

Office of Superintendent of Schools
Board Meeting of August 1, 2007

July 31, 2007

School Police and District Security
Gerald L. Darling, Chief of Police

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECEIVE THE STATUS REPORT OF THE INCORPORATION OF TACTICAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SUPPORT (TEMS) INTO THE SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM

COMMITTEE: SCHOOL SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY

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

During the Board Meeting of June 13, 2007, Board Member Renier de la Potilla, proffered and The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approved Agenda Item H-4, directing the Superintendent of Schools to enter into discussions with existing governmental entities for the purposes of exploring terms and cost involved in contracting Tactical Emergency Medical Support (TEMS) personnel and to report to the Board during the meeting of August 1, 2007.

In the wake of the recent and senseless acts of violence that have taken place at Columbine High School, Virginia Tech University and other educational facilities and institutions across the nation, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) must ensure it is prepared to respond to and mitigate a similar situation should it arise here within the District. Unfortunately, the "school shooter" is arguably one of the most difficult threats to defend against and can also dole out a tremendous amount of violence in a short period of time.

The Miami-Dade Schools Police Department (M-DSPD) is charged with providing a full compliment of police services to the District and constantly trains to respond to such an incident. The Department is currently in the final stages of developing a Special Response Team (SRT) that is trained and equipped for such a response. The SRT, although highly skilled and outfitted for "high-risk" critical incidents within the school environment, cannot deliver emergency medical treatment at the scene to victims who have sustained serious injuries such as gunshot wounds and without this treatment, will likely perish due to loss of excessive blood.

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The incorporation of TEMS into the SRT would greatly enhance the ability to provide life-saving medical attention to fallen persons within a school during the peak of an incident, a time when most Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will not enter a "hot-zone" due to the risk of becoming a victim. TEMS personnel are trained paramedics that specialize in providing urgent care and treatment to victims prior to extricating them from the affected area. These critical moments are often referred to as the "Golden Hour" and can have a significant impact on whether a trauma patient survives. TEMS personnel are also trained in triage concepts whereby victims are classified and treated in terms of the severity of their injuries. TEMS personnel receive training in Special Weapon And Tactics (SWAT) Medic School and actively participate in joint training exercises with the Hialeah Police Department.

The M-DSPD has currently entered into discussions regarding this initiative as it relates to the cost and terms of incorporating TEMS into the SRT. M-DSPD recently conducted a training exercise with the TEMS personnel at Hialeah Miami Lakes Senior High School to test the application of this concept within a school setting. Given the fact that there are few, if any agencies that are presently prepared to address this issue, M-DSPD must take the appropriate measures to safeguard human life. Thus far, the concept of incorporating TEMS personnel into the SRT is favorable, notwithstanding any findings that would suggest a better option.

The following illustrates the current status of the proposed action brought forward by The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida regarding TEMS:

1. If feasible and agreed upon, M-DSPD would only require the services of four (4) TEMS personnel. The projected cost for said services would be approximately \$31,000.
2. M-DSPD Staff is currently conducting a staff study and concept paper on the incorporation of TEMS into the SRT during critical incidents. There is a full-scale training drill scheduled for Saturday, July 28, 2007, at the University of Miami involving TEMS personnel and M-DSPD. The information gathered during this exercise will be integrated into these reports. A final copy of these documents will be transmitted to the Board upon completion of this exercise.
3. The agreement to incorporate TEMS into the SRT will be reviewed by the Office of Risk Management and Board Attorney's Office.

RECOMMENDED:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, receive the status report of the incorporation of Tactical Emergency Medical Support (TEMS) into the Special Response Team (SRT).

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