

Dr. Martin Karp, Vice Chair

Co-Sponsors: Ms. Perla T. Hantman, Chair
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member
Ms. Susie Castillo, Board Member
Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Board Member
Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member
Ms. Lubby Navarro, Board Member
Dr. Marta Pérez, Board Member
Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member

} Added

SUBJECT: PREVENTING, EDUCATING, AND RAISING AWARENESS OF HOW TO PROTECT AGAINST SEXUAL PREDATORS/SEXUAL MOLESTATION

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION, AND TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Media reports are filled with examples of young men and women who have been victimized by sexual predators; however, the cases have gone unreported sometimes for years. Most often these crimes go unreported because of fear, embarrassment, or the inability of adults to recognize the signs of sexual trauma. Among cases of child sexual abuse reported to law enforcement, 93 percent of the perpetrators are known to the victim. Most molesters have established relationships with their victims that developed by befriending these minors months before any incident occurred.

According to one report, 70 percent of child sexual offenders have between one and 9 victims, while 20 percent have 10 to 40 victims. Therefore, a child coming forth about an act of sexual misconduct would help reduce the amount of repeated offenses by one predator. It is important that parents and educators alike be made aware of the warning signs of dangerous relationships, as well as indicators of sexual victimization. Further, awareness must be raised among children about the dangers of engaging in on-line communications or relationships with adults that may lead to victimization. Educational programs could provide children with the resources to deal with their experiences instead of keeping it within themselves. Guidance for parents can help reduce incidences of exploitation.

Therefore, the District should consider adding class offerings for parents and families through The Parent Academy that would provide information on internet safety; how to recognize common strategies and methods of child molesters, what steps are needed to evade such despicable actions; how to recognize signs that a child may have been victimized; and how to access resources to help victims of abuse. Further, the District should engage in a comprehensive review of its policies, procedures and resources to ensure that children and adults feel safe and secure in the M-DCPS educational environment. Finally, there needs to be a districtwide campaign informing parents and children of what reporting procedures to follow if they suspect or experience sexual molestation.

Additional preventative steps must be taken for the protection of minor students from sexual predators and sexual molestation throughout our community.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. MARTIN KARP:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, directs the Superintendent to:

1. explore the best mechanism to implement a program where students at the elementary, middle and high school grade levels receive instruction on identifying warning signs of inappropriate adult behavior that can lead to sexual molestation, and recognizing, stopping, and reporting sexual misconduct; and,
2. institute a districtwide campaign on the importance of speaking out should one become or suspect someone is a victim of an act of sexual molestation;
3. review, and as legally appropriate, revise adult/child communication protocols;
4. explore creating a class in The Parent Academy where parents are taught how to help their children identify signs of inappropriate adult behaviors, use evasion techniques, and recognize changes in children's behavior which would result from victimization; and
5. provide a report to the School Board no later than February 21, 2018.