

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Board Member

SUBJECT: CONNECT-ED MESSAGES

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC

BLUEPRINT: INFORMED, ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Since 2006, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has utilized the Connect-ED messaging system as a communication tool, facilitating the delivery of efficient and cohesive messaging from school sites and the District to parents, staff and other stakeholders. Through this system, messages to parents may be recorded and transmitted through phone calls, emails and/or text messages.

The District's *Connect-ED Communication System Guidelines* manual serves to provide users with procedures and suggestions for the appropriate and most effective use of the system. The manual defines four types of messages that may be sent by the District and/or school site: Attendance, Emergency, Outreach and Survey. The manual states that "Emergency messages include but are not limited to: weather related emergencies and/or incidents and events that impact the health and safety of students and/or employees." Additional guidance is provided to school site principals to consult with the Region Superintendent and/or School Operations to determine whether criteria is met to send this type of message and notes that, in most cases, emergency messages will be initiated at the District level. The manual also addresses text messaging, stating "Text messaging is to be used in emergency situations and sent from the District to parents. Any text message sent by the principal must be approved by School Operations in advance."

As duly elected officials and representatives serving constituents and municipalities district-wide, School Board members are often called upon to provide information and responses regarding events that have warranted emergency messaging to the community. They are often expected to have knowledge of that messaging and event by constituents, other elected officials, and the media. Currently, no mechanism for the efficient sharing of these emergency messages with School Board members exist. While the Miami-Dade Schools Police Chief and/or the corresponding region superintendents advise School Board members of critical events that are emergency related and/or of high public interest in their respective districts, additional awareness of the Connect-ED emergency messaging shared with the school community can further inform and facilitate a cohesive response to all stakeholders.

This agenda item seeks to authorize the Superintendent to determine and implement the most efficient methodology to communicate to the Board the content of all Connect-Ed messages sent under the emergency designation, as described in the *Connect-ED Communication System Guidelines* manual, and/or of which are high interest to the public and media, as determined by the Superintendent or his designee, by no later than the commencement of the 2019-20 school year.

The Board would be well served to receive this information, which could be easily disseminated mirroring the format and methodology employed by School Operations' daily Critical Incidents Reports/Automated Incident Reporting Archive. In a succinct manner, this report serves to keep all Board Member offices aware of district-wide critical incidents and noteworthy occurrences which involve our students and stakeholders.

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

ACTION PROPOSED BY

DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent to:

- a) review and determine the most efficient means of communicating to the Board the content of all Connect-Ed messages sent under the emergency designation, as described in the *Connect-ED Communication System Guidelines* manual, as well as those of which may fall outside the emergency designation but are of high interest to the public and media, as determined by the Superintendent or his designee; and
- b) establish a plan to implement such means of communication by no later than the commencement of the 2019-20 school year.