

Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

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**SUBJECT: THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
SUPPORT HUMAN TRAFFICKING EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS SENATE
BILL 554 IN THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE**

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATIONS, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
BLUEPRINT: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS AND INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS**

Human trafficking is a major problem in our community and nation today. Florida ranks third in the nation in human trafficking. This problem has infiltrated the walls and halls of our schools, which are often places for the recruitment of Human trafficking victims.

The 21st Annual No More Broken Hearts Domestic Violence Workshop was held last month virtually. This annual event, founded by Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, brings together a cross-section of the community to discuss domestic violence and human trafficking. The half day program provided Information, resources and consisted of virtual workshop panel discussions from various perspectives regarding this danger in our homes, schools, and community.

One of the goals of No More Broken Hearts is to discuss and develop action items and concrete solutions that can be translated into actionable items to address this problem. One of the recommendations from this year's event is the focus on this policy item. As such, there is currently a bill in Florida Legislature that will require human trafficking education in schools. Senate Bill 554 among other things, "Revises required health education in public schools to include information regarding the dangers and signs of human trafficking; specifying the minimum requirements of the human trafficking education portion of the comprehensive health education curriculum; providing an effective date.

According to the Florida Department of Education, human trafficking, under both federal and Florida law, is defined as the transporting, soliciting, recruiting, harboring, providing, or obtaining of another person for transport; for the purposes of forced labor, domestic servitude or sexual exploitation using force, fraud and/or coercion. Human trafficking is modern slavery.

There are approximately 30 million people enslaved throughout the world with 2.5 million located right here in the United States.

- Many of these victims are lured with false promises of financial or emotional security; instead, they are forced or coerced into commercial sex (prostitution), domestic servitude or other types of forced labor.
- Any minor under the age of 18 who is induced to perform a commercial sex act is a victim of human trafficking according to U.S. law, regardless of whether there is force, fraud or coercion. Increasingly, criminal organizations, such as gangs, are luring children from local schools into commercial sexual exploitation or trafficking.
- According to the U.S. Department of Justice, every two minutes a child is trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation in the United States.

Most school-aged Florida children spend five days a week, six to eight hours a day, in schools. As a result, schools are a potential environment for a variety of prevention and intervention activities for the children. School settings provide educators and school personnel with a unique opportunity to support the health and development of students. Ensuring a safe and supportive environment for students is the responsibility of all school personnel.

The human trafficking education portion of the health curriculum must include, at a minimum, recognition of the signs of human trafficking; awareness of resources, including national, state, and local resources; prevention of the abuse of and addiction to alcohol, nicotine, and drugs; information on the prevalence and nature of human trafficking; strategies to reduce the risk of human trafficking; techniques that may be used in setting healthy boundaries and how to safely seek assistance; and information on how social media and mobile device applications are used for human trafficking.

This item has been reviewed and approved as to form and legal sufficiency by the School Board Attorney.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

DR. DOROTHY BENDROSS-MINDINGALL: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to:

- 1) include this item Senate Bill 554 as a priority for the School Board's 2021 Legislative agenda; and
- 2) explore the feasibility of adding Human Trafficking Education to school district's health curriculum, and report back to the Board by the June 23, 2021 School Board meeting.