

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 A 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

January 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the first Surgeon General's Report that 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, millions of Americans 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 under the age of 18 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 this 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 in November with the Annual "Great American Smoke-Out", sponsored by the American Cancer Society. During this month, educational materials on tobacco prevention will be made available to district schools, 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 eligible District employees, 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 toward a healthier life and set an important example for our youth. Together, as community leaders, education and health care providers, we can help reach the ultimate goal of making the next generation tobacco-free.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR
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 a year-round awareness campaign to promote a tobacco-free society.