

Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair
Dr. Steve Gallon III, Vice Chair
Ms. Susie V. Castillo
Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman
Dr. Lubby Navarro
Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas

SUBJECT: RACIAL AND CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION CURRICULUM

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

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

Black people in America have faced over 400 years of oppression in this country. As people of African ancestry, known as African Americans, we have suffered in silence long enough. Even though we have made gains, institutional systemic racism still exists. Racism is a learned behavior, it's taught, and as a school system, we teach. Just like we teach students in the classrooms and in schoolhouses, we must also teach our students in the classroom of life.

We must address the unequal treatment in the justice system, education system, health system and economic system. Combating racism and creating an inclusive environment for black and brown students and students of different socioeconomic backgrounds, regardless of their religious faiths or sexual orientation, should be a priority of our school system.

In Minneapolis, Minnesota, the tragic death of African-American George Floyd on May 25, 2020, set off protests around the country and globe against police brutality and systematic racism. Many have spoken out against social injustices caused by racism and cultural intolerance.

School Board Policy 2225, *Multicultural Programs*, states in part, that The School Board:

is committed to equity in education for all students, and to providing a learning environment that reflects the cultures, traditions, customs, and historic legacies that comprise the District's population. This will enable students and staff to acquire a broader knowledge base while developing appreciation and respect for individual similarities and differences, and to function effectively in Miami-Dade's culturally and linguistically diverse society, as well as in the State, the nation, and the world.

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Multicultural education must not only be a part of the curriculum, but must become a driving force in the restructuring of the school culture and organization.

Moreover, as part of the Required Instruction pursuant to F.S. 1003.42, the Student Progression Plan includes multicultural education as a topic at every grade level.

In a statement released June 2, 2020, the Superintendent of Schools reiterated our school district's position as "a staunch advocate for equality and social justice in public education." In furtherance of Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (MDCPS) mission, the District has historically kept open the dialogue on race and equality.

Following the troubling incident that took place in 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia, MDCPS created resources for students who may have questions and concerns and to encourage educators to find ways to discuss sensitive and difficult topics. In particular, "Instructional Resources to Combat Current Events Stemming from: Hatred, Racism, Intolerance, and Bigotry" was made available on the MDCPS website. In addition, counselors, administrators and staff continue to be available to students wanting to discuss these important issues.

While extracurricular sources are no doubt beneficial, incorporating antiracism into MDCPS' curriculum is crucial. Teaching students how to work together, despite their differences in racial and cultural background, is key to a healthy learning environment that promotes equality and acceptance.

This agenda item requests Board approval to direct the Superintendent: (1) to review the currently available curriculum-based options that address racism and cultural understanding ; (2) establish a student led taskforce that meets monthly to discuss institutional systemic racism in our society; (3) require the taskforce to report to the School Board quarterly; (4) in consultation with relevant departments of M-DCPS to develop a proposed, and/or enhance existing, Districtwide antiracism curriculum and make recommendations on August 12, 2020 to the School Board to be incorporated in the 2020-2021 School Year.

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

ACTION PROPOSED BY

DR. DOROTHY BENDROSS-MINDINGALL: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to:

1. review the currently available curriculum-based options that address racism and cultural understanding;
2. establish a student led taskforce that meets monthly to discuss institutional systemic racism in our society;
3. require the taskforce to report to the School Board quarterly; and

4. in consultation with relevant departments of M-DCPS to develop a proposed, and/or enhance existing, Districtwide curriculum that addresses racism and cultural understanding and report back with recommendations on August 12, 2020 to the School Board to be incorporated in the 2020-2021 School Year.

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