

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair }
Dr. Martin Karp, Vice Chair } A
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall } D
Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman } D
Dr. Lubby Navarro } E
Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas } D

SUBJECT: AMENDMENT TO BOARD POLICY 6332 TO INCLUDE UNION REPRESENTATION ON SELECTION COMMITTEES FOR HEALTH AND FLEXIBLE BENEFITS

COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida (Board) remains committed to providing a competitive compensation and salary schedule to all of its employees. This commitment also includes the provision of a high-quality, low-cost, yet rich fringe and health benefits program to its nearly 50,000 full and part-time employees and retirees. In doing so, the Board is also committed to embracing its fiduciary role and responsibility to tax payers that have entrusted it to make fiscally responsible, transparent, and accountable decisions on behalf of the District, employees, and community stakeholders.

Effective leadership on the part of the Board posits that its fiduciary responsibility be balanced with the inclusion, input, and engagement of relevant stakeholders. In embracing such inclusive paradigms and practices, the Board does not abdicate its fiduciary role and responsibility. It is not an either/or---but a both/and, and the Board, through policy, should adopt and promote inclusive, respectful, and engaging practices in issues involving employees and related matters. Such practices are even more critical when decisions of the Board will have a direct or even vicarious impact on employees, community stakeholders, and in some instances, members of the community. This ethos has been reflected in both policy and practice for decades, and is often demonstrated and/or operationalized through existing Board policies through advisory committees, task forces, ad hoc and oversight committees, and various councils.

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With respect to selection of healthcare, fringe benefits, and related risk management professional services, the Board, through Policy 6332 and with contracts that exceed \$50,000.00 annually, has embraced this ethos and practice of inclusion through an ad hoc insurance committee and, with items involving collective bargaining, the Fringe Benefits Council as far back as 2005, according to Board records. During these periods, stakeholders were able to assist in conducting reviews on related criteria regarding proposed healthcare, fringe benefits, and risk management related contracts. Union representatives were provided a platform to provide, if not a vote, a voice on behalf of their members.

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Research on leadership and organizational dynamics has resoundingly concluded that when employees and related stakeholders are involved in making decisions, they gain a professional and personal stake in the organization and its overall success. This is especially critical when such decisions directly impact the employee's work duties, compensation, and/or overall role and responsibility in the organization. Such research has significant implications for practice in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) as an organization. By actively engaging (M-DCPS) employees, union representatives, and related and impacted stakeholders in decision making, the performance, commitment, and overall morale within and even outside of M-DCPS improve. In making decisions regarding healthcare, fringe benefits, and risk management related issues, the Board has historically engaged and empowered the aforementioned stakeholders in the process. Doing so has engendered a spirit of mutual respect, cooperation, transparency, and shared commitment to the District. Not doing so, inevitably has the opposite effect.

Recent matters involving the Superintendent's recommendation to the Board for proposed voluntary benefits for employees resurrected the importance of employee inclusion, representation, and participation in decisions that impact them. The initial process of this most recent matter involving proposed voluntary benefits, either by decision, design, or default, reportedly did not provide a platform for voice or vote for union leadership to speak on behalf of their members. This exclusion on the front end of decision-making not only became a perceived act of offense to those who were excluded, but an act of quantifiable inefficiency in the amount of time, human capital, and related expense to subsequently reach an appropriate and fair resolution. Such exclusions of the voice of union membership should not be left to the personal and/or professional devices of the bureaucracy, especially when involving matters that directly impact their members' finances and/or families. Such inclusion should be in place for perpetuity and codified, even if revised at a later time, in Board policy.

This item seeks to direct the Superintendent to initiate rulemaking that ensures the formal representation and participation, in the form of both voice and vote, of union membership in matters that involve the selection of healthcare, fringe benefits, and related risk management professional services for all contracts that exceed \$50,000.00 annually.

This item has been review by the School Board Attorney for legal sufficiency.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to initiate rulemaking to amend School Board Policy 6332 *Professional Services Contracts for Insurance or Risk Management Programs* to ensure the formal representation and participation, in the form of both voice and vote, of union membership in matters that involve the selection of healthcare, fringe benefits, and related risk management professional services, and those required by and subject to for all contracts that exceed \$50,000.00 annually.

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