

Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

SUBJECT: IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: INFORMED, ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

The Miami-Dade School Board's anti-discrimination policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of a student's immigration status. In addition, the U.S. Supreme Court has held that public school districts must educate all students regardless of their immigration status. The School Board has historically been committed to providing safe, welcoming, and inclusive schools for all students without regard to their immigration status.

However, the current national and state political climate has caused heightened anxiety for many immigrant, refugee and migrant students and families in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). In fact, recent bills filed in the Florida Legislature target refugee students and families and would end out-of-state fee waivers for tuition at Florida's Colleges and Universities for certain immigrant students.

For example, HB 427 would end the State's participation in Florida's Refugee Services Program by December 31, 2017. The State's withdrawal would also end the unaccompanied refugee minor program as well as the Cuban/Haitian entrant program. Not only would individual refugee students and their families lose benefits but the District would lose millions of dollars in funding for its English language and vocational training programs that currently serve this population through its adult education centers. In addition, SB 82 would no longer require the State's public universities and colleges to provide in-state tuition to undocumented students who graduate from state high schools.

These types of bills will negatively impact M-DCPS, its students and their families as well as our communities, both financially, socially, educationally, and emotionally. It is possible that there may be additional legislation introduced this year on the state and federal level that negatively impact our M-DCPS refugee and immigrant students and families. This item requests that the Board amend its 2017 State Legislative Platform to specifically oppose any legislation that eliminates funding that allows M-Dcps to assist refugee and immigrant students and their families or negatively impacts our immigrant students' ability to obtain an education in Florida.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

DR. DOROTHY BENDROSS-MINDINGALL: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County amend its 2017 State Legislative Platform to specifically oppose any legislation that eliminates funding that allows M-Dcps to assist refugee and immigrant students and their families or negatively impacts our students' ability to obtain an education in Florida.