

Ms. Susie V. Castillo, Board Member

SUBJECT: WATER ON EVERY PLATE

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL SERVICES AND STUDENT AND SCHOOL SUPPORT

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

Consumption of water is associated with a number of health benefits including obesity prevention, a reduced number of cavities, proper hydration, and improved cognitive function. As a participant of the National School Lunch Program, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) is required to make potable water available to children at no charge in the place where meals are served in our schools. According to MDCPS' Food and Nutrition Procedures, schools can implement this requirement by providing students access to 1) a water fountain in the cafeteria or immediately adjacent to the cafeteria 2) a faucet that allows students to fill their own bottles or cups with drinking water or 3) water pitchers and cups on lunch tables.

However, many schools rely on water fountains to meet the federal requirement for water accessibility, a practice which has proven to not be effective in assuring students have water available to them during meals. This is especially apparent in elementary schools where students must often ask for permission to go to the water fountain or in cases where students must wait in line to get water, wasting their lunch time. In terms of practicality, water fountains are not serving to meet the obligation we have to have water on every plate.

As a district, we must seek a solution to the issue at hand by exploring the practicability of providing our students the choice of bottled water during meals as part of the National School Lunch Program and in supporting the negotiations of high-volume pricing and in assuring we are doing achieving our goals through financially sound decisions.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. SUSIE V. CASTILLO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida direct the Superintendent to explore the feasibility of providing our students the choice of bottled water during meals as part of the National School Lunch Program.