

Ms. Susie V. Castillo, Board Member

SUBJECT: CRUELTY FREE ANIMAL CONTROL

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL, & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC

BLUEPRINT: SAFE HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

In Miami-Dade County, there is a law that prohibits dogs from roaming free. The Miami-Dade Animal Services Department enforces this law by picking up stray dogs. There is no such law for cats. Therefore, Animal Services does not pick up stray cats.

Community members together with Miami-Dade County Animal Services have been applying the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Program as a form of animal control since 2012. In a TNR program community cats are humanely trapped, brought to a veterinarian to be fixed (spayed or neutered), ear-tipped (the universal sign that a cat is fixed), and then returned to their outdoor home.

Despite the efforts of Miami-Dade County Animal Services and their volunteers, our office has been made aware of alleged instances where a private animal control agency has been procured by Miami-Dade Public Schools (M-DCPS) for the removal of cats on school property. The cost of hiring these agencies ranges between \$70 and \$100. However, the more significant concern lies with allegations of inhumane treatment of cats by private agencies, who operate with little to no supervision, using loopholes to remove and dispose of cats despite federal and state laws.

The Miami-Dade County Animal Services is the primary agency responsible for animal control. The procurement of private animal control agencies for the removal of cats from any Miami-Dade Public Schools (M-DCPS) facility should be prohibited as an unnecessary expense due to the efforts of volunteers who in exchange for their free services, and to ensure that safety and humane treatment of feral and free-ranging cats.

This item has been reviewed and approved as to form and legal sufficiency by the School Board Attorney.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MS. SUSIE V. CASTILLO: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to:

1. Investigate the allegations involving M-DCPS procuring private animal control agencies and their practices, the scope of the problem of stray cats on school and District property, and make recommendations to address the issue, including but not limited to, initiating rulemaking procedures to prohibit the procurement of private animal control agencies for the removal of cats from School property if appropriate;

2. Explore the feasibility of creating a formal procedure for schools to contact Miami-Dade County Animal Services for the removal of cats from school and District property; and
3. Report back to the Board by the December 11, 2019 School Board Meeting.