

Dr. Lubby Navarro, Board Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA RECOGNIZE APRIL 2021 AS NATIONAL AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH

COMMITTEE: FACILITIES & CONSTRUCTION

LINK TO STRATEGIC

BLUEPRINT: EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a developmental disorder that impacts an individual's social skills, communication, and behavior. April has been set aside as Autism Acceptance Month in order to increase acceptance and to foster inclusivity of those impacted by autism. The Autism Society has been recognizing autism during the month of April since the 1970's with their national campaign. The United States recognizes April as a special time to empower those with autism.

Autism Society, the nation's leading grassroots autism organization was founded in 1965 by Dr. Bernard Rimland, Dr. Ruth Sullivan and many other parents of children with autism. They have spearheaded numerous pieces of state and local legislation, including the 2006 Combating Autism Act, the first federal autism-specific law.

National Autism Acceptance Month shines a light on the increasing need for education, acceptance and inclusive practices for autism, the nation's fastest growing serious developmental disability. As more health professionals become proficient in diagnosing autism, more children are being diagnosed, resulting in rates as high as 1 in 54 children nationally.

Every year during the month of April, community organizations throughout Miami-Dade County join forces to increase acceptance, which affects so many children in our community. National Autism Acceptance Month provides the perfect opportunity for individuals and organizations to educate their communities about autism and many Autism Society local chapters hold special events in their communities throughout the month of April.

Miami Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) recognizes the importance of early identification and intervention through its Department of Exceptional Student Education. The department provides a wide range of developmentally appropriate learning opportunities and services in a variety of programs for the over 7,000 students who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders. M-DCPS also collaborates with UM-NSU CARD, Autism Speaks, The Dan Marino Foundation, The Advocacy Network on Disabilities, and the Autism Society of South Florida in an effort to increase awareness and support individuals impacted by autism throughout our community.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. LUBBY NAVARRO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognize April 2021 as National Autism Awareness Month.