

Mr. Joseph S. Geller, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall } REVISED AT DAIS BY BOARD ACTION

SUBJECT: REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF DISTRICT'S USE OF SYNTHETIC TURF AND ARTIFICIAL GRASS

COMMITTEE: FACILITIES & CONSTRUCTION

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: EFFECTIVE & SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is committed to providing learning environments that promote student health and safety while ensuring responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. As the District continues to invest in facilities and outdoor spaces, decisions regarding surface materials should be guided by the best available scientific evidence and long-term financial considerations.

Synthetic turf and artificial grass have become increasingly common in schools and recreational facilities because of cost-effectiveness and reduced maintenance requirements. These materials offer operational advantages, but also present health and safety considerations that must be evaluated before continuing with installations.

Recent research has identified issues that continue to be examined by public health and environmental experts, including elevated surface temperatures during periods of extreme heat, chemical components found in certain synthetic turf material, microplastic generation, environmental impacts, and lifecycle costs. At the same time, several comprehensive assessments have concluded that average exposures during typical use are below established levels of concern, while recognizing that additional research is needed regarding long-term exposure.

The District also has a responsibility to ensure that capital investments provide the greatest long-term value. Although synthetic turf may reduce certain maintenance costs, installation costs are generally higher than those of natural grass, and synthetic fields require replacement at the end of their service life. A comprehensive evaluation of lifecycle costs will provide a more complete understanding of the long-term financial implications of future investments.

Additionally, advances in natural grass management, hybrid field technologies, Florida-Friendly landscaping, and other climate-appropriate design strategies may offer alternatives that support student wellness, environmental sustainability, and operational efficiency.

Given the District's responsibility to make informed, evidence-based decisions, this item calls for comprehensive review of the available research, financial implications, operational considerations, and best practices before expanding the use of synthetic turf on District properties. This will help ensure that future decisions appropriately balance student health and safety, fiscal responsibility, environmental sustainability, and long-term facility management.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
JOSEPH S. GELLER:**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, directs the Superintendent to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the District's use of synthetic turf and artificial grass, including student health considerations, environmental impacts, lifecycle costs, operational standards, maintenance and upkeep practices of existing turf fields, benefits and limitations, and available alternatives, and evaluate the feasibility of implementing a future policy adjustments, including maintenance and replacement costs as well as safety concerns when such review is completed, if deemed appropriate; ~~temporary moratorium on future installations while such review is completed~~;
2. Convene an advisory panel comprised of relevant community stakeholders to assist in the review, including, as appropriate, public health experts, environmental professionals, students, representatives of PTAs, school administrators, and other subject matter experts, to evaluate evidence and provide input and recommendations to the Superintendent;
3. Present the findings and any recommendations at the Facilities and Construction Meeting of ~~October 7, 2026~~ December 2026.