

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

SUBJECT: FENTANYL – A FAKE PRESCRIPTION PILL, WIDELY AVAILABLE, AND INCREASINGLY LETHAL

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: SAFE, HEALTHY, & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Fentanyl is a potent opioid that is legally prescribed for acute and severe pain under the care of a medical doctor, but it is also found in many illicit drugs such as counterfeit pills that are produced to resemble drugs. Illegal fentanyl is sold as a powder, in eye droppers, or nasal sprays, or made into pills that look like real prescription opioids, in candy, and even blocks that resemble sidewalk chalk. Every color, shape, and size of fentanyl should be deemed exceedingly dangerous and deadly. An amount equal to 10-15 grains of table salt is enough to kill a person, according to the United States (U.S.) Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

The DEA has recently informed the public of an alarming emerging trend of colorful fentanyl available across the United States. Named as the “rainbow fentanyl”, this trend appears to be a new method used to sell highly addictive and theoretically deadly fentanyl to look like candy to children and young adults.

According to the DEA, fake pills have been confiscated in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and in 2022, the DEA seized more than 50.6 million fake pills often laced with fentanyl, more than double the amount of fentanyl pills seized in 2021. The DEA laboratory testing has revealed that six out ten fentanyl-laced fake prescription pills examined in 2022 contained potentially lethal doses of fentanyl. In 2021, four out of ten fentanyl-laced fake prescription pills were found to contain the potentially lethal doses.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that 107,622 Americans died of drug overdoses in 2021, with 66 percent of those deaths related to synthetic opioids like fentanyl. Furthermore, an increase of illicit fentanyl is the likely driver of teen drug overdose deaths in recent years, according to data from the CDC. Among teens ages 14-18, the CDC data showed a substantial 169% increase in deaths from illicit fentanyl and synthetics from 2019 to 2022 and a nearly 30% increase from 2020 to 2021.

This item seeks to direct the Superintendent of Schools to develop and implement an awareness campaign for students, parents, and employees regarding the dangers of fentanyl, presenting an alarming increase in poisoning deaths among children and young adults; to review the operational, budgetary, and legal aspects of the likely need to provide emergency medical treatment, including FDA-approved medication, in the event of a potential fentanyl overdose at a school-site or a school-related event; and provide a report to the Board by April 8, 2023.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the General Counsel's Office as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR
MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent of Schools to:

1. develop and implement an awareness campaign for students, parents, and employees regarding the dangers of fentanyl, presenting an alarming increase in poisoning deaths among children and young adults;
2. review the operational, budgetary, and legal aspects of the likely need to provide emergency medical treatment, including FDA-approved medication, in the event of a potential fentanyl overdose at a school site or a school-related event; and
3. provide a report to the Board by April 8, 2023.