



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

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January 20, 2012  
BULLETIN # P-14132-CFO/RBM

Contact Person:  
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ACTION BY:  
February 29, 2012

TO: Principals and Department Heads

FROM: Michael J. Burke, Chief Financial Officer *MJB*

SUBJECT: "SAFETY MATTERS"

Risk Management believes we, collectively as a District, can save substantial dollars per year through enhanced safety measures. Here's How: We will be instituting various training requirements, and enforcing existing School Board Policy, 2.382 Safety Awareness & Safety Committees. Incorporating an awareness of safety within our culture and everyday work environment will make the difference. In fact, two of our peer urban Districts in Florida, (similar size or larger) have realized significant savings through their safety programs.

We can do a better job in the safety arena through:

- Accident prevention, including prompt correction of hazardous conditions
- Safety training for all staff
- Enforcement of safety rules
- Reviewing accidents and making recommendations on corrective action.

This combined effect will be more safety awareness and accountability. The program will be branded "Safety Matters," and will include a Train U site with resources to assist with understanding roles and responsibilities, and resources to assist with compliance with School Board Policy 2.382.

#### **Aren't these costs (for accidents) paid by insurance?**

No, costs for workers' compensation (lost wages, medical treatment, and other statutory benefits), general liability (student and visitor accidents), and auto liability claims, are paid from operating fund dollars. Since these claims are paid from the Risk Management budget, most schools and departments don't understand the costs. With the continuing pressure on education funding, this program will help make scarce dollars available for other operational needs.

#### **What are our costs?**

An average of the past three (3) years total claims costs for our District is \$12.4 million dollars. The categories are broken down as follows:

- Workers' Compensation      \$10 million or 81%
- Auto Liability                 \$1.8 million or 15%
- General Liability             \$614,099 or 4%

You will soon be receiving your school's or department's specific claim data for the past three (3) years. In addition to your claim averages for your school or department, the report will also reflect your area and total averages per year to see how your school compared to the area average. Along with your claim data will be a key to reading and interpreting the data. This claim data will also be shared with area superintendents and leadership team.

### **How will this help my school/work location?**

The loss of a teacher from the classroom or the loss of a support employee from your work team or school due to an injury compromises our ability to support the educational mission of the District. While we know there will always be workplace and student accidents, our goal is to reduce severity and incorporate loss prevention concepts to reduce accidents. Of particular concern are those accidents that are based on hazardous acts and conditions.

Your school or department safety committee is the key to reducing and correcting hazards at your individual locations.

### **What's next?**

1. Dianne Howard and Linda King will be attending principal area meetings in January and February to discuss this topic in more detail, addressing questions and receiving your feedback.
2. Accountability and enforcement of the requirements of Policy 2.382. To that end, each school must name someone as the safety committee chairperson. This will be the school's "Safety Advocate."
3. A Train U site titled "Safety Matters" will be created to support the requirements of the policy, which will require each advocate/chairperson to register for the course to receive course news and assignments. The site will provide resources for the safety committee and spell out responsibilities of the safety committee, including the requirement to review all accidents that occur.

If we all work together, we can make our district a safer, more productive place for students, employees, and visitors.

EWG/MJB/DH/LK/ka

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_



E. Wayne Gent, Superintendent