

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(8)

TO: Honorable Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: January 19, 2022

FROM: Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution directing the County Mayor to collaborate with the University of Miami-Nova Southeastern University Center for Autism and Related Disorders, and the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust to establish a program for neurodivergent youth to fully participate in the Miami-Dade Teen Court program, and requiring a report

Resolution No. R-64-22

The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Raquel A. Regalado.



Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

GBK/jp



MEMORANDUM (Revised)

TO: Honorable Chairman Jose "Pepe" Diaz
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: January 19, 2022

FROM: 
Gen Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Agenda Item No. 11(A)(8)

Please note any items checked.

- ☐ "3-Day Rule" for committees applicable if raised
- ☐ 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- ☐ 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- ☐ Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- ☐ Budget required
- ☐ Statement of fiscal impact required
- ☐ Statement of social equity required
- ☐ Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor's report for public hearing
- ☒ No committee review
- ☐ Applicable legislation requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3's present ____, 2/3 membership ____, 3/5's ____, unanimous ____, CDMP 7 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) ____, CDMP 2/3 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) ____, or CDMP 9 vote requirement per 2-116.1(4)(c)(2) ____ to approve
- ☐ Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(8)
1-19-22

RESOLUTION NO. _____ R-64-22

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COUNTY MAYOR OR MAYOR'S DESIGNEE TO COLLABORATE WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI-NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR AUTISM AND RELATED DISORDERS, AND THE MIAMI-DADE ECONOMIC ADVOCACY TRUST TO ESTABLISH A PROGRAM FOR NEURODIVERGENT YOUTH TO FULLY PARTICIPATE IN THE MIAMI-DADE TEEN COURT PROGRAM, AND REQUIRING A REPORT

WHEREAS, neurodiversity refers to variations in the human brain regarding sociality;
and

WHEREAS, the term "neurodiversity" was coined in 1998 by sociologist Judy Singer, who helped popularize the concept along with journalist Harvey Blume; and

WHEREAS, it emerged as a challenge to prevailing views that certain neurodevelopmental disorders are inherently pathological and instead, adopts the social model of disability, in which societal barriers are the main contributing factor that disables people; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention announced that the prevalence rate for autism spectrum disorder ("ASD") is currently 1:54 for 8-year-old children; and

WHEREAS, according to the advocacy organization, Autism Speaks, more than 500,000 young adults with autism will age out of guaranteed services in the next decade; and

WHEREAS, there are 7,500 individuals with autism registered with the University of Miami-Nova Southeastern University Center for Autism and Related Disabilities ("CARD"), and CARD estimates that there may be as many as 50,000 individuals with ASD in Miami-Dade County; and

WHEREAS, CARD provides services throughout the County for children and adults who have ASD, in addition to other disorders that may co-exist with autism; and

WHEREAS, CARD's primary services include client and family support services, programmatic technical assistance and consultation, and public education and awareness activities; and

WHEREAS, CARD has expressed an interest in collaborating with the County to establish a Countywide program focused on ASD and neurodiverse inclusion; and

WHEREAS, a collaboration between the County and CARD should include a training program for County staff that interact with teens, including, but not limited to, the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust ("MDEAT"), which administers and operates the Miami-Dade Teen Court program ("Teen Court") on behalf of the County; and

WHEREAS, Teen Court was established over 23 years ago as an alternative sanctioning program for first-time youthful offenders who agree to allow their peers to determine sentencing instead of the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, through youth participation, the program helps decrease juvenile delinquency by interrupting the beginning stages of criminal behavior; and

WHEREAS, unlike any other diversion program in Miami-Dade County, Teen Court serves a range of youth within its peer sanctioning process such as teens needing a second chance and youth looking for opportunities to serve their community; and

WHEREAS, Teen Court is also for other teens who want to volunteer, earn community service hours, and learn about the legal system; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, Teen Court has provided more than 7,800 youth an opportunity to correct their wrongs as well as an opportunity to be exposed to new career pathways for an up close and personal experience that otherwise could not be afforded to them; and

WHEREAS, there is very little research on neurodivergent youth, including those with ASD, delinquency and the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, according to one study published by BioMed Central in 2017, the prevalence of delinquency in the ASD population varied from 5 to 26 percent, whilst ASD was found in 2 to 18 percent of the forensic populations studied; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement and justice officials need to recognize that the features of ASD are always relevant when interacting with neurodivergent youth; and

WHEREAS, this Board believes that youth with neurodivergent youth should be given the same opportunities as other youth to participate in the Teen Court program; and

WHEREAS, educational programs, rehabilitation programs, and other alternatives to jail time, such as Teen Court, should also be considered for neurodivergent individuals who are found guilty of a misdemeanor; and

WHEREAS, Teen Court can benefit from an inclusion program; and

WHEREAS, CARD can develop social stories, a social learning tool that assists neurodivergent individuals to understand their environment and helps in reducing anxiety in new places and interactions; and

WHEREAS, these social stories can be provided to MDEAT staff, the judges, lawyers and other participants in the program; and

WHEREAS, CARD also has expertise related to ASD and what resources are available to individuals with ASD and their families, including resources by age group, resources for educators, information for the general public, information related to mental health challenges and ASD, and the importance of healthful living including exercise and nutrition; and

WHEREAS, CARD can also assist MDEAT in ensuring that Teen Court is open, accessible, and friendly to neurodivergent individuals and their families through training of the staff, judges, lawyers, and others who participate in Teen Court, and consultation regarding sensory-friendly activities and autism friendly spaces; and

WHEREAS, accordingly, this Board wishes to ensure that neurodivergent youth can fully participate in Teen Court with the assistance of CARD; and

WHEREAS, this Board further wishes to be informed about the resources that will be needed to provide access and participation for neurodivergent tween, teens, and young adults, such as through the Juvenile Services Department,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that the Board:

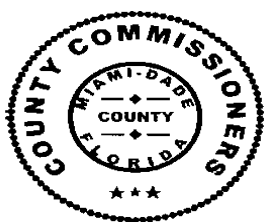
Section 1. Directs the County Mayor or Mayor's designee to collaborate with the University of Miami-Nova Southeastern University Center for Autism and Related Disabilities and Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust to establish a program for neurodivergent youth to allow such youth to fully participate in the Miami-Dade Teen Court program. Such collaboration shall not result in any funds being expended by the County. This Board further directs the County Mayor or Mayor's designee to identify resources needed to provide access and participation for neurodivergent tween, teens, and young adults.

Section 2. Directs the County Mayor or Mayor’s designee to submit a written report to this Board within 45 days of the effective date of this resolution, which shall be placed on an agenda of the Board pursuant to Ordinance No. 14-65, regarding the directive as outlined in section 1.

The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Commissioner Raquel A. Regalado. It was offered by Commissioner **Sally A. Heyman**, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner **Raquel A. Regalado** and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Jose “Pepe” Diaz, Chairman	aye		
Oliver G. Gilbert, III, Vice-Chairman	aye		
Sen. René García	aye	Keon Hardemon	aye
Sally A. Heyman	aye	Danielle Cohen Higgins	aye
Eileen Higgins	aye	Joe A. Martinez	aye
Kionne L. McGhee	aye	Jean Monestime	aye
Raquel A. Regalado	aye	Rebeca Sosa	aye
Sen. Javier D. Souto	absent		

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 19th day of January, 2022. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK

By: Melissa Adames
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "TAS", is written over a horizontal line.

Melanie Spencer
Terrence A. Smith