

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member

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SUBJECT: COLLEGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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 determined by the needs of each student for successful K-12 progression and high school graduation. In doing so, the provision of educational, emotional, social, and postsecondary support resources and advisement is essential to ensure 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."*

The Board, along with the Superintendent, also recognize that their role in educating and developing students is not circumscribed by students' attendance and matriculation in the District, but is also linked to the support and preparation whose impact extend beyond high school graduation. Thus, the District remains committed to the provision of support, resources, and advisement as students prepare to enter college or the world of work.

Historically, this specific body of work has been delivered at the senior high school level through the College Assistance Program (CAP) and CAP Advisors, professionals who are experienced, trained, and dedicated to supporting students' understanding, preparation, and engagement in the college application, admission, and enrollment process. In addition, this work has also been supported at the Board level by initiatives such as the Miami National College Fair which has been consistently promoted and championed by School Board Chairwoman Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman. Her recent School Board Agenda Item H-5 was unanimously co-sponsored and approved at the School Board Meeting of December 14, 2018.

According to information on the District's website, *"the College Assistance Program (CAP) is a postsecondary advisory program in all public senior high schools in Miami-Dade County. The specialized focus of the program enables CAP advisors to serve students more effectively because of their specific expertise in this field."*

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It is one of the few college-help services in schools nationwide that initiates contacts with the students. CAP advisors communicate effectively on behalf of students as a result of their special relationships with college representatives as well as local, state and national organizations." The website also notes that the mission of the College Assistance Program is to:

- *increase the number of students applying for admissions into post-secondary institutions*
- *increase the number of students applying for local and national scholarships*
- *increase financial aid awareness and application*
- *reduce the drop-out rate by focusing on postsecondary transition*
- *increase parental involvement, and*
- *improve student academic performance.*

Though critically important to and valued by the Board, Superintendent, educators, students, parents and college and university partners, it has been recognized that due to past financial hardships of the District, not every senior high school presently has a CAP Advisor to fully implement the mission and purpose of the College Assistance Program and to further support students' participation in initiatives such as the *Miami National College Fair*. The decision to provide this position and subsequent support was decentralized. Consequently, many high schools, due to a myriad of reasons, decided not to employ a CAP Advisor at the school. The absence of this position in high schools, especially in those schools with high indicators of academic, economic, and social fragility increase the likelihood of creating further inequities and opportunity gaps for students interested in pursuing a college education after graduation.

This item seeks to direct the Superintendent to review the current level of implementation of the College Assistance Program (CAP) and availability and assignment of CAP Advisors to senior high schools throughout the District, as well as schools offering grade 12 that will ultimately graduate and award high school diplomas to students.

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. assess and evaluate the implementation of the College Assistance Program (CAP) with respect to specific metrics outlined in its mission;
2. review the assignment and availability of CAP Advisors at senior high schools throughout the District, as well as schools offering grade 12 that will ultimately graduate and award high school diplomas to students;
3. explore the allocation of positions to ensure that a CAP Advisor commensurate with CAP are provided to schools that currently do not have the position and thereby are limited in offering CAP services and supports to their students and provide relevant and requisite training on CAP and related services;

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4. make budget and/or policy recommendations, where required, appropriate, and/or needed;
5. include any budget recommendations to increase the number of CAP Advisors in the proposed 2019-2020 District Budget and related allocation plans to ensure that each senior high school and schools offering grade 12 have a CAP Advisor; and
6. provide an update to the Board no later than the School Board Meeting of March 13, 2019.

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