

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON FINDINGS REGARDING STUDENT SUSPENSION, SUCCESS CENTERS, AND RELATED SCHOOL DATA AND SAFETY MEASURES

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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

The School Board is committed to ensuring a safe learning environment for its students, staff, and stakeholders. In doing so, it initiates and adopts several policies, action items and procedures that seek to drive and govern effective, evidence-based practices for school leaders, teachers, and staff. In fact, School Board Policy 5500- *Student Conduct and Discipline*, establishes guidelines, procedures, and corrective strategies to be employed in promoting and maintaining appropriate student behavior. In addition, the School Board of Miami-Dade County remains committed to promoting and maintaining a high level of accountability, integrity, and transparency in the operation of the school district and in matters governing school safety, security, and student discipline.

At the School Board Meeting of February 15, 2017, the School Board unanimously approved School Board Agenda Item H-7 (Revised), *Student Behavior: Out of School Suspensions and Student Success Centers*. The item directed the Superintendent to provide an update on the implementation, utilization, and effectiveness of the “Student Success Centers,” as alternative educational settings for students who violate the *Code of Student Conduct*, as well as the alignment of Success Centers with School Policy 5500, *Student Conduct and Discipline*, and the guidelines, procedures, and corrective strategies governing student discipline. The intent of Item H-7 was to be proactive in ensuring the effectiveness and alignment of Student Success Centers with respect to educational/student impact, policy and contractual alignment, stakeholder engagement, resource allocation, and improvement of implementation for the 2017-2018 school year. Item H-7 established a 24-member Student Success Center Evaluation Task Force to provide feedback on implementation and recommendations for improvement and required a status update in May 2017.

On May 22, 2017, the Superintendent of Schools issued a memorandum providing the School Board with the requested update detailing the purpose of Success Centers; the number of centers; staff allocation; total cost to operate; and results from student and parent surveys about the centers. The memorandum also reported on recommendations of the Student Success Center Evaluation Task Force, which included representation from school site administrators, teachers, parents, and counselors, as well as student input through anonymous surveys completed at the conclusion of assignment to a Success Center. Implementation of several Task Force programmatic recommendations was reported. The memorandum also declared an objective to align existing M-DCPS staff practices regarding out-of-school suspensions with Board policies and collective bargaining agreements.

Following the May 22, 2017 update, the *Code of Student Conduct* (COSC) Review Committee was convened to address the policy-alignment objectives. The COSC Review Committee was comprised of internal and external stakeholders including, but not limited to representatives such as principals, district staff, community stakeholders, students, United Teachers of Dade, State Attorney's Office (SAO), Public Defender's Office, Department of Juvenile Justice, Miami-Dade County Juvenile Services Department, and Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) representatives. The COSC Review Committee meetings took place over a period of a year to discuss recommendations for the revision of the *Code of Student Conduct*, and the COSC Review Committee proposed amendments to School Board Policy 5500, *Student Conduct and Discipline*, to align with the most updated statutory requirements, including those required by SB 7026.

Following the COSC Review Committee's recommendations, the School Board approved Agenda Item D-66 on November 20, 2018, revising Policy 5500, *Student Conduct and Discipline*, and the *Code of Student Conduct*, incorporating suggestions from the COSC Review Committee of stakeholders. The revisions included descriptions of the various types of alternative educational settings (AES) being utilized by the District (including alternatives to outdoor suspension), inclusion of computer-related crimes, and alignment with incident descriptions in the Florida School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) rule. On October 21, 2020, the School Board adopted additional revisions to Policy 5500, *Student Conduct and Discipline*, and the *Code of Student Conduct*, including further alignment to SESIR incidents.

Section 1006.07(9), Florida Statutes and Florida Administrative Rules 6A-1.0018 require all school districts to accurately and timely report school safety and student disciplinary incidents related to 26 incident reporting categories. Additionally, the Florida Department of Education's (FDOE) Office of Safe Schools reviews school disciplinary actions. In furtherance of this requirement and consistent with state law, the Board has adopted, amended, and revised Board Policy 8405, *School Safety*, which requires the Superintendent to "develop and implement procedures for timely and accurate reporting of incidents related to school safety and discipline,"

and for the Superintendent to “provide training to appropriate personnel in accordance with law and State Board of Education rules.” This includes “designating persons responsible for SESIR reporting for the District and ensuring that those persons receive live or online training,” as required by FDOE rules.

To comply with SESIR reporting requirements, M-DCPS staff has developed two separate mechanisms for reporting school safety and discipline data: (1) the District Student Information System (DSIS), which captures incident information reported and inputted by school-site administrators; and (2) the School Police Automated Reporting System (SPAR), which captures incident information reported and inputted by the Miami-Dade Schools Police Department (MDSPD). The data from DSIS and SPAR is then compiled by Staff and reported to FDOE as required.

M-DCPS district staff has reportedly been proactive in ensuring our SESIR reporting adheres to state requirements. Staff has indicated that it has continuously sought technical assistance on SESIR definitions and data-reporting processes from the FDOE’s Office of Safe Schools to help facilitate training on an annual basis for school-site administrators and school resource officers. This training includes professional development on FDOE mandates, the *Code of Student Conduct*, and the use of alternatives to traditional suspension, such as Student Success Centers.

Additionally, M-DCPS staff across a number of functional areas, including School Leadership and Performance, MDSPD, Mental Health Services, Student Services, Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis, has collaborated in modifying processes for collecting and inputting data, and M-DCPS staff has developed additional systems for assembling and monitoring school safety and disciplinary incident data to ensure the District complies with the SESIR guidelines prescribed by the FDOE.

Recently, external reviewers and public entities charged with reviewing school safety issues and protocols statewide have requested M-DCPS staff to examine and review its school safety and discipline systems, including its SESIR reporting processes, outdoor suspension protocols, and its use of Student Success Centers.

Despite M-DCPS staff’s avowed commitment to ensuring compliance and effective implementation of State and Board Policy requirements, a comprehensive report to the School Board is critically important as the School Board bears ultimate responsibility for compliance and accountability.

This item seeks to direct the Superintendent ensure immediate action is taken to comply with the Florida Department of Education's (FDOE) School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) system guidelines and procedures, implement corrective strategies governing student discipline, including but not limited to, the utilization and effectiveness of student suspensions and Student Success Centers, and to provide an update at the Personnel, Student, School & Community Support Committee Meeting of November 9, 2022.

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, directs the Superintendent to:

1. ensure immediate action is taken to comply with the Florida Department of Education's (FDOE) School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) system guidelines and procedures;
2. implement corrective strategies governing student discipline, including but not limited to, the utilization and effectiveness of student suspensions and Student Success Centers; and
3. provide an update at the Personnel, Student, School & Community Support Committee Meeting of November 9, 2022.