

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION CRISIS MANAGEMENT

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL SERVICES AND STUDENT AND SCHOOL SUPPORT

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

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is entrusted by thousands of families to keep their children safe before, during, and after school. This level of expectation and trust does not rest exclusively with the school site. As both national and local incidents have recently shown, the need for school bus transportation security and crisis planning is as important as planning for such at the school site. In many cases, school bus drivers are the first and last school employees to see students on a daily basis. Consequently, school buses have become extensions of schools.

School bus drivers, as with all school and district employees charged with the protection and supervision of students, must be trained and prepared in helping students through a crisis and ensuring their safe return home from school. Knowing what to do when faced with a crisis can be the difference between calm and chaos, courage and fear, and even more critically, life and death.

A proactive approach to ensuring that school bus drivers are adequately trained can mitigate property damage, prevent injuries, and even more important, save lives. The importance of taking a proactive approach in the areas of school bus transportation crisis management, preparation, and training, as well as the development, review, and/or revisions to policies and plans governing school bus transportation safety cannot be underscored enough.

Although training is provided to District school bus drivers in areas that may include personal safety, student misconduct, student fighting, and parental conflicts, increased training in these areas must be provided and expanded to other areas that include but are not limited to potential threats to student and school bus driver safety such as vehicle assaults, hijackings, and possession of dangerous materials or weapons.

The importance of crisis and emergency planning and management is widely known. The midst of a crisis is not the time to start figuring out who ought to do what. For it is at that moment that everyone involved— from top to bottom—must know the “drill” and what to do, and equally important, know each other and each individual’s respective role and responsibility in handling the crisis. It is critically important that school bus drivers and related transportation supervisors and district staff clearly know, understand, and are able to implement the procedures and guidelines in the event of a school bus transportation crisis.

This item seeks to ensure that plans regarding school bus transportation safety and crisis management are developed, reviewed, and/or revised to ensure adequate training and preparedness of school bus drivers and related transportation supervisors and district staff in dealing with a crisis in which students are being transported on District-operated school buses.

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

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

1. convene a Task Force comprised of district and school-site administrators, school bus drivers and related transportation supervisors and district staff, AFSCME representatives, parents, and other governmental entities to review and assess the District's current school bus transportation and crisis management plan; and
2. develop, revise, and/or update the school bus transportation and crisis management plan, as recommended by Task Force as needed; and
3. formulate Board Policy recommendations and/or amendments, if needed; and
4. provide comprehensive training on school bus transportation and crisis management to all school bus drivers and school bus transportation related administrators and staff; and } Revised
5. finalize and codify a school bus transportation and crisis management plan, inclusive of related training, prior to the opening of the 2017-2018 school year; and } Revised
6. explore contractual requirements for independent contractors that operate bus routes to ensure alignment with district comprehensive training on School Bus Transportation and Crisis Management. } Added