

Ms. Raquel Regalado, Board Member

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEALTH INTERACTIVE GAMING INITIATIVE**

**COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, EVALUATION AND TECHNOLOGY**

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

On September 19, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared the neighborhood of Wynwood a Zika-free area given that no new cases of the virus were reported since early August. However, the fight against the life-threatening virus is far from over. The need for countywide prevention knowledge prevails as the illness continues to actively spread throughout Miami-Dade County.

While at Miami-Dade County Public Schools we have been working to educate about Zika, our parents, teachers, and residents are legitimately concerned that the operations of our county’s Mosquito Control Division are not optimally effective. Only two years ago, our communities were affected by outbreaks of dengue fever, also a mosquito-borne disease. As such, it is critical to create more levels of collaboration that will help Miami-Dade County now battle the spread of the Zika virus (which is known to be transmitted by mosquito species *Aedes Aegypti* and *Aedes Albopictus*).

The University of Miami, Florida International University, Barry University, and volunteer groups are jointly working on a public health interactive gaming initiative aiming to advance student and countywide knowledge about Zika. The program, which may also be provided in Spanish and Haitian Creole, consists of two-hour improvisational skits that gamify prevention and mitigation techniques to help stop the spread of the virus. Students participating will break out into brainstorming groups and work on Zika prevention songs, slogans and artwork in support of a Zika prevention ad campaign that they will create and perform in class.

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All participants will be honored with a Zika training certificate and the winners will participate in a radio interview with NPR, then honored by local officials as their school’s honorary Zika Prevention Guards. Each school’s winning slogans will be designated as the specific school’s message for their area of the Zika zone and displayed in a prominent area around the school. Each school’s participating students will receive stencils and sidewalk chalk, then chalk the winning slogans on approved walls and sidewalks in their respective neighborhoods. As these walk and chalk, they will surveil the area for any standing water or potential Zika mosquito propagation sites. The use of stencils and sidewalk chalk will allow every member of the community to get involved and become citizen educators throughout their neighborhoods, raising countywide resilience.

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This program provides our students with a great opportunity to help eradicate a life-threatening disease countywide by increasing prevention knowledge through art activities.

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**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
MS.RAQUEL REGALADO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, through the Superintendent, determine the feasibility and best practices to have M-DCPS students participate in a public health interactive gaming initiative that will help to advance countywide prevention knowledge about the Zika virus.