


MEMORANDUM

February 12, 2019

TO: The Honorable Chair and Members of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

FROM: Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools 

SUBJECT: STAFF FOLLOW-UP: SCHOOL BOARD MEETING OF NOVEMBER 20, 2018, AGENDA ITEM H-14, THE VAPING EPIDEMIC

At the School Board meeting of November 20, 2018, the Board approved Agenda Item H-14, proffered by School Board Vice Chair Dr. Martin Karp and co-sponsored by School Board Chair Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, as well as School Board Members Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Ms. Susie V. Castillo, Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Ms. Lubby Navarro, and Ms. Mari Tere Rojas. This item authorized the Superintendent of Schools to: 1) implement training for school staff on how to identify vaping devices and establish proper measures to prevent such devices from being on school property; 2) collaborate with parent organizations including the PTSA to educate parents about vaping so they can identify the devices used and update parents on the latest research showing these products' dangers and addictive properties; 3) inform students of the risks and possible health effects of e-cigarettes and ask all students to sign a pledge to not use e-cigarettes and vaping devices; 4) seek grants and partnerships with entities including the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The Children's Trust, the District's Health and Wellness Advisory Committee, municipalities, and the County to help with the above efforts; and 5) provide a response by the February 2019 School Board meeting.

Staff has prioritized raising the awareness of the dangers associated with vaping and the use of e-cigarettes. As a preventative measure, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) and the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County (DOH) launched the E(liminate)-Cigs anti-vaping campaign on October 16, 2018, at Miami Beach Senior High School. This campaign included the dissemination of information through the District's social media platforms using #EliminateCigs. As a follow-up to the aforementioned agenda item and as an enhancement to the ongoing E(liminate)-Cigs anti-vaping campaign, staff has taken several proactive measures to inform and educate internal and external stakeholders on vaping and e-cigarette use.

Actions Taken to Engage with Key Stakeholders

All middle school and senior high school principals received information about vaping and its alignment to the newly revised School Board Policy 5500, *Student Conduct and Discipline*. The revisions within the newly adopted Code of Student Conduct (COSC) added the term "vaping" to the description of Level II Seriously Disruptive Behaviors and included the definition of vaping in the glossary.

As a training mechanism, all school site principals will conduct a faculty meeting that includes a presentation that reviews this change and has pictorial examples. This will assist school-site staff in the identification of vaping devices and reinforce District-wide preventative measures such as the E(liminate)-Cigs anti-vaping campaign.

In addition, to ensure our students, parents/guardians, and stakeholders are educated and receive critical information about the dangers of using e-cigarette products, weekly briefings regarding the E(liminate)-Cigs campaign were disseminated to all District employees. The briefing included links to materials and additional resources prepared by the CDC and the DOH that can be displayed throughout school and shared with students and parents/guardians. Staff is collaborating with The Parent Academy in the development of a session on the dangers of vaping and e-cigarettes. Information regarding the Districtwide anti-vaping campaign and available parent education opportunities will be shared with parent organizations, including the PTSA.

School-Site Educational Opportunities

Student engagement is a key element in the dissemination of information regarding the negative impacts associated with vaping. As such, staff has taken the following actions:

- Each traditional middle and senior high school principal was instructed to host an E(liminate)-Cigs campaign kick-off event at their individual school between October 22 - November 16, 2018, and share pictures on their school's social media accounts. As part of the kick-off events, students were asked to sign an anti-vaping pledge.
- New Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) clubs were established to provide students a vehicle through which they may educate their peers on the harmful effects of tobacco use.
- Principals were also provided with District-approved morning announcement messages regarding the use of vaping products and the COSC.

Engagement with External Stakeholders

Presentations were given to several external stakeholder groups regarding M-DCPS' anti-vaping campaign. Staff presented at the Miami Beach Youth Commission meeting. At the conclusion of the presentation, a motion passed recommending the City Commission of Miami Beach post anti-vaping information at all city parks, bus stops, and trolley stops. Presentations regarding the E(liminate)-Cigs campaign were also given through the Florida Healthy School District Collaborative's Biannual Webinar and at the School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) meeting. The SHAC is comprised of representatives from various health care providers and community stakeholders.

The District continues to collaborate with external partners on its efforts to raise awareness on the dangers of vaping and e-cigarette use. On January 23, 2019, administrators, teachers, and counselors had the opportunity to attend a workshop conducted by Florida International University (FIU) titled "What Educators Need to Know About E-Cigarettes."

Next Steps

A video designed to educate students on the dangers of using e-cigarettes will be viewed at all middle and senior high schools. Continued collaboration will take place with the Florida Department of Health and community partners to educate and raise awareness of this important issue among all stakeholders, including students, parents/guardians, educators, and health care providers.

If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Valtena G. Brown, Deputy Superintendent/Chief Operating Officer, School Operations at 305 995-2938.

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cc: School Board Attorney
Superintendent's Cabinet
School Board Agenda Office