

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Board Member

**SUBJECT: ELIMINATION OF ALL EXPANDABLE POLYSTYRENE
FOAM/STYROFOAM PRODUCTS**

COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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

Expandable Polystyrene Foam (ESP), known popularly by the brand name Styrofoam, has long been considered an environmental nuisance and, more recently, posed serious health concerns. Each year, an estimated 225 million ESP-based traditional lunch trays occupy space in landfills where they will not break down for hundreds of years and may leech pollutants into the water and air. More recently, concerns regarding the leeching of carcinogens into the foods carried by the trays and containers has become a serious concern. According to the National Research Council, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, and the National Toxicology Program, styrene, the main ingredient in polystyrene foam, is likely a carcinogen increasing the risk for leukemia and lymphoma in humans. Because of these environmental and health concerns, school districts, municipal governments, counties and businesses throughout the nation have moved to ban the use of ESP.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is to be commended for its continuing efforts at conservation and reducing its reliance on polystyrene products. In 2015, through the District's participation as one of the 11 largest school districts in the country forming the Urban School Food Alliance (USFA), the price of compostable lunch trays was driven down; these districts led the way in moving towards eliminating dependence on ESP, leveraging economies of scale to drive down the cost of a compostable alternative from a cost-prohibitive 12 cents to 4.9 cents. Additionally, the District has also ensured the training of Food and Nutrition employees includes sustainability and waste reduction education under their "Lean and Green" umbrella.

Currently, school sites are using compostable lunch trays, but ESP cups, plates, containers, and trays can still be found in use at school and district facility cafeterias. This agenda item authorizes the Superintendent to initiate a plan to eliminate the use and purchase of all ESP products at school sites and district facilities by July 2019 and initiate rulemaking procedures to incorporate the ban into School Board Policy 7460.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney's office as to form and legal sufficiency.

ACTION PROPOSED

BY LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County authorize the Superintendent to initiate a feasibility study to eliminate, due to identifiable health concerns, the use and purchase of all Expandable Polystyrene Foam products at school sites and district facilities and report back recommendations to the Board by the April 25, 2018 School Board meeting.