

Ms. Lucia Baez-Geller, School Board Member

**SUBJECT: 2021 VISION**

**COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC**

**BLUEPRINT: SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is recognized for its leadership in providing a world class education for its students. During the pandemic, the challenge in giving our students the world becomes greater with each passing day as many students are struggling academically, emotionally or losing attention or interest in their virtual work. Educators and parents are connecting these struggles to lifestyle changes, COVID, isolation and attention deficit issues.

One possibility that many people are unaware of is that some academic struggles may be due to a treatable physiological vision dysfunction where eye movement, eye focusing, and eye teaming skills are not working properly. This condition is shown to become more severe and prevalent with increased screen time, greater straining of the eyes, and added exposure to blue light.

If undetected or misdiagnosed, a student's ability to sustain visual attention will diminish and lead to reading problems and a general dislike of reading. Other consequences may include incomplete school assignments, weakening organizational skills, problems with paying attention, and growing frustration. Studies show that people who have vision dysfunction were often misdiagnosed with attention deficit disorders since both conditions share many of the same behaviors and symptoms.

For example, the Developmental Eye Movement Test provides information on whether students are seeing clearly and using both eyes as a "team." M-DCPS students and their parents/guardians could benefit from an informational campaign that incorporates facts about symptoms related to physiological vision dysfunction, exercises available for students, and resources to address the problem. This informational campaign would be instrumental to educators, counselors or guardian of children who are seeing signs of attention deficit disorders or reading difficulties.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney for legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY**

**MS. LUCIA BAEZ-GELLER:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to:

1. conduct an informational campaign about physiological vision dysfunction and related developmental eye movement tests for parents/guardians and educators who work with children diagnosed with attention deficit and reading problems; and
2. provide a response to the School Board no later than the School Board meeting of April 2021.