

July 21, 2017

Ms. Susie V. Castillo, Board Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA TO ENDORSE SEPTEMBER 2017 AS NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: INFORMED, ENGAGED & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Childhood obesity is an issue that continues to affect countless children throughout Miami-Dade County, Florida. Poor diet, nutritional intake, and lack of physical activity are all factors that can contribute to the issue of obesity rates.

The rate of obesity and overweight children in the county is an astonishing 67.4%. In addition, roughly 13% of students in high school are considered obese, and only 12% participate in class or program for physical education at their school. One of the populations that seem to be more at risk are the low-income families who are unable to afford exceptional nutritious choices and families that lack the proper education. In fact, poor dietary choices made by children are often due to their lack of information regarding proper nutrition. Children who are overweight and obese are at a much higher risk of acquiring certain illnesses such as diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and even mental health problems.

Moreover, while obesity certainly carries health risks, when raising awareness it is important to also promote positive body images amongst our students. Our individual genetic makeup is a contributing factor to our weight, and while some heavier people may be fit, some thin people may not be fit. We must then avoid placing a harmful focus on weight and instead focus on actively educating our students on healthy habits regarding their food, nutrition, and physical activity.

Childhood Obesity Awareness Month was first observed in September 2010. Since then, we have been granted the opportunity to change the present trends in obesity in children through education and awareness. Increased cognizance of this epidemic and ways in which we can healthily prevent its advance during the month of September 2017 will be to the benefit of all of the students and parents of Miami-Dade County Public Schools at risk.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida endorse September 2017 as National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.