serve to assist parents in understanding topics such as managing privacy settings on applications such as Whatsapp, Snapchat, and Instagram, parental control features on smartphones and home broadband, utilizing safety modes on sites such as Google and YouTube, and speaking with their children about relevant topics such as cyber-bullying and sexting.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to initiate powerful and deliberate Digital Citizenship Awareness Campaign educating students and parents on their rights and responsibilities as digital citizens as outlined in School Board Policy 7540.03 and The Code of Student Conduct and launched for the 2016-17 school year.