

Ms. Luisa Santos, Board Member

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SUBJECT: BUILDING MENTAL HEALTH RESILIENCE DURING THE POST-SECONDARY PLANNING PROCESS

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC

PLAN: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS, & INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS

At the School Board Meeting of August 18, 2021, the School Board approved School Board Agenda Item H-16 (Revised), *Post-Secondary Success Commitment*. The *Framework for Post-Secondary Success* includes:

1. **Baseline Data:** understand where we are to determine where we can improve and grow
2. **Universal Standards:** implement a post-secondary planning curriculum that aligns the efforts of all stakeholders advising students in post-secondary planning
3. **Personalization:** increase opportunities for all students to access individual advising
4. **Best in Class CAP Advisors:** provide new CAP Advisor orientations and high-quality, ongoing professional development aligned to newly created universal standards
5. **Centralized Leadership:** secure the centralized personnel needed to oversee and execute this framework
6. **Ongoing Evaluation:** set annual metrics and reports to track success and best practices
7. **Culture Shift:** cultivate and norm district and community wide expectations regarding post-secondary planning
8. **The Tools:** leverage the power of the tech tools we currently use, such as SCOIR

Since the passing of the Post-Secondary Success Framework, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has remained steadfast in upholding our commitment to our students. The M-DCPS Division of Student Services offers our students and parents many resources like College Assistance Program (CAP) advisors for post-secondary planning, summer college bootcamps, and free online resource guides. The Parent Academy also provides guides and videos on topics such as completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), using a SCOIR account, and becoming informed on Dual Enrollment options in the district¹. As we provide these important resources it has become evident that families need additional support to build and sustain mental health resilience throughout the post-secondary planning process.

¹ MDCPS Parent Academy, <https://parentacademymiami.com/>

The amount of adolescents who are reporting poor mental health is on the rise.² Coupling this data with the stressful process of post-secondary planning and college applications³ students are experiencing increased stress and anxiety levels. Through the post-secondary planning process, many students learn to implement time management in sorting their options and necessary applications, experience rejection from institutions, and prepare themselves for the experience that is transitioning out of high school. Equipping them with mental health resiliency skills is vital to their successful navigation of this process and their success after graduation.

In order to fully support students, we must also equip the trusted adults that guide them with the training to support them. In a recent study analyzing the college application patterns of the class of 2022 family members were cited as one of the greatest sources of influence in a student's college application and over half of the students in the survey study said their counselors were the most influential in their college decisions.⁴ Our student services support staff not only provide clarity to students but serve as a resource to parents and family members who are looking to inform themselves in order to best support their student through the process.

The Board and the District have a responsibility to strengthen our current pool of resources regarding mental health resilience for students and families going through the post -secondary planning process, and for the school staff who support them.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. LUISA SANTOS:**

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

1. Explore the feasibility of developing and implementing a plan to strengthen current mental health support for students and families going through the post-secondary planning process by expanding training for our high school student services teams, including but not limited to CAP advisors, guidance counselors, TRUST counselors' mental health coordinators, and student support specialist on the topic;
2. Facilitate district-wide workshops for groups, including but not limited to parents and community members and high school students on this topic; and
3. Report back findings to the School Board at the Academics, Innovation, Evaluation & Technology Committee Meeting of November 8, 2023.

² The CDC: Adolescent and School Health, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/mental-health/index.htm>

³ Barile, N. (2018, April 26). *How to help Seniors Manage College Application stress*. Hey Teach!

⁴ Patch, W. (2023, July 19). *2022 niche senior enrollment survey: The new normal*. Niche.