

Dr. Marta Pérez, Board Member

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF SCHOOL BOARD POLICY 2290 - (CHARACTER EDUCATION)

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: SAFE, HEALTHY, & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The entire school district of Miami-Dade County is committed to giving our students the highest quality education possible, based on sound policies. As important as academic subjects are, lessons on how to behave towards others, to be kind, honest, and other values that fall into Character Education are also important. Character education includes **learning and respecting common attitudes and behaviors that are important for people to hold as responsible citizens.**

At the March 17, 2004, School Board Meeting, Agenda Item B-82 was proffered and approved which included convening an Ad Hoc Committee to review the implementation status of the nine board-adopted core character education values. At the September 8, 2004, School Board Meeting, Agenda Item D-5 was proffered and approved to establish a Code of Student Conduct for Pre-K and Kindergarten students.

During the 2022 State of Florida Legislative session, House Bill 7, Individual Freedom, was passed. The bill amended s. 1003.42(2)(s), F.S. the Character Education topic to include the civic and character education on the qualities and responsibilities of patriotism and citizenship including kindness; respect for authority, life, liberty, and personal property; honesty; charity; racial ethnic, and religious tolerance and cooperation; and, for grades 11 and 12, voting. Additionally, the requirements for a character development curriculum have been deleted and replaced with instructional programming.

As per our character education board rule, a character education curriculum is offered for students at all grade levels with sample lessons for teachers and all teachers are required to incorporate character education in their classroom content. The reason for this requirement is so all students are instructed in values and character to help form caring, responsible citizens at home, school, and the community. Research shows that a child's emotional education literally changes the child's brain chemistry and can positively influence their behavior towards others and their confidence in themselves.

Our District provides curricular materials and professional development for teachers and staff designed to support classroom instruction on the nine (9) core values. These are:

- A. Citizenship - Students will help to create a society based upon democratic values, e.g., rule of law, equality of opportunity, due process, reasoned argument, representative government, checks and balances, rights and responsibilities, and democratic decision-making.
- B. Cooperation - Students will work together toward goals.
- C. Fairness - Students will treat people impartially, not play favorites, be open-minded, and maintain an objective attitude toward those whose actions and ideas are different from their own.
- D. Honesty - Students will deal truthfully with people, be sincere, not deceive them or steal from them, not cheat, or lie.
- E. Integrity - Students will stand up for their beliefs about right and wrong and resist social pressure to do wrong.
- F. Kindness - Students will be sympathetic, helpful, compassionate, benevolent, agreeable, and gentle toward people and other living things.
- G. Pursuit of Excellence - Students will do their best with the talents they have, striving toward a goal, and not giving up.
- H. Respect - Students will show regard for the worth and dignity of all people, be courteous and polite, and judge all people on their merits. Respect takes three major forms: respect for oneself, respect for other people, and respect for other living things and the environment.
- I. Responsibility - Students will think before they act and be accountable for their actions, pay attention to others, and respond to their needs. Responsibility includes the affirmative obligation to care for each other.

Practicing these values is also connected with mental health. Unfortunately, some current events, such as the pandemic, mass shootings, economic uncertainty require us to assess the values and emotional fortitude we are providing for our students. In this regard, our district should review our character education board policy to align with the new bill, House Bill 7, to ensure that it is up to date. Additionally, district staff should update current character education curriculum to support the new law requirement for Civic and Character Education instructional programming.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. MARTA PÉREZ:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to review our character education school board policy to align it to new legislation and update current character education curriculum to support the new requirement for Civic and Character Education instructional programming for implementation during the 2023-2024 school year.