

Ms. Susie V. Castillo, Board Member

**SUBJECT: THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,  
APPROVE THE ENDORSEMENT OF SEPTEMBER 2020 AS  
NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH**

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

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

Today childhood obesity is a health issue of particular concern because of the number of children and teens throughout Miami-Dade County that suffer from this disease. Florida ranks 8<sup>th</sup> out of 51 states including the District of Columbia with a worrisome 17.8% of all youth ages 10-17 years old, categorized as obese. Obesity is much more than cosmetic, as there is a direct correlation to other detrimental health conditions such as diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and increasingly, mental health issues.

The factors that lead to obesity include poor diet, nutritional intake, hereditary predisposition, and lack of physical activity. This year in particular where organized sports, physical education, recess, and all other group physical activities were canceled due to COVID19, more focus and creative solutions need to be placed to curtail the rising obesity rates of our youth.

Prior to COVID19, the rate of obesity and overweight children in the county was an astounding 67.4%. In addition, roughly 13% of students in high school were considered obese, and only 12% participated in class or programs for physical education at their school. One of the populations that seemed to be more at risk are low-income families who are unable to afford exceptional nutritious choices and often lack the knowledge gained through nutritional education.

As we raise awareness about childhood obesity, it is important to also promote positive body images amongst our students. Our individual genetic makeup is a contributing factor to our weight, and just as some heavier people are fit, and some thin people may not be fit at all, body image may become distorted without relatable information and examples. This is an opportunity to avoid placing a harmful focus on weight and instead focus on actively educating our students on healthy habits regarding their food, nutrition, and options for physical activity especially during this COVID pandemic.

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month was first observed in September 2010. For 10 years we have had the opportunity to change the tide of childhood obesity. Focusing our efforts on education, awareness, and by providing tangible recommendations, especially during the month of September 2020 will be to the benefit of all of the students and parents of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, both those at risk and those who may not be.

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

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve the endorsement of September 2020 as National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month.