

Ms. Lucia Baez-Geller, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall [>] Revised
Dr. Steve Gallon III
Ms. Luisa Santos

SUBJECT: EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF EXPANDING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES ACROSS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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

Restorative Justice Practices are used as an alternative approach to traditional disciplinary methods and conflict resolution. These practices focus on repairing and restoring relationships in order to foster a positive and welcoming environment. They also aim to encourage personal growth and accountability among students. By using alternative disciplinary strategies, students can use dialogue and problem-solving to address conflicts and infractions, while addressing underlying reasons for any offense.

Currently, Miami-Dade County Public Schools utilizes Restorative Justice Practices as an approved alternative strategy for dealing with level I infractions, including but not limited to, confrontations with other students, disruptive behaviors, violation of dress code, and failure to comply with class and/ or school rules. It is also approved for dealing with level II infractions, including but not limited to confrontation with a staff member, instigative behavior, petty theft, fighting, and failure to comply with previously prescribed corrective strategies. These practices are currently implemented in 47 middle schools and 17 high schools county-wide. By expanding the program and implementing these practices across more high schools throughout the district, we can develop a more supportive learning environment that is beneficial for both students and staff.

While each school site could have a different approach to how to best utilize these strategies, it would be centered around active participation and an ongoing collaboration between all stakeholders. Training and professional development opportunities will be available for teachers and administrators, and students and parents will be fully informed about these practices, their rights, and their roles. To achieve this, each school would develop a comprehensive plan that includes clear goals, strategies, and evaluation methods for implementing these practices. If feasible, a staff member could act as the Restorative Justice Coordinator at each school site, responsible for facilitating meetings, engaging students and parents, evaluating effectiveness, and acting as a liaison between the school site and district.

This item seeks to direct the Superintendent to explore the feasibility of expanding Restorative Justice Practices throughout Miami Dade County Public Schools, specifically at the high school level. The item also calls for the review of implementation of Restorative Justice Practices every time the Code of Student Conduct is revised and examine the effectiveness of these practices throughout Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Finally, the item seeks to direct the Superintendent to explore the feasibility of establishing a Restorative Justice Coordinator at the school site.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the Office of the General Counsel as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. LUCIA BAEZ-GELLER:**

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

1. explore the feasibility of expanding Restorative Justice Practices across Miami-Dade County Public Schools, specifically at the high school level;
2. review of implementation of Restorative Justice Practices every time the Code of Student Conduct is revised, and examine the effectiveness of these practices throughout Miami-Dade County Public Schools
3. explore the feasibility of allowing school-site staff to act as the Restorative Justice Coordinator; and
4. present a report regarding the feasibility of this item by the Personnel, Student, School, and Community Support Committee Meeting of October 4, 2023.