

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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April 9, 2008

TO: All Principals  
FROM: James F. Notter  
Superintendent of Schools  
SUBJECT: ENERGY DRINKS

The danger to students from energy drinks is real and has created a problem at some of our schools.

For your information, attached is an article titled; "Danger: Energy Drinks Not for Kids," that was released by the School District to the media. Also attached is an article titled; "Regional Drug Alert – South Florida Drug Observatory," dated March 18, 2008.

Please read the enclosed articles, share them with your staff, and post the articles so that they are visible to visitors and students, as appropriate. These articles may also be included in your school's newsletter or other communication that is sent to parents.

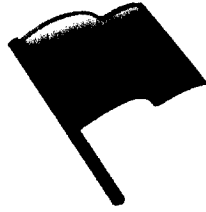
Providing information about the danger of energy drinks may also be a part of your daily announcements at your school. In addition, check the vending machines at your school to ensure that energy drinks are not included in the beverage selections.

**Should you have any questions, please contact The Supply Management and Logistics Department at 754-321-0515.**

JFN/DC/BL/RW:mw  
Attachment

cc: School Board Members  
Executive Leadership Team  
Area Directors School Improvement  
Robert Waremburg, Director, Supply Management and Logistics  
Barbara Leslie, Director, Food and Nutrition Services

## **Danger: Energy Drinks Not for Kids**



Improved performance. Increased concentration. NOT! Claims such as these along with names that reflect marketing strategies geared toward kids- “Red Bull”, “Monstar”, “Spike”, etc., have caused an increase in sales and popularity of these items in the last few years. But, are these drinks safe for our children?

The high caffeine level of these beverages makes them unsuitable for children. A high intake of caffeine can boost heart rate and blood pressure. If these drinks are mixed with alcohol (a common practice among youth) the risk of heart rhythm problems is increased. Additionally, caffeine is a diuretic, leading to dehydration. Dehydration is a major concern for young athletes exercising in Florida’s heat and humidity. Dehydration contributes to heat illness, which can be deadly.

Energy drinks derive their name from the addition of “so-called” energy enhancing ingredients such as: vitamins, minerals, caffeine, guarana, carnitine, inositol, ginseng and other substances. The main ingredients in these drinks are caffeine and sugar. These drinks are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. The manufacturer can mix a variety of ingredients without anyone assuring its safety.

Often, energy drinks replace more nutrient-dense foods in the diet such as milk, which is high in calcium and needed for the development of strong bones. Children may skip meals missing needed fruits and vegetables. A well balanced diet and plenty of rest will provide our children with the energy they need to perform both physically and academically.

**ALCOHOL ENERGY DRINKS TARGETED TO YOUTH**

The latest effort of the beer industry to lure new customers is the introduction of malt liquor products containing high doses of caffeine and alcohol. Examples include Anheuser-Bush's *Bud Extra* and *Tilt* and Miller Brewing Company's orange-flavored *Sparks* malt liquor. While these products have not been widely advertised, they are promoted on youth-oriented websites targeting underage drinkers.



**BUD EXTRA**



**SPARKS**



**TILT**

A key problem is that the packaging of these malt liquor products closely resembles that of non-alcohol energy drinks. In fact, the malt liquor-energy drinks generally cost 50 cents less than those without alcohol. Store clerks arrested for selling these products to minors said they were not aware that they contained alcohol.

The mixture of alcohol and caffeine is also seen in cocktails of liquor and non-alcoholic energy drinks as well as in the new fruit flavored malt liquor products containing elevated levels of caffeine. A recent Wake Forest University study found that those drinking alcohol mixed in energy drinks were **twice** as likely to:

- Drink more
- Be drunk,
- Ride with a driver who had been drinking,
- Commit a sexual assault,
- Be a victim of a sexual assault,
- Be hurt or injured, and
- Require medical attention.

The reason for these problems is that the stimulant effects of high dose caffeine in energy drinks masked the feelings of being intoxicated from the alcohol. Thus, people drank more and experienced more consequences.

To see a recent WFOR-Channel 4 news story about these products visit:

<http://cbs4.com/seenon/i.team.miller.2.643928.html>

To learn more about this issue and others related to alcohol and youth, contact the **Underage Drinking Task Force** in your county:

- **The Miami Coalition for a Safe and Drug-Free Community** (305) 854-4515
- **United Way of Broward County's Commission on Substance Abuse** (954) 760-7007
- **The Palm Beach County Substance Abuse Coalition** (561) 627-6603

The South Florida Drug Observatory is a program of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Substance Abuse which is a community partnership with the United Way of Broward County's Commission on Substance Abuse, the Florida Department of Children and Families, Nova Southeastern University, The Miami Coalition for a Safe and Drug-Free Community, and Up Front Drug Information Center.

*Regional Drug Alert* may be copied without permission.

Please cite the Center for the Study and Prevention of Substance Abuse

**Telephone:** (786) 242-8222 **E-Mail:** upfrontin@aol.com **Website:** drugfreebroward.org