

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF THE "HIALEAH HEALTHY FAMILIES" INITIATIVE TO COMBAT CHILDHOOD OBESITY, SPONSORED BY THE CITY OF HIALEAH

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the nation, as reported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Statistics reveal that the number of obese children and adolescents has more than tripled in the past thirty years; obesity among children aged 6 to 11 increased from 6.5% in 1980 to 19.6% in 2008. In the Hialeah Community, recent data shows that 46% of school age children are overweight. These escalating rates of obesity in children and adolescents are of enormous public health significance. The impact of childhood obesity on children's physical health includes increased risk for pre-diabetes, heart disease, as well as bone and joint problems. Moreover, obesity is one of the risk factors for metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes; two health conditions that have also increased dramatically in children. In addition, overweight children tend to experience psychological consequences, and are at a greater risk of experiencing social and emotional problems, including low self-esteem, increased stress and anxiety. Statistics also show that children who are overweight are at a higher risk of remaining overweight in adulthood. As such, it is critical that prevention efforts begin at an early age.

In response to this urgent public health concern, the City of Hialeah, with the support of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida Foundation, launched a community-wide campaign entitled "Hialeah Healthy Families" to address the causes of childhood obesity and promote healthy eating and active living. This initiative began in 2010 through a coalition of community partners that worked together to develop a Call to Action targeting four vital areas of the community: Environment, School Involvement, Parent Engagement, and Social Marketing/Community Outreach.

The Call to Action builds on success stories, such as the Safe Routes to Schools Program and the annual Walk Our Children to School events. The Call to Action was unveiled to the public at the City's Fourth of July Celebration, and will encourage the public to apply for mini-grants to implement programs that promote sustainable, healthy lifestyle changes in the Hialeah community.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR
MS. PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse The "Hialeah Healthy Families" initiative to combat childhood obesity, sponsored by the City of Hialeah.