

Mr. Renier Diaz de la Portilla, Board Member

**SUBJECT: INCORPORATION OF TACTICAL EMERGENCY
MEDICAL SUPPORT (TEMS) INTO SPECIAL
RESPONSE TEAM**

**COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND
GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

**LINK TO DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPROVE STUDENT SAFETY AND THE SCHOOL
ENVIRONMENT**

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One of the greatest lessons learned from the Columbine tragedy is the need to incorporate Tactical Emergency Medical Support with Special Response Team operations. In the case of Columbine, after EMS personnel were fired upon, paramedics were unable to enter to retrieve the wounded until the school was secured by the SWAT team. During this time, the SWAT team that was untrained to assist the wounded had to move critically wounded children to triage units. Due to the inability of EMS personnel to enter and treat students, the lapsed time from injury to treatment was 4 hours in some cases. As a consequence of untimely medical attention, many students that might have survived perished.

“Communities who employ SWAT teams should consider the incorporation of tactical emergency medical support (TEMS) personnel onto the team. ‘It has even been suggested that communities that deploy SWAT teams without TEMS support may be liable for litigation under the concept of deliberate indifference to human life. ‘Evidence exists within the military, civilian law enforcement, and medical literature that on-scene TEMS serves to improve mission success and team safety and health, while decreasing morbidity and mortality in the event of an injury or illness suffered during operations. National professional organizations within law enforcement and emergency medicine have identified and support the fundamental need for mission safety and the development of a standard model to train and incorporate TEMS into law enforcement special operations.’ [9] The presence of TEMS during the attack would have mitigated the need for SWAT operators to extract the wounded to R13’s location for initial care and stabilization.” (The *Internet Journal of Rescue and Disaster Medicine’s* article, “EMS response to Columbine: Lessons Learned”).

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Tactical Emergency Medical Support (TEMS) personnel are full time EMS paramedics that are SWAT certified. The TEMS personnel train with their Special Response Team, and are deployed jointly into all situations. The TEMS will give immediate emergency medical attention in the most hostile environments. In addition, The Department of Homeland Security-National Response Guidelines recommends that first responder teams incorporate TEMS into their current operations. Currently, the City of Hialeah has excess TEMS personnel that can be contracted to Miami-Dade Public Schools Police.

The events of Columbine and Virginia Tech have shown the need to reevaluate current safety procedures and policies. The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida must be proactive in assuring the safety of our students. There is no cost for this item.

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**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MR. RENIER DIAZ DE LA PORTILLA:**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, directs the superintendent to enter into discussions with existing governmental entities for the purposes of exploring terms and costs involved in contracting tactical emergency medical support personnel, and report to the School Board of Miami-Dade County on the meeting of August 1, 2007.

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