

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Vice Chair

**SUBJECT:                   REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA DESIGNATE SEPTEMBER 9 - 15 AS NATIONAL SUICIDE AWARENESS WEEK IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**COMMITTEE:           INSTRUCTIONAL   EXCELLENCE    AND   COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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

National Suicide Prevention Week is an annual week-long campaign in the United States to inform and engage health professionals and the general public about suicide, its prevention, and the warning signs. By drawing attention to the problem of suicide in the United States, the campaign also strives to reduce the stigma surrounding the topic, as well as encourage the pursuit of mental health assistance and support people who have attempted suicide. Since 1975, National Suicide Prevention Week awareness events are held throughout the week corresponding to World Suicide Prevention Day, which is recognized annually on the 10th of September and hosted by the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Federation for Mental Health.

According to the Florida Vital Statistics Annual Report, suicide is the third leading cause of death amongst teenagers. Sadly, teenage suicide rates have tripled over the past two decades with an average of one young person committing suicide approximately every two hours in the state of Florida. In Miami-Dade County alone, a total of 27 young lives were lost to suicide in 2011. From these tragedies and lives lost, efforts launched by teachers, counselors, school staff personnel, and students alike have brought attention to this growing issue and brought this once taboo topic to the forefront of a national discussion.

Creating opportunities for conversations between students and school personnel on the topic of suicide and depression and the stigma surrounding suicide can empower students to get help for themselves or for others. Knowing the warning signs and helping students and school staff access the appropriate resources is a proven strategy in preventing suicide. To promote the national commitment to action and to prevent suicide through public awareness and education, it is recommended that the School Board designate September 9 - 15 as National Suicide Awareness Week in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

**Replacement  
H-19**

This item also seeks to highlight the programs currently in place by M-DCPS including, but not limited to, the Comprehensive Student Services Program, the TRUST curriculum, and the Health Education curriculum, which educate and bring public awareness to school site personnel and students on the topic of suicide.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY VICE CHAIR  
DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, designate September 9 - 15 as National Suicide Awareness Week in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and encourage the use of M-DCPS Comprehensive Student Services Program, the TRUST curriculum, and the Health Education curriculum to help prevent suicide through public awareness and education.