

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair

**SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF THE ANNUAL "GREAT AMERICAN SMOKE-OUT" IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY, HEALTH AGENCIES, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, AND YEAR-ROUND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE A TOBACCO-FREE SOCIETY**

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

**LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

In 1964, the Surgeon General linked smoking use to serious diseases in the United States. Although much progress has been made in reducing tobacco use, and despite the well-known associated health risks, there are still 45 million Americans that continue to smoke. Recent data focusing on young adults shows that one out of four high school seniors are smokers. Alarming, every day nearly 4,000 children between the ages of 12 and 17 will naively try their first cigarette. Approximately 1,000 of them will become habitual daily smokers. The vast majority of Americans who begin daily smoking during adolescence are addicted to nicotine by young adulthood. Added to the concern is the increased use of tobacco flavored products, in particular those that may be mistaken for candy, leading to a false impression that they are safe.

A report from the U.S. Surgeon General recognizes that we cannot end the tobacco epidemic without targeting our efforts on our young population. Education and awareness campaigns are the most effective and successful strategies to help prevent our youth from smoking that first cigarette and/or trying a tobacco flavored product. In this regard, the District is working in partnership with local health agencies to strengthen our tobacco awareness efforts.

To advance this important safety initiative, it is recommended that a year-round awareness campaign be promoted throughout the school district, commencing on November 15, 2012, with the Annual "Great American Smoke-Out", sponsored by the American Cancer Society. During this event educational materials on tobacco prevention will be made available to the entire school district, on an age-appropriate basis. The Office of Risk and Benefits Management will also feature e-mail alerts highlighting the District's Smoking Cessation Program, a free insurance benefit available to all District employees covered under CIGNA, to help them quit and stay tobacco free. During this campaign, those adults who currently smoke will be encouraged to use the date to make a plan to stop, or stop smoking that day. By doing so, smokers will be taking an important step towards a healthier life. Together, as community leaders, education and health care providers, we can help reach the ultimate goal of making the next generation tobacco-free.

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**ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR  
MS. PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse the annual "Great American Smoke-Out" in partnership with the American Cancer Society, health agencies, and local governments, and year-round awareness campaign to promote a tobacco-free society.