Office of School Board Members
Board Meeting of March 15, 2023

March 9, 2023

Ms. Monica Colucci, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Mr. Daniel Espino, Vice Chair
Mr. Roberto J. Alonso
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall
Ms. Mary Blanco
Dr. Steve Gallon III
Ms. Luisa Santos
Added

SUBJECT: **THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZE APRIL 2023 AS AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH**

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

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: **SAFE, HEALTHY, & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

Autism, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech, and nonverbal communication. According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated 1 in 44 children in the United States. There is not one type of autism, but many subtypes, influenced by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Because autism is a spectrum disorder, each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges. The ways in which people with autism learn, think, and problem-solve can range from highly skilled to severely challenged. People with ASD may require significant support in their daily lives, while others may need less and, in some cases, live completely independently.

Every April, the Autism Society works to build an inclusive community where individuals with autism are embraced and supported to attain the highest quality of life possible. The Autism Society was founded in 1965 by Bernard Rimland and remains one of the few grassroots organizations in the autistic community. Driven by the fact that autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability in the world, the Autism Society hosted one of its first nationwide efforts of an awareness campaign called National Autistic Children's Week in 1972, which subsequently evolved into the Autism Awareness Month. In 2021, Autism Awareness Month was renamed Autism Acceptance Month to foster the need for public awareness to promote acceptance, celebrate the differences, and be more inclusive toward individuals with autism.

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

This item has been reviewed and approved by the General Counsel's Office as to form and legal sufficiency.

ACTION PROPOSED BY MS. MONICA COLUCCI: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognize April 2023 as Autism Acceptance Month.

Revised
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