

Ms. Lucia Baez-Geller, School Board Member

**SUBJECT: ENDORSEMENT OF AND PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES FOR NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH® AND NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK AND RECOGNITION OF EXTRAORDINARY WORK PERFORMED BY FOOD AND NUTRITION EMPLOYEES**

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

**LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The primary goal of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Department of Food and Nutrition is to improve the health and nutritional well-being of students.

This year's theme for National Nutrition Month® is "**Personalize Your Plate.**" The importance of eating a variety of nutritious foods every day, planning meals, learning skills to create tasty meals, and consulting with a registered dietitian nutritionist will be emphasized during National Nutrition Month®. This year's National School Breakfast Week theme is "**Score Big with School Breakfast.**" Top priorities should be to support the District's Wellness Policy, to develop sound eating habits to start each day, and to help students make informed healthy food choices.

The Department of Food and Nutrition is being asked to provide activities to school cafeteria managers, and this year given the current conditions during the pandemic, to also provide activities to parents, caregivers and guardians that promote nutrition and healthy school breakfast options at home. Food service personnel are encouraged to involve principals, teachers, students, parents, and the community in planned activities during National Nutrition Month® and National School Breakfast Week.

AFSCME, under the leadership of Phyllis LeFlore, and the Department of Food and Nutrition, under the direction of Food and Nutrition Officer Penny Parham, along with the thousands of food service employees in the Department of Food and Nutrition are to be commended for their work and there is no better time to recognize them than during National Nutrition Month®.

From emergency school closures in March 2020 to present, M-DCPS made quality food distribution a priority. Food and Nutrition employees have worked tirelessly since the start of the pandemic. These employees have been responsible for serving more than 15 million meals from the time of school closures up until today. Throughout the time of school closures, the district distributed free breakfast and lunch from 50 school food distribution locations across our County and secured all available program waivers from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to allow for the distribution of school breakfast and lunch meals to all children 18 years or younger. Food and Nutrition personnel continue to distribute free meals from almost all school locations while also serving healthy meals to students who have returned to brick and mortar learning.

Now more than ever we need to recognize those who worked throughout the pandemic and who have constantly adapted to new food distribution plans. Those who planned the meals also realized that their guidance to provide healthy food options was essential.

Food and Nutrition strategized on not only getting meals out to everyone during the pandemic, but also for meals to be nutritional.

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:

1. endorse March 2021 as National Nutrition Month® and March 8-12, 2021, as National School Breakfast Week in M-DCPS;
2. commend The Department of Food and Nutrition, AFSCME and all its employees for their outstanding efforts during the pandemic; and
3. authorize the Superintendent to develop relevant programming around National Nutrition Month® and National School Breakfast Week.