

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Vice Chair

**SUBJECT: REVIEW STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND PARENTAL PARTICIPATION PRACTICES AND POLICIES**

**COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC**

**PLAN: SAFE, HEALTHY, & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County is committed to ensuring that parents and family members play a pivotal role in the education and development of its students, especially school-aged children. In fact, School Board Policy 2111, *Parent Involvement-A Home-School-District Partnership*, further affirms and codifies this commitment and states that “strong, continuing family and community involvement in all aspects of school programs and activities provides support for measurable improvement in student achievement.” It also asserts the promotion and encouragement of a “collaborative environment” in which parents and families are invited to engage in the education of students.

The importance and impact of parental involvement in the education of a child cannot be overstated. In fact, several studies over the past five decades have shown that when parents are involved in their child’s education, it improves academic achievement. Beyond academic achievement, parental involvement is also associated with better behavior, social skills, and mental health. Parental engagement has been described by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as a “protective factor” that may help children avoid risky behaviors that affect their health and learning. Thus, the need for continued support of parental involvement in schools is clear and compelling. School districts must consistently review policies and practices that support parental engagement and participation in educational decision-making. Additionally, the fundamental tenets of Florida Statute 61.13, *Support of children; parenting and time-sharing; powers of court*, strongly posits that each parent should play and have an active role in the lives of their children, especially in matters and decisions relating to education.

School Board Policy 0100 defines parents as the “natural, adoptive, foster or surrogate parents, the party designated by the courts as the legal guardian or custodian of a student, any person in a parental relationship to a student, or any person exercising supervisory authority over a student in place of the parent.” This definition sometimes reveals conflicts regarding parental engagement and participation in certain educational decisions among persons who may be sharing parental responsibilities.

Moreover, statutes and court documents often fail to provide the requisite clarity and/or specificity for schools to decide upon certain matters involving parental involvement and decision-making about education-related issues. The lack of clarity about which adult ultimately has final decision-making authority in a given situation may result in more or less deference to an individual parent’s engagement in the education of the child over whom they are exercising a parental relationship.

Thus, this item seeks to direct the Superintendent, in consultation with the School Board Attorney, to review district policies and school-based practices governing parental engagement in education and active participation in educational decisions at the school and district level, and where necessary and appropriate, to initiate rulemaking to develop and/or amend school board policy to help clarify certain matters of parental involvement and decision-making about educational issues.

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

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

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

1. review, in consultation with the School Board Attorney, district policies and school-based practices governing parental engagement in the education of their child, access to relevant and requisite student information, and active participation in educational decisions at the school and district level;
2. initiate a working group comprised of school principals, district administrators, representatives from the School Board Attorney's Office, and invitees such as Family Court and parent representatives; and
3. if determined necessary and appropriate, initiate rulemaking to develop and/or amend school board policy and related practices and requisite forms to help clarify certain matters of parental involvement and decision-making about educational issues, or if no rulemaking is deemed necessary and appropriate, provide a report to the School Board no later than the August 10, 2022 Board Committee meeting.