

Business Operations
Larry W. Stanearth, Chief Business Officer

SUBJECT: UPDATE REPORT ON FIRE SAFETY

COMMITTEE: FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Introduction:

At its meeting of March 12, 2003, the School Board (Board) directed District staff to prepare a report outlining a plan of action intended to expedite the correction of fire safety related items in the District's schools. That report was to identify pending items, priorities and attendant criteria, and recommendations on a delivery method or methods intended to reduce staff involvement and to complete all corrective action within a 24-month period. Immediately thereafter, a working group comprised of District staff and UNICCO representatives began the process of developing the plan of action.

Background:

Currently, the various inspections conducted by the District result in three basic categories: fire, sanitation and casualty. The inspections performed by outside agencies, i.e. the Miami-Dade County Fire Marshall and local municipalities with their own fire departments, are specific to fire safety. Both the District and the outside agencies inspect every building in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools annually, and the results are logged into a District maintained database. The initial assessment is consistent with the comments made by the County at a recent Board meeting; that is, that the District has made great strides in reducing the number of fire related violations and is very responsive to any violation that poses a risk to students or staff. The most recent data available for the preparation of this item indicates approximately 272 open work orders in the maintenance department, related to issues identified by the outside agencies, and approximately 1,100 violations listed in capital projects, either in the planning stage or in progress.

Opportunities for Process Improvement:

Based on the working group's review of the current processes and information flow (see Attachment A), the improvement areas listed below were identified, and are already being addressed as a team effort:

1. More closely integrated reporting systems among all the parties involved in the inspection and correction processes;
2. Establishment of a feedback loop among responsible parties to minimize the potential for under/overstatement of the extent and number of open violations;
3. Coordinated management over the entire spectrum of activities to track status, progress, and to assign responsibilities and accountability;

4. Redesign and coordination of the various databases, and as much as possible, automation and standardization;
5. Data entry streamlining to reduce administrative time and cost.

Short-term Action Plan:

The working group's consensus is that fire safety must be addressed in a coordinated manner by all the affected parties. Minimally, as short-term immediate measures, the working group recommends the following:

1. Concentrate on fire safety violations issued by the County and the municipalities as the highest priority;
2. Assign a program manager whose responsibilities will include immediate data reconciliation (presently on-going), and the coordination of the inspection verification process, supervision of assigned resources and the development of a long term corrective action plan including all related systems and processes. As part of the inspection verification process, 3-4 person teams will be dispatched to each affected site to validate the open violations. One of these team members will be a fire safety certified inspector whose secondary area of responsibility will be to verify whether or not the violation has been corrected;
3. Establish a priority setting process to rank all outstanding violations, a method of delivery, which should give top consideration to bundling of like-projects, and a timeline for execution (from design to construction).

It is anticipated that the above listed activities can be completed in two (2) months, including the validation process, and the preparation of funding estimates to cure the remaining outstanding violations. In the interim, and in tandem with the above activities, the working group will ascertain the immediate supply of A/E and construction firms available to address and cure the outstanding violations, and if necessary prepare a RFP to augment the pool of available candidates. Additionally, the week of April 11, 2003, the Construction Department proposes to assign an additional fourteen (14) projects which would cure an estimated 216 fire safety deficiencies, at a total preliminary estimated combined cost of approximately \$3.6M. These projects will be bundled and assigned to firms presently qualified as CM @ Risk to achieve time savings and economies of scale. Likewise, over the next week, the working group will start to prioritize the open work orders referenced earlier in this item, match priorities with available funding and schedule work assignments.

RECOMMENDED:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to complete the activities listed herein under Short-Term Action Plan, and provide a progress update to the Board at the July 9, 2003 meeting.

FW:ARC:aj

ATTACHMENT A

THE INFORMATION FLOW

1. School District Safety Inspectors conduct an annual inspection of each building. The scope of the inspection is all inclusive of fire and safety considerations. A form is filled out identifying the relevant items (the process flow is identical if the inspection is conducted by the County or the municipalities);
2. A copy of the inspection form is left with the site administrator, copies are provided to District Maintenance and Construction departments, and a copy is brought to the Safety Office for inputting into a database, and on the average, depending on workload, results are available electronically within one to two months thereafter. A review of the data from this source shows approximately 50,000 open entries (all categories of violations), over time, of which approximately 30,000 are predominantly safety items related to casualty and sanitation risk, and the balance coded as fire safety related. Of this latter group, 4,926 resulted from inspections by the County or the municipalities;
3. The data entered into the Safety database, exclusive of the violations requiring action by on-site personnel, is then divided into two basic categories, Construction and Maintenance. The items requiring action by the Maintenance Department are entered into the COMPASS maintenance management system. A limited comparison of the data between reporting systems concentrating on a single school site suggests discrepancies, and as such this is an area of the process on which the working group will focus for improvement. The items requiring action by the Construction department are forwarded to that division, and at that point, split into violations related to fire safety and all other categories. The fire safety violations are entered into a stand-alone database and are then incorporated into larger projects that typically deal with total system replacement. In most cases the Construction Department engages a professional consultant to further evaluate and estimate the problem. The violations that are in the 'all other' (casualty and sanitation) category, are referenced if and when a rehabilitation project is planned for the subject building. As of March 25, 2003 the Construction department had addressed approximately 100 fire violations, and had another 1,109 fire violations listed in projects being planned or in progress.
4. On the annual (re)-inspection, the inspectors determine if the findings from the prior year inspection have been corrected. Although inspectors may find the same problem still existing at re-inspection, it does not necessarily mean the problem was not addressed but may in many cases just be an indication of a re-occurring problem, e.g. the blocking of egress.