

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Board Member

**SUBJECT: THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD PROMOTE MARCH 2017 AS FLORIDA BIKE MONTH, ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL BIKE TO SCHOOL DAY FESTIVITIES, AND RECOGNIZE THE BIKESAFE PROGRAM**

**COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The environment and health benefits of bicycling as a viable mode of transportation for individuals and communities have been formally researched by the Florida Department of Transportation. The studies have shown that dedicated programs and partnerships effectively promote and encourage bicycling activities. These programs and partnerships are most successful when distinct groups, such as commuters and school children, are empowered through education to increase their participation in physical and recreational activities.

In this regard, the School District has partnered with the BikeSafe Program to teach safe bicycling education skills at the middle school level. The BikeSafe Program was created by Dr. Gillian Hotz at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, to address Miami-Dade County's high rates of bicyclist injuries and fatalities. The BikeSafe safety lessons are applicable to all ages; however, the BikeSafe educational in-school curriculum focuses on middle school age children, as this age group has been determined to be at high risk for bicycle injuries and fatalities due to their developing physical skills and increased sense of independence. The safety lessons are taught through the middle school physical education program.

Safe bicycling is encouraged all year-round. However, there are two key months of the year, March and May, when bicycling is most celebrated in the State.

- Florida Bike Month: March has been designated as Florida Bike Month due to our ideal spring climate. Florida Bike Month, similar to national initiatives, promotes healthy lifestyle choices by encouraging physical fitness to help reduce the chances of chronic illness and obesity. Increased bicycle usage helps lower motor vehicle emissions and global warming.
- National Bike to School Day: The National Bike to School Day festivities, taking place on May 10, 2017, further promote safe bicycling skills and activities throughout the District. All schools are encouraged to participate. This event builds on the successes of the Walk to School Day initiative celebrated throughout the world each October.

It is recommended that Miami-Dade County Public Schools continues to champion programs and events that promote personal health and well being in addition to protecting the environment.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, promote March 2017 as Florida Bike Month, encourage participation in the National Bike to School Day festivities, and recognize the BikeSafe Program for its efforts in improving bicycle safety at middle schools.