

Ms. Susie V. Castillo, Board Member

SUBJECT: LIGHTNING DETECTION SENSORS/ALARMS IN SCHOOLS

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Lightning is the second leading cause of storm deaths in the U.S., killing more people than tornadoes or hurricanes. From 2006 through 2013, 261 people were struck and killed by lightning in the United States. Just this year, according to the National Weather Service, there have already been 26 deaths caused by lightning. Over 95% of these fatalities occurred outdoors, with most occurring in Florida, known as the "lightning capital" of the country. Statistics show that Florida has more lightning per square mile than any other state in the country. In the hottest spots in South Florida, lightning strikes up to 75 times more often than on the opposite corner of the country. Since 1993, over 20 people have been killed or injured by lightning in South Florida.

Just this summer The Washington Post reported that "deaths from lightning strikes have taken an alarming upswing so far this year, after years of a downward trend. So far this year, 17 people have died after being struck by lightning - the highest count we've seen at this point in the calendar year since 2009 when 23 were reported through July 9."

Lightning strikes have been documented as far as 25 miles away from their parent storms - bolts from the blue - so just because the rain has stopped doesn't necessarily mean you're safe yet. Moreover, media reports of fatal lightning incidents, indicate that many victims were either headed to safety at the time of the fatal strike or were just steps away from safety.

Given the deadly threat posed by lightning in our state, it is imperative that the district develop a lightning safety plan for schools and explore the feasibility of placing lightning detection sensors/alarms in all schools. It is recommended that the district consider public/private partnerships and collaboration with local municipalities in its feasibility assessment of this proposal.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. SUSIE V. CASTILLO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to explore the feasibility of installing lightning detection sensors/alarms in all schools in Miami-Dade, and develop a comprehensive lightning safety plan for schools, report back to the Board by the January 2016 Board meeting.