

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair
Dr. Steve Gallon III, Vice Chair
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall
Ms. Lucia Baez-Geller
Ms. Christi Fraga
Dr. Marta Perez
Ms. Luisa Santos

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SUBJECT: MIAMI-DADE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD FORMAL REQUEST TO THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND THE EDUCATION COMMISSIONER TO PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE EXTENDED PROVISION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACCESS TEST TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS AND INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Board policy 5410, Student Progression Plan, states that “*The Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Learners (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0)* is the annual summative English language proficiency assessment that is administered to all Kindergarten through 12th grade English language students. The assessment is aligned with WIDA English Language Development Standards and assesses each of the four language domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. ACCESS for ELLs 2.00 monitors students’ progress in acquiring academic English.” In-person testing is required for all English Language Learners (ELL) during the time period designated for the administration of the ACCESS test in Florida from January 25, 2021 to March 19, 2021. WIDA has expressed concerns about the validity of take-home exams and the student’s ability to access technology and it will not administer the test remotely. However, WIDA is prepared to work with State Departments of Education regarding any requests to extend state testing windows, including extending testing into the summer of 2021.

Many grassroots organizations, advocates, ELL students and their families have begun articulating their concerns with state education commissioners and boards overseeing English language testing in Florida, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Colorado, among others. Some states have responded with comprehensive guidelines for districts and families about voluntary participation in WIDA ACCESS testing.

During these very challenging times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our students are still participating in My School Online. With over 61,704 (2019-2020 M-DCPS Statistical Highlights), English Language Learners in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, many of our ELL students may lack access to dependable technology, their parents may not speak English in order to support the learning, and students may not have been able to socially interact with their teachers and their peers during the pandemic, which has certainly not helped them in developing language skills. These students are now being asked to return to school to take the assessment.

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Therefore, this agenda item seeks for The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, to formally submit a request to the Governor of the State of Florida and the Education Commissioner to provide an alternative extended provision for the administration of the ACCESS test to English Language Learners until the summer of 2021, and to ensure that students are not disciplined, punished, or sanctioned for opting out.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, formally submits a request to the Governor of the State of Florida and to the Education Commissioner to provide an alternative extended provision for the administration of the ACCESS test to English Language Learners until the summer of 2021, and to ensure that students are not disciplined, punished, or sanctioned for opting out.