

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Board Member

**SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS DURING ACTIVE THREATS AND/OR CRISIS EVENTS**

**COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC**

**BLUEPRINT: SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

An effective communication plan can serve to deliver accurate and life-saving information to affected audiences during an active threat or crisis event. While many businesses, organizations and school districts have general communications plans and protocols, a closer look at real-time messaging during these events is warranted, particularly during an era noted for the upward trend in active shooter occurrences. The ability to communicate in real time through mass communication systems has been noted as a best practice, alongside the consideration given to message tailoring for affected audiences and their accessibility to said systems.

School campuses, like the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC), have implemented crisis communication plans inclusive of real-time messaging during emergencies with the intent of informing and protecting vulnerable students, faculty, and staff. During the active shooter event of April 30, 2019, UNCC officials activated their crisis communication plan, initiating real-time messaging via several platforms. Through the school's website, email system, and via messaging on UNCC's Twitter account, the affected audience on campus was kept apprised of the threat throughout the occurrence. The UNCC incident can serve to highlight how real-time messaging can expedite the delivery of life-saving instructions and information so that those affected can make informed decisions; an initial tweet informed audiences that shots had been fired at the Kennedy Building, follow-up tweets urged students to remain in lockdown mode and provided updates regarding law enforcement sweeps, and the final tweet reassured students that the campus was secure.

Unfortunately, 2017 and 2018 have the distinction of featuring the highest reported active shooter incidents in FBI recorded data over the last two decades, with 57 incidents combined. If anything is to be gained from the aftermath of this and other senseless and tragic cases, it is the opportunity to gain knowledge and plan accordingly. Through its dynamic and adaptive response in the wake of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School tragedy, Miami-Dade County Public Schools has distinguished itself as a leader in safety and security state-wide. As we evolve, develop and further refine communication protocols, the District has the opportunity to consider real-time messaging as one of those best practices.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:**

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

- a) review best practices in crisis communication in an effort to establish or identify a methodology for real-time communication with affected stakeholders during active threats or crisis events in Miami-Dade County Public School sites;
- b) provide a report to address the establishment and implementation of a crisis communication plan to include: findings, recommendations, a matrix of associated budgetary needs to operationalize, and a related strategic action plan and timeline for a projected launch in School Year 2020-2021, pending Board approval; and
- c) provide the report by the December 2020 School Board meeting for the Board's consideration.