

Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

SUBJECT: DRINKING WATER IN SCHOOLS

COMMITTEE: FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION

LINK TO STRATEGIC

BLUEPRINT: EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

Lead in school drinking water is a national problem. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics lead exposure in children can cause headaches, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, anemia, hyperactivity and agitation. Further, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states there are no safe levels of lead exposure in children. To address this problem there is currently a bill in the Florida Legislature (Senate Bill 66: Drinking Water in Public Schools), that would require public schools to filter drinking water at the source on campuses built before 1986. The filters would have to remove lead.

This bill, among other things, state the following:

“For each district school which was built before 1986, each school district shall:

- (a) Identify and install a barcode on all drinking water sources in such school.*
- (b) Install a filter that reduces lead in drinking water on each drinking water source and, at a minimum, maintain each filter in a manner consistent with the manufacturer’s recommendations. The filter or all the filter’s component parts must meet the National Sanitation Foundation/American National Standards Institute Standard 53: Drinking Water Treatment Units-Health Effects or Standard 61: Drinking Water System Components-Health Effects, as appropriate.*
- (c) Post a conspicuous sign near each school water source that is not a drinking water source. The sign must include wording and an image that clearly communicate that water from the source should not be used for human consumption or, if applicable, food preparation or cooking.*
- (d) Publish on the school district’s website a list of drinking water sources at such schools. At a minimum, the list must include for each drinking water source all of the following:*
 - 1. The date on which the current filter was installed.*
 - 2. The date on which the current filter is scheduled to be replaced.*
 - 3. The barcode identification number associated with the source.*
 - 4. Any actions necessary to comply with the requirements of this section which have been completed or are pending.”*

The adverse health effects of lead exposure in children and adults are well documented and no safe blood lead level in children has been identified. Experts generally agree that lead accumulates in the body and can be ingested from various sources, including water sources used for drinking, food preparation, or cooking. All sources of lead should be controlled or eliminated to prevent childhood lead poisoning. As used in this section, the term “drinking water source” means any water source used for drinking, food preparation, or cooking.

According to a report from the Harvard School of Public Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, many schools across the country have too much lead in their tap water, but most are not even testing for it. All kids no matter where they live should have access to safe drinking water in school. Drinking water is important for helping kids grow up healthy and water should be safe to drink which is why this item is important.

Regardless of whether SB 66 is approved by the Legislature, this item seeks to authorize the Superintendent to conduct a feasibility study regarding the potential costs and impact of implementing its provisions and report back to the Board by the August 14, 2019, meeting. The report should include the schools potentially impacted, the estimated number of water sources per school, the overall costs of implementation, and details sufficient to determine potential cost estimates for each water filter, signage, bar code identification and website listing. The report should also include current efforts and protocols used by the District to detect and prevent lead in drinking water at schools.

This item has been reviewed by the School Board Attorney for legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. DOROTHY BENDROSS-MINDINGALL:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to conduct a study on the feasibility of implementing SB 66 and potential costs, regardless of whether the bill is approved by the Legislature, including a description of current efforts and protocols used by the District to detect and prevent lead in drinking water at schools, and report back to the Board by the August 14, 2019 School Board meeting.