

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF TWO HIGHWAY SAFETY CONCEPT PAPERS ENTITLED "A PLAN TO REDUCE SPEEDING NEAR PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS" AND "A PLAN TO COMBAT AGGRESSIVE DRIVING IN SCHOOL ZONES", FOR FUNDING UNDER THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HIGHWAY SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

LINK TO DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPROVED SAFETY THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT BY IMPLEMENTING PREVENTATIVE MEASURES AND EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

The Florida Department of Transportation Safety Office (FDOT) awards Highway Safety subgrant programs to address traffic safety priority areas, such as Police Traffic Services, Speed Control, Speed and Aggressive Driving, Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety, and Roadway Safety. Safety Programs that are typically awarded address traffic safety deficiencies, expansion of an ongoing activity, or development of a new program.

Recognizing that student pedestrian safety is of utmost importance to the School District, the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Grants, Marketing & Community Services, Facilities Planning, School Police and Miami-Dade County Public Schools Community Traffic Safety Team (Public Schools CTST) collaborated to develop two concept papers for submittal to FDOT. All Concept Papers are reviewed and prioritized by FDOT and in August, 2008, selected agencies will be invited to complete a subgrant application. Both programs would mutually enhance safety efforts by providing driver feedback signage, education and School Police enforcement of traffic laws. The Public Schools CTST unanimously endorsed both Concept Papers at its March 13, 2008 meeting.

The following is a summary of the proposed Highway Safety Concept Papers. The complete proposals are being submitted to the Board as supplemental information under separate cover.

A Plan to Reduce Speeding near Public High Schools

Vehicular speeding in areas around schools could potentially have devastating consequences with regard to student-pedestrians. Solar-powered dynamic speed display signage can help reduce vehicle speeding when permanently installed at schools locations. The signs have built-in radar with changeable messages that display actual speeds of approaching vehicles, thus immediately alerting drivers of their excessive speed. It is proposed that the availability of signage and the presence of law enforcement can lessen the likelihood of traffic-related injuries in and around public high schools. Automated enforcement signage and technologies have proven track records of abating accidents and fatalities.

This grant requests seed money to pilot a traffic safety program at seven senior high schools. At the end of the academic year, piloted school data will be compared with the 36 other public high schools. The Public Schools CTST identified the following seven senior high schools as ideal candidates based on their locations in high volume traffic areas and incidents of pedestrian accidents:

- Coral Gables Senior High
- John A. Ferguson Senior High
- Felix Varela Senior High
- Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior High
- American Senior High
- G. Holmes Braddock Senior High
- Coral Reef Senior High

A Plan to Combat Aggressive Driving in School Zones

Traffic around school zones and the security of school facilities fall under the aegis of the School Police Department. Police enforcement is considered a key component in combating aggressive driving in school zones, coupled with traffic control measures and education. The School Police Department has limited resources and is lacking traffic officers and specialized traffic enforcement vehicles. In a comprehensive effort to minimize the risk of injuries to children and other pedestrians in schools zones, the Concept Paper proposes training for all school police officers and experienced traffic enforcement instructors, and will provide the necessary equipment for traffic control around schools, including five specialized traffic patrol vehicles equipped with radar/laser guns, traffic handbooks, citation books and traffic safety vests.

Five officers will work for three hours per day, five days a week and will be dedicated exclusively to this initiative. Activities will be centered around a designated school for 60 days, focusing first on schools located in the highest traffic activity locations. Traffic Enforcement Officers (TEO) will conduct a minimum of two traffic safety presentations per week for drivers in the enforcement area, including student drivers, school staff and volunteers. At the end of the 60-day enforcement period, the designated TEO will move to the next identified school zone.

ACTION PROPOSED BY VICE CHAIR PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse two Highway Safety Concept Papers entitled "A Plan To Reduce Speeding Near Public High Schools" and "A Plan to Combat Aggressive Driving in School Zones", for funding under the Florida Department of Transportation Highway Safety Grant Program, and direct the Superintendent to formalize the grant application accordingly.