

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF A YEAR-ROUND WATER SAFETY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HEALTH AGENCIES

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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

Water safety awareness is crucial in South Florida, where many children are exposed to pools and open bodies of water, such as lakes, canals and beaches. In fact, Florida has the second highest number of drowning incidents in the United States, with children ages one through four ranking the highest in the nation. Locally, Miami-Dade County leads the State in drowning fatalities for this age group, averaging 45 a year. Sadly, for every child that becomes a drowning victim, another four are hospitalized.

In order to reduce these staggering statistics, local health agencies have formed the Miami-Dade County Drowning Prevention Coalition, a partnership for a safer and more informed community. The Coalition's mission is to provide a centralized resource for the coordination of information and programs related to water safety awareness, education and advocacy to reduce drowning, near drowning and other water related injuries throughout the County. Key partners include Miami-Dade County, Jackson Memorial Hospital, Miami-Dade County Injury Prevention Coalition, Miami Children's Hospital/ Safe Kids, and the American Red Cross.

Drowning is Preventable - the following water safety tips highlight important measures that can help keep children safe:

- Never leave a child unattended around a pool/spa, bath tub or any body of water.
- Teach children basic safety water skills; learn to swim.
- Avoid entrapment; keep children away from pool drains and other openings.
- If you own a pool, install a 4-foot fence around its perimeter.
- Keep in mind it takes only inches of water for a small child to drown; always keep a young child within arm's reach in a bathtub. Never leave a bucket or basin containing even a small amount of liquid unattended. Consider placing locks on restroom seat covers.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse a year-round water safety awareness campaign, in partnership with Miami-Dade County Health Agencies.

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