

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF DISCIPLINARY, SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AT HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC EVENTS

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC

BLUEPRINT: SAFE, HEALTHY, AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is committed to developing, supporting, and implementing policies and practices that promote the total development of all students. This commitment not only focuses on students' development and advancement in academics and the arts, but in athletics as well. For decades, athletics has been a staple in many school districts, schools, and more important, the learning and life experiences of students. In fact, research has shown that athletics, specifically at the high school level, provides a vehicle to improve students' citizenship, sportsmanship, self-discipline, physical and emotional wellness, and grade point averages. Research has also shown that people who participate in high school athletic programs get better jobs, earn better pay, and realize professional and personal benefits that last a lifetime.

To this end, M-DCPS has adopted and implemented policies that not only advance athletics, but also strengthens sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity in the students that participate. In fact, *School Board Policy 2341-Interscholastic Sports* affirms the authority and responsibility of the Board and role of the Superintendent in ensuring that "*sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity characterize the manner in which the athletic program is conducted and the actions of students who participate.*" It also affirms the role of the Board in "*recognizing the value of school athletic activities as a vital part of education.*" Despite the Board's policy and position, recent incidents involving alleged conflicts at high school athletic events and as reported by the media call for Board action and review.

As a part of the authority and responsibility of the Board, and duty of the Superintendent, it is incumbent that all policies, procedures, and practices are reviewed periodically to ensure that athletic programs and events continue to adhere to the highest of ethical standards and sportsmanship, and avoid incidents could result in present or future conflicts in schools and throughout the community. This is especially critical at the high school level as student athletes prepare to enter postsecondary and/or career pathways, and are more vulnerable to incidents such as youth violence. Such a review will also provide an opportunity to assess policies, procedures, and practices that ensure the safety and security of student athletes, students, staff, and public stakeholders that attend and/or participate in school athletic events, and make improvements, where needed.

Further, *Policy 9160-Public Attendance at School Events* states that “members of the community are welcome to attend athletic and other public events at schools and/or District facilities.” These provisions provide a framework and delineation of the role and responsibility of the M-DCPS and attendees at such events. In addition to providing for a welcoming environment and experience, implicit in these provisions is the duty and expectation that athletic and other public events sponsored by the Board and/or held at schools and/or District facilities will ensure that all participants and members of the public are safe, and that there is a plan of action in the event of a critical incident. Amid the growing concern for and reality of such incidents occurring in public spaces, including high school athletic events, now is the appropriate and prudent time for M-DCPS to review, reinforce, and/or revise policies, procedures, and practices that guide the safety and security at public athletic events sponsored by the District.

Across the nation, there has been increased focus on ensuring the safety and security in public places, especially schools. Despite this increased focus, preparedness for incidents that threaten the safety and security of students and the public at school-sponsored activities such as high school athletic events continue to demand review and enhancements that further protect the welfare and safety. At the start of the 2018 high school football season, a spate of shootings at or outside high school football games in three states on a single Friday night left two dead and at least three injured. In fact, Florida was home to the most violent of the incidents was reportedly in Jacksonville where one person was killed and two others injured after a game between Raines High School and Lee High School where a shooting occurred near the main gate to the stadium as attendees were leaving the game. Further south in Wellington, Florida, students and parents would scatter outside Palm Beach Central High School as gunfire occurred in the fourth quarter. Three people were injured—one critically.

Other shootings involving athletic events occurred across the country. One was reported in Fairfield, California which claimed the life of a teenager, and a game was halted in Illinois amid shots being fired near the stadium where Freeport High School and Auburn High School were competing.

Although there have been no reported shootings or serious acts of violence at high school athletic events in Miami-Dade in 2018, recent incidents involving student athletes and members of the public require a review of the disciplinary procedures for student athletes who are involved in unsportsmanlike conduct and/or physical conflicts during competition. Such conflicts have a proclivity to trigger subsequent conflicts among members of the community attending the event. Therefore, this also requires a review of the safety and security procedures for students and members of the public in attendance at District or school sponsored athletic and related events.

This item seeks to direct the Superintendent to review disciplinary procedures and guidelines for student athletes. This item also directs the Superintendent to review the safety and security procedures for student athletes, auxiliary, faculty and staff, and members of the public when entering and exiting the school and/or District facility, and/or in the event of a critical incident occurring before, during, and/or after the competition.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney’s office 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. review the District and state policies, procedures, and guidelines that address the sportsmanship, behavior, ethical, and integrity standards of student athletes and coaches in M-DCPS;
2. establish a Task Force comprised of principals, athletic directors, coaches, and a School Board representative to review and discuss the sportsmanship, behavior, ethical, and integrity standards of student athletes and coaches in M-DCPS;
3. provide mandatory annual training to principals, school administrators, athletic directors, and coaches that specifically addresses and ensures understanding and compliance with District and state policies, procedures, and guidelines that address the sportsmanship, behavior, ethical, and integrity standards of student athletes and coaches in M-DCPS;
4. develop, implement, and monitor a process to ensure that student athletes are provided an annual review of the sportsmanship, behavior, ethical, and integrity standards for student athletes in M-DCPS;
5. conduct a review of the policies, procedures, and practices that guide the safety and security of students, staff, and attendees at public athletic events sponsored by the District and/or which are held on District-owned facilities;
6. provide mandatory annual training to school police, principals, athletic directors, and related district athletic staff on the procedures to be implemented in the event of an emergency or crisis event at public athletic events sponsored by the District and/or which are held on District-owned facilities;
7. make policy revisions and/or recommendations, where determined appropriate or necessary; and
8. provide an update to the Board no later than March 29, 2019.

