

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Vice Chair

**SUBJECT: HURRICANE IAN RELIEF AND SUPPORT**

**COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED, & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS**

*Hurricane Ian* was one of the strongest and most devastating hurricanes in history. A large, deadly and destructive Category 4 hurricane, *Ian* caused widespread damage across western Cuba and the southeast United States, especially the states of Florida and South Carolina. *Ian* caused catastrophic damage in parts of Southwest Florida, mostly from flooding due to extreme storm surge and rainfall. In particular, the cities of Fort Myers Beach and Naples were impacted strongly. Millions were left without power in the storm's wake, and several inhabitants were forced to take refuge on their roofs. Sanibel suffered major flooding as well and its causeway collapsed. Pine Island in Lee County, Florida also suffered extreme damage and flooding, with the bridge to Fort Myers being leveled. To date, Hurricane *Ian* has caused at least 115 fatalities, including 5 people in Cuba, 105 in Florida, and 5 in North Carolina according to local officials. The current death toll in Florida marked *Hurricane Ian* as the deadliest hurricane to hit the state since the 1935 Labor Day hurricane.

*Hurricane Ian* has caused significant economic and personal hardships on individuals, children, and families across the impacted communities. These hardships have been significantly exacerbated among individuals, children, and families living in poverty and who were already facing such economic and personal hardships before the storm. Preliminary estimates of damage from *Hurricane Ian* have placed losses in the tens of billions with potential losses more than \$60 billion---of which nearly \$50 billion reflects losses in Florida alone.

There is a growing body of research regarding the adverse, lingering impact of disasters on communities. From 1980 through July 2022, the United States experienced 332 disasters that each caused at least \$1 billion in damages – and their frequency is escalating.

While the financial impact of natural disasters such as *Ian* may be significant, very often and sadly what is not captured are the ways that costs are borne unequally, both within and between communities. Research after past disasters like *Hurricane Katrina* has shown that not only are poor and nonwhite communities often the hardest hit by disasters, but also that FEMA aid disproportionately goes to whiter and wealthier communities of homeowners in the aftermath. Thus, disadvantaged communities will always be hurt the most when disaster strikes---and in such communities, school-aged children, and their families—and their education suffer greatly.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is no stranger to the negative, devastating impact that a natural disaster such as *Hurricane Ian* can have on a community—and more importantly, the education of students. From *Hurricane Andrew* of 1992—a powerful and destructive Category 5 Hurricane that became one of the most destructive hurricanes in terms of structural damage and financial costs to ever hit Florida to *Hurricane Irma* which surpassed it 25 years in 2017. Having experienced the impact and effects of such devastation, M-DCPS understands, appreciates, and values the importance of collaborating in the provision of support, relief, and aid to communities impacted by a hurricane.

In these instances, M-DCPS, as the nation's 4<sup>th</sup> largest school district, has consistently responded to crisis and risen to the occasion to provide aid, relief, and support in times of crisis. Such a response is needed to communities, schools, families, and most important, children in the hardest hit areas of Southwest Florida.

Thus, this item seeks to affirm the Board's commitment to working with related entities, organizations, and stakeholders in the provision of relief and support to schools, districts, and/or communities, impacted by Hurricane Ian, as appropriate and direct the Superintendent to explore the development and/or promotion of a district and/or individual schoolwide initiative to support the collection and provision of resources to aid and support schools, districts, and/or communities, impacted by Hurricane Ian, as appropriate and provide an update to the School Board no later than November 18, 2022 and updates to the School Board on a monthly basis, as deemed appropriate and relevant.

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

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

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

1. affirm the School Board's commitment to working with related entities, organizations, and stakeholders in the provision of relief and support to schools, districts, and/or communities, impacted by Hurricane Ian, as appropriate;
2. direct the Superintendent to explore the development and/or promotion of a district and/or individual schoolwide initiative such as supply drives, support letter campaigns, class/school/district partnerships/adoptions, etc. to support the collection and provision of resources to aid and support students, staff, schools, districts, and/or communities, impacted by Hurricane Ian, as appropriate; and
3. provide an update to the School Board no later than November 18, 2022, and updates to the School Board on a monthly basis, as deemed appropriate and relevant.