

# NEWS

**AS PROPOSED BY SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR PERLA TABARES HANTMAN, THE SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES ITEMS RECOGNIZING SPINAL CORD INJURY AWARENESS WEEK AND ENDORSING THE ANNUAL 'GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT'**

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## **NEWS RELEASE FROM PERLA TABARES HANTMAN**

October 18, 2013

As proposed by School Board Chair Perla Tabares Hantman, the School Board voted; to recognize Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Week on November 11-17, 2013, and also to endorse the annual "Great American Smoke-Out" in partnership with the American Cancer Society, health agencies, and local governments.

Former professional racecar driver Darrell Gwynn founded Spinal Cord Awareness Week 11 years ago through the Darrell Gwynn Foundation (DGF) to provide awareness, prevention, support and funds to help find a cure for paralysis.

"DGF's mission is to educate the community, particularly high school students, about spinal cord injuries by providing facts and statistics about such injuries, as well as common-sense ways to prevent them," said Ms. Hantman.

January 2014 will mark the 50th anniversary of the first Surgeon General's report that linked smoking use to serious diseases in the nation. Despite the progress made in reducing tobacco use and the well-known associated health risks, millions of Americans continue to smoke. Data shows that one out of four high school seniors are smokers. Every day, nearly 4,000 children will try their first cigarette. Approximately 1,000 of them will become habitual daily smokers.

"A report from the U.S. Surgeon General recognizes that we cannot end the tobacco epidemic without targeting our efforts on our young population," said Ms. Hantman. "Education and awareness campaigns are the most effective and successful strategies to help prevent our youth from trying a tobacco-flavored product. In this regard, the District is working in partnership with local health agencies to strengthen our tobacco awareness efforts."

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