

Dr. Lubby Navarro, Board Member

**SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF MONTH APRIL 2022 AS  
WORLD AUTISM DAY AND AWARENESS MONTH**

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

**LINK TO STRATEGIC**

**PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED, & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS**

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 World Autism Awareness 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 1970s with their national campaign. The United States recognizes April as a special time to showcase the uniqueness and 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.

World Autism Awareness Month shines 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 on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), resulting in rates as high as 1 in 44 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. World Autism Day and Awareness Month provides the perfect opportunity for individuals and organizations to educate their communities about autism. Many Autism Society local chapters hold special events in their communities throughout the month of April. Autism Speaks Miami is asking for everyone to commit to kindness throughout the month. Autism Speaks Miami works tirelessly to fuel innovative research and resources that help individuals impacted by autism.

Miami Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) recognizes the importance of early identification and intervention through its Department of Exceptional Student Education. This 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 acceptance 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 2022 as World Autism Day and Awareness Month.