

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member

SUBJECT: UPDATE OF THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS)

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: SAFE, HEALTHY, AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Senate Bill 7026, authorized by the 2018 Florida Legislature, comprehensively addressed the establishment of a Mental Health Assistance Allocation which affords funding to assist school districts in establishing or expanding school-based mental health care. In response to this legislation, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) established the Department of Mental Health Services at the School Board meeting of July 25, 2018, Agenda Item D-24 Revised.

The newly established department is responsible for the organization, management, and monitoring of student mental health referrals, District and community resources, and the delivery of mental health care and treatment for M-DCPS students. A cadre of 30 mental health and social work professionals expands support services in elementary, K-8, middle, and senior high schools and provides greater flexibility to address mental health apprehensions as they may become evident. These newly hired employees assist and support students and families with social, emotional, and physical development needs which ultimately should improve and maximize student success.

At the same meeting, the Board approved the M-DCPS Mental Health Assistance Allocation Plan, Agenda Item D-68 Revised. Annually, starting September 30, 2019, each school district shall report on its program outcomes and expenditures to the Commissioner of Education for the previous fiscal year. The report will contain comprehensive information including, but not limited to, the number of students who receive screenings or assessments; are referred for services or assistance; receive services or assistance; and the related entities who are providing said services or programs.

This agenda item provides a number of recommendations to ensure that school-based mental health care services are provided in a timely manner and are updated pursuant to possible changes during the 2019 legislative session; that students and families receive the necessary services which hopefully will ensure success in life; and that the School Board is well-informed, fully engaged, and supportive of the needs of the District, the schools, and the students M-DCPS serve.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney's office as to form and legal sufficiency.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:

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

1. present to the School Board at the Personnel, Student, School & Community Support Committee meeting of July 22, 2019, with an update report to include:
 - a. progress of the Department of Mental Health Services to date;
 - b. review of possible changes to the Mental Health Assistance Allocation legislation, pursuant to final actions taken during the 2019 Florida Legislative session;
 - c. recommendation for enhancing and updating mental health services in M-DCPS;
 - d. proposed recommendations to the Board based on staffing needs to ensure that mental health evaluations and services are conducted in a timely manner; and
2. submit to the School Board at its meeting of September 4, 2019, the Mental Health report prior to submission to the Commissioner of Education.