

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Vice-Chair

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SUBJECT: AFFIRMANCE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT'S COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE, UNITY, FAIRNESS, EQUITY, AND EQUALITY FOR BLACKS AND AMONG ALL STUDENTS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) remains committed to not only the provision of educational services to students, but to supporting the paradigms, principles, and practices of social justice, unity, fairness, equity, and equality. Consistently, the School Board and the Superintendent have been a strong, unified voice of advocacy on such issues.

Recently, the community, state, and nation have been rocked by racial division, discord, disharmony, and distrust, and have begun to question the fairness and integrity of systems of government and criminal justice as they relate to the Black community and communities of color and poverty. Persons from these communities have expressed and articulated the sting of marginalization, dehumanization, trauma, and disenfranchisement they feel and their belief that too often vex people who are Black, minority, and poor.

The brutal, public, and inexplicable death of George Floyd, a Black man whose life was taken by a white police officer, has resulted in the explosion of protests around the Miami-Dade community, and throughout the state, nation, and world---even notably outside the U.S. Embassy in London. Mr. Floyd's slow, painful death occurred as the officer maintained his knee lodged into his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, and as a crowd of onlookers *watched* and *pleaded* and *recorded* the callous denial of his citizenship, devaluing of his humanity, and eventual slow, painful, and horrific taking of this unarmed Black man's life. The issue reportedly arose from a call to police regarding the alleged use of a counterfeit \$20 bill. Mr. Floyd's eventual death was over twenty dollars.

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Ensuring that all students know, believe, and realize that they have an equal and equitable opportunity for learning and life-long success, regardless of race, is not only a guiding tenet of public education, but an obligation of each person and entity responsible for its delivery and dispensation. It has also served as the fulcrum of how students' education in and across Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is to be provided and how, within the structure of the school system and greater community, they are viewed and treated.

As a District committed to diversity, equity, equality, and inclusion, the shouldering of ensuring the fair, equal, and just treatment of Blacks and persons from under voiced, underserved, and underrepresented communities, represents an even heightened sense of social responsibility. It also provides an even greater opportunity to not only support students' achievement toward learning and life-goals, but also helps in recognizing present and past inequities and in helping to rectify the economic and social inequalities and injustices of today. Such inequities and inequalities have too often resulted in poor students and those of color and with immigration status experiencing a lesser form of education, such as less qualified teachers, less course offerings, less culturally responsive teaching, and less programs of innovation and enrichment, and lower teacher expectations; yet, being subjected to higher rates of disciplinary action and referral and placement into special education. These inequities, injustices, and inequalities are often transitioned into experiences into the larger society which often maintains inherent, structural systems of racism, denial, and deprivation. These further impede students' pursuit of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness---pursuits guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Despite the inequalities and injustices historically sewn into the fabric of this country, M-DCPS remains committed to issues and practices of social justice, fairness, unity, equity, and equality, and maintains the goal of eliminating disparities and educational barriers in its continued quest toward racial parity and diversity in its schools and across the district and throughout the community, state, nation, and world.

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This item seeks to affirm the School Board's commitment to issues and practices of racial and social justice fairness, unity, equity, and equality, and that it maintains the goal of eliminating racial and social intolerance, indifference, and division in its schools and across the district and throughout the community, state, nation, and world. This item also seeks to review and contemplate ways that additional resources and strategies may be adopted and implemented to teach and promote racial and social justice, unity, and harmony among students in M-DCPS.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney for legal sufficiency.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, affirm its:

1. commitment to issues and practices of racial and social justice, fairness, unity, equity, and equality, and that it maintains the goal of eliminating racial and social intolerance, indifference, and division in its schools and across the district and throughout the community, state, nation, and world; and

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2. direct the Superintendent to review and explore ways that additional resources and strategies may be adopted and implemented to teach and promote racial and social justice, unity, and harmony among students in M-DCPS and provide an update no later than August 17, 2020.