

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Member

SUBJECT: PARTICIPATION OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE INTERNATIONAL "WALK OUR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL DAY" ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2005

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The ninth annual international "Walk Our Children to School Day", planned for Wednesday, October 5, 2005, 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 19, 2005 meeting, and the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee endorsed the event at its meeting on May 25, 2005. This event is also sponsored nationwide by the National SAFE KIDS Coalition.

According to the MPO, two hundred twenty-one (221) children under the age of fourteen (14) were injured, and four (4) children were killed in 2003, as a direct result of pedestrian accidents in Miami-Dade County. These numbers represent a decrease in injuries as compared to previous years, with the exception of one additional fatality.

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

Listed below is a summary of the many benefits this event has to offer:

- "Walk Our Children to School Day" promotes safe walking skills. The event increases the awareness of safe walking skills and safe routes to school for both students and parents.
- "Walk Our Children to School Day" promotes physical health and activity. This event increases the awareness that walking is an exercise promoting good health and physical fitness.

- “Walk Our Children to School Day” promotes concern for the environment. Walking to school helps to reduce school-related traffic and pollution, which promotes a cleaner and healthier environment for everyone.
- “Walk Our Children to School Day” promotes increased driver awareness for pedestrians around schools. This event helps to reinforce the importance of reducing traffic speed and obeying the school speed zone limits around schools.

In conjunction with this program, the District, in collaboration with the MPO and Miami-Dade County Public Works Department, created a “Safe Routes to School” pilot program for fifteen (15) elementary schools. For each of those schools, a technical team developed criteria for the identification of a “Safe Route” to each selected school, evaluated routes for possible safety enhancements and developed a Global Imaging System based map of that route for distribution to parents. The team’s goal is to develop such a program for all public elementary schools in the District.

To this end, the Board is asked to join in promoting student pedestrian safety and awareness on international “Walk Our Children to School Day,” on October 5, 2005.

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 international “Walk Our Children to School Day” on October 5, 2005.