

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member

**SUBJECT: ASSIGNMENT OF A SPECIALIZED SOCIAL WORKER OR MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST TO THE MIAMI-DADE SCHOOLS POLICE**

**COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL, & COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: INFORMED, ENGAGED AND EMPOWERES STAKEHOLDERS**

Police departments throughout the nation are now considering or are already hiring social workers to provide follow-up services to students who may have been victims of crime, substance abuse, child abuse, juvenile delinquency, and sexual abuse, among others. These social workers assigned to police departments provide crisis intervention, interview child victims, provide mediation services, refer cases to schools and other social agencies, and may also give referrals for treatment.

The police encounters victims of child abuse, sexual abuse, torture, or physical assault on a regular basis and calming these victims may sometimes be beyond their expertise. Police social workers may use six basic techniques to calm the victim down so he or she can give the police an accurate statement and begin to heal. These techniques may include helping the victim define the problem, ensuring his/her safety; providing support; helping him/her examine alternatives, making a safety plan; and helping him/her get the services needed. Furthermore, police social workers empower under-represented populations in the community, including vulnerable communities, refugees, and immigrant populations.

Therefore, this agenda item seeks authorization from the Board for the Superintendent to explore the feasibility of assigning one or two specialized social worker(s) or mental health specialist(s) to the Miami-Dade Schools Police Department to provide follow-up services to students who have been victims of crimes.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney's office as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY**

**MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent of Schools to explore the feasibility of assigning one or two specialized social worker(s) or mental health specialist(s) to the Miami-Dade Schools Police Department to provide follow-up services to students who have been victims of crime, and report back to the Board by October 10, 2018.