

Dr. Martin Karp, Member

SUBJECT: THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA REVIEW THE SEXUAL ABUSE EDUCATION PROGRAM AND ADD A COMPONENT TO ADDRESS INTERNET SOLICITATIONS

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Nationwide, one of three girls and one of six boys experience some form of sexual abuse before age 18.

The sexual abuse education program currently offered in grade three is not being implemented in a number of schools. We must ensure that all students participate in the program.

Sexual assaults comprise 67 percent of the crimes against juvenile victims. Seventy-seven percent of sexual assaults on juveniles occur in the residence. In cases where children are sexually abused at home, schools may be the only source of information and protection for children.

In accordance with legislative requirements, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Division of Life Skills and Special Projects, has been coordinating the implementation of the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program through in-service workshops for teachers, counselors, and administrators.

The workbook *My Very Own Book About Me*, which is being used in some classrooms makes no mention of how to address Internet solicitations. According to Crimes Against Children Research Center, "one in five children will receive some kind of sexual solicitation while using the Internet."

Another instructional package, *The Safe Child Program* for K-3 students is either not readily available or is not being used. It was developed in 1989 and has undergone one revision 11 years ago.

Act for Kids reports that in addition to the individual suffering of victims, child sexual abuse contributes to other social dilemmas. Over 90 percent of all child molesters were assaulted as children. Over 80 percent of prostitutes on the street were sexually abused as children, and four out of five individuals incarcerated in penal institutions were abused as children. In general, children who are sexually abused are at a higher risk of being involved in other aggressive and destructive behaviors which negatively impact their lives, the lives of their loved ones, and the wellness of the community.

Research reveals that the cases of sexual abuse are severely underreported by educators who lack resources and support.

This item includes two components: child protection and parent education. Specifically, the Superintendent is directed to:

- Produce and display posters in every school with information for children to ask questions, report abuse, or solicitation;
- Create programs in The Parent Academy for parents who were physically or sexually abused in an effort to stop the cycle;
- In The Parent Academy and outside The Academy at school sites, inform and educate parents on topics including how to monitor children's online activities;
- Provide presentations on preventing, recognizing, and responding to child abuse;
- Address Internet solicitation by incorporating this topic into the curriculum and provide parents with guidelines on monitoring children's use of the computer;
- Ensure that approved curriculum materials are being implemented; and
- Partner with agencies that specialize in instruction for teachers and children regarding sexual abuse to conduct prevention presentations, and provide information on reporting procedures.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

DR. MARTIN KARP:

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

1. review the sexual abuse education program for the purposes of updating and strengthening the curriculum;
2. disseminate information at school sites for children, educators, and parents;
3. require all elementary schools that do not have sexual abuse instructional materials to purchase *My Very Own Book About Me* and to receive district-generated materials, which add a component to the curriculum addressing Internet solicitations;
4. create programs at The Parent Academy;
5. accept and review proposals from agencies expressing a willingness to provide services; and
6. accept and review proposals to provide assessments and prevention presentations.