

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Vice Chair

Co-Sponsors:      Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair  
                             Ms. Lucia Baez-Geller  
                             Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall  
                             Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas  
                             Ms. Luisa Santos

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**SUBJECT:            PLANNING FOR THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF INFLUX OF  
                             HAITIAN IMMIGRANT STUDENTS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY  
                             PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

**LINK TO STRATEGIC  
PLAN:                SAFE, HEALTHY, & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) remains committed to the education and uplift of children, youth, and families regardless of race, ethnicity, or national origin. M-DCPS' principles and practices are grounded in providing each student with an equal and equitable pathway toward learning and life-long success. Despite its primary purpose of educating students, M-DCPS has been resolute in providing a strong voice of advocacy, support, and service to immigrant students and their families in their pursuit of their life's goals, hopes, dreams, and aspirations. These efforts have also been demonstrated by the Superintendent, administrators, teachers, and staff throughout the district.

The School Board has consistently demonstrated its conviction in and commitment to providing for and ensuring the education of immigrant children who arrived in the United States due to political and social unrest as well as natural disasters in their native countries. Such immigrant children and families have lived, studied, worked, and prospered in the United States. Many of these families, such as those who arrived from the island of Haiti, do so seeking improved opportunities and the achievement of more prosperous hopes, dreams, and aspirations for their children.

In fact, at the School Board Meeting of March 15, 2017, the School Board unanimously approved Board Item H-7, Continued Advocacy And Protections For Undocumented Immigrant Students From Federal Immigration Authorities And Other Law Enforcement Authorities On School Grounds, proffered by School Board Member Lubby Navarro, which reaffirmed the Board's and Superintendent's work over the last several years and called for several actions advocating for the rights of undocumented students and their families, which included but was not limited to, continued distribution of guidelines to parents, students, and employees, and collaboration with community organizations on joint advocacy efforts.

**Revised  
H-7**

Also, at the School Board Meeting of September 6, 2017, the School Board unanimously approved Agenda Item H-14, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Student Immigration Influx Plan, proffered by School Board Member Maria Teresa Rojas. The item cited the development of a plan by M-DCPS in 1987 to respond and be prepared for the possibility of a large-scale influx of foreign-born students and their families, and authorized the Superintendent to re-evaluate, review, and update the plan and related policies, as well as provide a copy of the plan to the School Board.

Lastly, at the School Board Meeting of May 24, 2017, the School Board unanimously approved Board Item H-18, Urge President Donald Trump And The United States Department Of Homeland Security To Extend Temporary Protected Status For Haitian Nationals, proffered by Dr. Steve Gallon III, which authorized the Superintendent to urge President Donald Trump and Secretary of Homeland Security John F. Kelly to extend Temporary Protected Status for Haitian nationals for at least another 18-month period. Though not granted at the time, in May 2021, President Biden administration announced an 18-month temporary protective status for Haitians already residing in the United States, which now applies to Haitians in the country as of July 29. The administration cited *"...security concerns, social unrest, an increase in human rights abuses, crippling poverty, and lack of basic resources, which were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic."*

Recently, thousands of Haitian migrants appeared at the United States-Mexico border seeking to cross the Rio Grande and find refuge in the United States. The surge of migrants – mostly Haitian – was reportedly the result of messages by word of mouth or social media that the border at Del Rio was open.

The surge was also in the midst of a worldwide pandemic and the recent spread of the Delta variant---a vicious form of COVID-19 that is taking the lives of thousands of Americans at an alarming rate. The surge, which includes women and children, has resulted in chaotic scenes at the bridge, including law enforcement officials on horseback using aggressive tactics against migrants. Such images, which reflect a throwback to periods on the enslavement of Black people in this country, have sparked anger in both local and federal officials, and even others from around the world calling the alleged treatment and makeshift camps under the bridge inhumane. Many Haitians camping under the bridge are believed to have been living in South America since the catastrophic 2010 earthquake in their native country. The economic toll of the pandemic on the region further fueled migration to the southern border, as well as the recent presidential assassination and the earthquake that hit the country in August 2021.

Despite the political rancor and fallout from these horrific events, the United States may have to receive and address an increase of immigrants who are provided entry into the country. Based on many accounts, such entry will lead to an influx of immigrants, mainly Haitian arriving in South Florida and with children to be enrolled. Despite the unprecedented surge and horrific visuals at the border, the commitment of the School Board, Superintendent, and entire M-DCPS community is preceded as the district serves a significantly large population of students and families from Haiti as well as from other Central American and Caribbean nations, and has been a strong voice of advocacy, support, and service to immigrant students and their families.

This item seeks to direct the Superintendent to provide an update to the School Board on plans and provisions made and/or will be made in anticipation of an influx of migrant students, specifically those from Haiti as a result of the recent border crisis; identify and collaborate with community partners and related agencies to expand provision and

support for immigrant students and their families, specifically those from Haiti as a result of the recent border crisis; review the enrollment practices as well as educational and related services provided to immigrant students in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools pursuant to relevant Board Policy, state statute, consent decrees, and federal law, as well as best practices and evidence-based programs for addressing and supporting immigrant students and their families; provide the most recently updated copy of the Student Immigration Influx Plan to the School Board; and provide update and status to the Board on the abovementioned no later than the School Board Meeting of November 17, 2021.

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

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

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

1. provide an update to the School Board on plans and provisions made and/or will be made in anticipation of an influx of migrant students, specifically those from Haiti as a result of the recent border crisis;
2. identify and collaborate with community partners and related agencies to expand provision and support for immigrant students and their families, specifically those from Haiti as a result of the recent border crisis;
3. review the enrollment practices as well as educational and related services provided to immigrant students in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools pursuant to relevant Board Policy, state statute, consent decrees, and federal law, as well as best practices and evidence-based programs for addressing and supporting immigrant students and their families;
4. provide the most recently updated copy of the Student Immigration Influx Plan to the School Board; and
5. provide update and status to the Board on the abovementioned no later than the School Board Meeting of November 17, 2021.