

Mrs. Manty Sabates Morse, Member

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZING A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO DETERMINE THE MERITS OF INCLUDING THE "DON'T LAUGH AT ME" PROGRAM AS PART OF OF THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

Tragic violent events involving the safety of our school children present the school systems throughout the nation with a new challenge which if not properly addressed can have a devastating effect on upcoming generations of Americans. Events such as the terrible killings at Columbine High School, places before us in bold terms the need to identify and address this behavioral crisis at its core.

While it is important the need to root out violence in our schools, it is also important to develop an educational environment that nurtures academic growth and achievement. Peer disrespect, ridicule, and bullying by classmates can result in severe emotional pain, violence, mental depression, and even suicide. Disrespect diminishes the student's ability to concentrate and engage in productive work.

There is hope, however. Behavioral studies have revealed that social and emotional learning together with character education can promote and result in the creation of a safe and nurturing classroom environment.

"Don't Laugh at Me" is a teacher guide program for grades 2-5 and 6-8. A project of "Operation Respect", "Don't Laugh at Me" was founded and produced by Peter Yarrow Productions. Its goal and mission is the creation of a ridicule-free classroom environment.

Through the introduction of social and emotional learning as well as character education, the program hopes to ultimately provide for togetherness among the students, getting them to work on common endeavors. This effort will nurture a spirit of humanity and compassion, at the same time that it accelerates students' personal, emotional, ethical and academic growth.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MRS. MANTY SABATES MORSE:

That The School Board of Miami Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to authorize a feasibility study on the merits of including the "Don't Laugh at Me" program as part of the school curriculum.

**REPLACEMENT
B-4**