

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member

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**SUBJECT: COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS**

**COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION, & TECHNOLOGY**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC**

**BLUEPRINT: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS & INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County is committed to providing all students with a quality education, inclusive of academic support and enrichment opportunities, as well as supporting and advocating for their fair, equal, and equitable pursuit of their hopes, dreams, aspirations, and life's work. For many students, the pathway to a life of promise, prosperity, and a rewarding, respectful career is attending and graduating from college. Yet, regrettably for many students, this pathway is riddled with academic, social, financial, and often, systemic roadblocks and impediments that prevent many students, after graduation, from attending a college or university.

Although a college education is not the panacea to ensure the learning and life-long success and prosperity of those that earn it, a college education has been widely regarded as such an important step in life that it has become a central part of the "American Dream." A college or postsecondary education opens up increased opportunities in life, and intellectually, technically, and socially prepares youth and adults for more promising, rewarding careers. Many studies have also shown that in addition to having a better paying and higher skilled profession, a college or postsecondary education also leads to overall happiness and stability throughout one's life.

The School Board and the Superintendent have historically recognized that the provision of educational, emotional, social, and postsecondary support, resources, and advisement is essential to ensuring the learning and life-long success of all students. In fact, Priority 1 of Pillar 1 of the *2015-2020 Miami-Dade County Public Schools Strategic Blueprint* affirms the District's commitment to "ensure that all students graduate and are college and career ready." They also recognize that such provision, and even intervention is not circumscribed to students' tenure and matriculation in the District, but is also linked to support and preparation beyond high school.

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In addition to graduating from high school and earning and maintaining a grade point average acceptable to a college or university, one of the major hurdles a student must overcome is the earning of an acceptable score on college entrance examinations. These examinations are not administered, authorized, or managed by the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, yet, are administered and managed through private entities. In many instances, students have met all of the requirements for college entry, yet have been precluded from being accepted into a college or university due to scores that were not sufficient, but have been determined to be statistically elevated.

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In many of these instances, there have been no determination of any wrongdoing or improprieties on the part of the students or even proctors during administration. Scores have been withheld or “flagged,” however, due to a performance increase from one test to the other that was deemed too significant.

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Recently, the “flagging” and withholding of the college entrance examination score of a Miami-Dade County Public Schools senior high school student preparing to graduate and attend college have drawn light on this issue and impact on students. Although the District has no legal authority, as both an advocate for the fair, equal, and equitable treatment of our students, and partner with entities that administer and manage the college entry examinations, a review of such matters would be prudent at this time. As an advocate for children, youth, and families, as well as issues that impact the community, it is not uncommon for the School Board and the Superintendent to wade in the waters of inquiry, advocacy, and resolution in instances in which a problem potentially exists and/or injustices may occur.

Lastly, this issue has also brought to light that in such instances of a “flag” or withholding, absence the availability of legal representation or recourse, most students, especially those from homes and communities where there is a dearth of information, understanding, resources, and representation to navigate any available means or mechanisms to appeal or negotiate a fair, reasonable, and expedient resolution. It has also demonstrated, through continuous cases that are being reported, that students and their families have no real sense or direction on who to turn to for help.

This item seeks to direct the Superintendent to review and quantify instances in which such “flagging” and withholding of college entrance examination scores of Miami-Dade County Public Schools’ students due to increased test scores. This is not to review and quantify any documented instances of test scores due to cases of wrongdoing or improprieties on the part of a student or test proctor or administrator. It also directs the Superintendent to work with entities that manage and/or have authority for the administration of such college entrance examinations to review these matters and ways to achieve resolutions. Lastly, this item directs the Superintendent to provide information, through schools, websites, and offices such as the College Assistance Program, on the process for reporting and responding to the “flagging” or withholding of a college entrance examination score due to a score increase determined to be statistically significant.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney for legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
DR. STEVE GALLON III:**

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

1. review and quantify where operationally and administratively feasible, inclusive of demographic subgroups, instances in which such “flagging” and withholding of college entrance examination scores of Miami-Dade County Public Schools’ students due to increased test scores. This is not to review and quantify any documented instances of test scores due to cases of wrongdoing or improprieties on the part of a student or test proctor or administrator;
2. work with entities that manage and/or have authority for the administration of college entrance examinations to review these matters and ways to achieve resolutions;
3. establish a process, where operationally and legally permissible, to report and account for incidents in which students’ college entrance examination scores have been “flagged” or withheld, due solely to increased test scores;
4. provide information, where operationally and legally permissible, through schools, websites, and offices such as the College Assistance Program, on the process for reporting and responding to the “flagging” or withholding of a college entrance examination score due to a score increase determined to be statistically significant; and
5. provide an update to the Board no later than the School Board Meeting of March 13, 2019.