

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

Co-Sponsors: Ms. Monica Colucci, Vice Chair
Mr. Roberto J. Alonso
Ms. Mary Blanco
Mr. Danny Espino
Mr. Joseph S. Geller } REVISED AT DAIS BY BOARD ACTION

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2026 AS NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS)

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED, & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has designated the month of September as *National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month*, a moment in time to share resources and stories and bring to light this highly stigmatized subject. This is also the time to reach out to those affected by suicide, raise awareness, and connect individuals with suicidal emotions to treatment services. Suicidal thoughts, very much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or economic background. Suicide is often the result of an untreated mental health condition. Suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be judged as normal and frequently may suggest more serious issues that must be assessed and treated.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) highlights that 1 in 20 U.S. adults (5%) have serious thoughts of suicide each year, and approximately one person dies by suicide every 11 minutes in the U.S.

Key statistics and crisis information published by NAMI outline the broader scope of mental health and suicide data:

- **National Rates & Frequency:** Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among people ages 10–24, and the third leading cause for youth ages 15–24.
- **Demographic Differences:** While women attempt suicide more frequently, men are 4 times more likely to die by suicide. NAMI polling shows increased vulnerability and climbing rates among older adults and young people of color.
- **Impact of the 988 Lifeline:** Studies indicate that youth suicide rates declined following the national launch of the *988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline*, validating the expansion of immediate crisis centers and dispatched resources.
- **Local Awareness (South Florida):** In Tamiami and the broader Miami-Dade area, NAMI partners with local governments and sports franchises (like the Miami HEAT and Miami Dolphins) to combat the fact that many residents remain unaware of how to access local mental health resources.

NAMI has reported that suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States. Some important facts reported by NAMI include the following:

- Seventy-nine percent (79%) of all people who die by suicide are male.
- Although more women than men attempt suicide, men are four times more likely to die by suicide.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people aged 10–14 and the third leading cause of death among people aged 15-24 in the United States (U.S.).
- Forty-six percent (46%) of people who die by suicide had a diagnosed mental health condition - but research shows that 90% may have experienced symptoms of a mental health condition.
- Over 18% of high school students have serious thoughts of suicide.
- The highest rates of suicide in the U.S. are among American Indian/Alaska Natives followed by non-Hispanic whites.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for people held in local jails.

While suicide prevention is important to address year-round, *National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month* provides a committed time for everyone to come together with collective passion and strength around a difficult subject. We can all benefit from having honest discussions about mental health conditions and suicide. One genuine conversation may change a life.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR
MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse the month of September 2026 as *National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month* in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS).