

Ms. Raquel Regalado, Board Member

SUBJECT: STUDENT IDENTITY THEFT

COMMITTEE: SCHOOL SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK: SCHOOL/DISTRICT LEADERSHIP**

In our digital age, it should come as no surprise that identify theft, defined as the successful or attempted misuse of personal information to commit fraud, is expected to surpass traditional theft as the leading form of property crime in the United States. In fact, nationwide, about 16.6 million persons, or 7% of all U.S. residents age 16 or older, were victims of one or more incidents of identity theft in 2012, according to a survey by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. In a similar finding, the Federal Trade Commission's Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book reported that children, 19 and under, made up 6% of all identity theft victims in 2012.

Notably, as part of these recent findings, the Federal Trade Commission ranked the state of Florida first among all U.S. states for identity theft in 2013. Furthermore, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office, identity theft in Miami, Florida has currently reached "near epidemic proportions." In fact, Florida's rate of 192.9 complaints per 100,000 residents is stunted by the Miami rate of 340.4 complaints per 100,000 residents.

A recent trend in Florida, the nations' capital of fraud, is that identity thieves are using the personal information of children and adolescents for frauds that go far beyond income tax fraud. For example, a child's private information may be used to request government benefits, open bank accounts, apply for credit cards, loans, utility services, public and private housing, to rent a place to live, and even to open public service accounts. As such, this misuse of personal information could affect the lives and credits of these children for decades after they graduate from high school.

And while in Florida an estimated 500,000 children under age 5 are victims of identity theft, thieves are now targeting school age children. So much so, that school age children have become the preferred target for identity thieves because unlike adults who are alert of the thief, the information of children can be used and reused without detection for long periods of time.

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At Miami-Dade County Public Schools, we recently had a breach involving student data that resulted in a criminal case and the modification of the information that employees can access through our communications systems. Meanwhile, at the state level, we move closer to compliance with the replacement of social security numbers to Florida identification numbers. However, the lessons learned from this breach in conjunction with the surge of identity theft statewide and the upcoming requirement to meet the state mandate provide our district with the opportunity to analyze what information we require from our students and teachers and to develop a comprehensive plan to protect the personal information we choose to collect from our students and inform our teachers, parents and students about the importance of protecting personal data.

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Finally, as one of the few school districts that has its own police force, Miami-Dade County Public Schools is in a position to craft a comprehensive identity protection plan which includes the department's knowledge of cybercrimes and could protect both the physical and digital collection, use, storage and destruction of the personal information of our over 345,000 students. Therefore, this item requests that the M-DCPS Police Department, alongside M-DCPS Information Technologies Department, M-DCPS School Site Operations, the Parent Academy and other necessary departments implement a comprehensive identity protection plan to protect the personal information of all our students and create an awareness, education and prevention campaign that will safeguard the personal information of our students and employees.

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**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. RAQUEL REGALADO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, through the Superintendent, direct the Police Chief in conjunction with other departments to develop a comprehensive identity protection plan that includes an awareness, education and prevention campaign; and that during this process, the district define what personal information we will require from our students in the 2015-16 school year.

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