

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Member

SUBJECT: PARTICIPATION OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE NATIONAL "WALK OUR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL DAY" ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2003

COMMITTEE: LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PERSONNEL SERVICES COMMITTEE

The seventh annual national "Walk Our Children to School Day", planned for Wednesday, October 8, 2003, promotes pedestrian safety education and awareness for the benefit of students across the nation that walk to school every day. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) unanimously endorsed this event at its May 22, 2003 meeting. This event is also sponsored nationwide by the National SAFE KIDS Coalition.

According to the MPO in 2001, two hundred ninety-three (293) children under the age of fourteen (14) were injured, and two (2) children were killed, as a direct result of pedestrian accidents in Miami-Dade County. These numbers represent a decrease in injuries as compared to previous years.

Similar to last year's event, the national "Walk Our Children to School Day" is an exercise involving students, parents, and schools to make pedestrian safety a priority for all children.

"Walk Our Children to School Day" offers the following benefits to the District:

- increased awareness of safe walking skills and safe routes to schools for both students and parents.
- increased awareness that walking is an exercise promoting good health and physical fitness.
- promotes concern for the environment by showing how walking to school helps to reduce school-related traffic and pollution, resulting in a cleaner and healthier environment for everyone.
- reinforces the importance of driver awareness in reducing traffic speed and obeying the school speed zone limits around schools.

In conjunction with this program, the District is also participating in the following pedestrian initiatives:

- Development of a "Safe Routes to School" pilot program for elementary schools. This program will consist of the development of criteria for identification of a "Safe Route" to each selected school, the evaluation of that route for possible safety enhancements and the development of a Global Imaging System (GIS) based map of that route for distribution to parents. The program will focus on 16 schools in the Liberty City area due to the large number of juvenile pedestrian crashes in that region.
- The Coordinated Pedestrian Safety Programs in Miami-Dade County will study traffic crashes involving pedestrians and develop countermeasures to help reduce the number of these crashes. The centerpiece of this work has been an extensive GIS database of pedestrian crashes developed by the University of Florida. By identifying high crash zones and understanding the types of crashes and populations involved it is possible to focus limited safety resources where they will have the most impact. Elements of the program include the "Three E's"- education, engineering and enforcement.

To this end, the Board is asked to join in promoting student pedestrian safety and awareness on national "Walk Our Children to School Day," October 8, 2003 and throughout the entire school year.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MS. PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, join in promoting student pedestrian safety and direct the Superintendent to encourage all Miami-Dade County Public Schools to participate in the national "Walk Our Children to School Day" on October 8, 2003 and to encourage pedestrian safety throughout the entire school year.