

Ms. Luisa Santos, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Mr. Roberto J. Alonso
Ms. Lucia Baez-Geller
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall
Dr. Steve Gallon III

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SUBJECT: PROPOSED MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS) 2024 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY- NATIVE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENTS

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS, & INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS

Over the course of the recent academic year, our already diverse student body has experienced notable changes. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) witnessed a significant increase in the number of foreign-born students, with over 19,000 enrolling during the 2022-2023 school year, surpassing the average number of 10,102 and marking the highest such figure in our district over the past six years. Consequently, there is an increased urgency to focus on supporting and enhancing the academic experience of our English learners (EL).

The term newcomers refers to individuals and their families who have immigrated from foreign countries and have recently established themselves in the United States.¹ For these students, it has meant entering in the midst of their educational journey, facing the challenge of adapting to a new cultural environment and building upon their academic English proficiency.² Native language assessments become particularly important for newcomer ELs to effectively showcase their breadth of knowledge and skills within standard testing conditions.³ The introduction of native language assessments permits ELs with developing English proficiency to utilize their first language as they take standardized tests to demonstrate subject knowledge while continuing to develop their English proficiency⁴. Providing progress monitoring assessments in a student's native language also empowers educational institutions and state agencies to procure a more comprehensive and accurate evaluation of ELs' aptitude in the subject matter.

Therefore, this agenda item proposes to include the use of Native Language Assessments for newcomers who enroll within two years of their graduation date in the M-DCPS 2024 State Legislative Program. This should be in addition and alignment to our current accountability and assessment reform priority which includes “provide a waiver from the passage of the English Arts

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¹ U.S. Department of Education. (2023). Chapter 1: Who are our newcomers. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/newcomers-toolkit/chap1.pdf>.

² Suárez-Orozco, C., Gaytán, F. X., Bang, H. J., Pakes, J., O'Connor, E., & Rhodes, J. (2010). Academic trajectories of newcomer immigrant youth. *Developmental psychology*, 46(3), 602.

³ Sugarman, J., & Villegas, L. (2020). Native Language Assessments for K-12 English Learners: Policy Considerations and State Practices. Policy Brief. *Migration Policy Institute*.

⁴ UnidosUS.(2019).Native Language Assessment Programs – UnidosUS. https://unidosus.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/unidosus_nativelanguageassessments_whitepaper.pdf

(ELA) requirement for ELL students who have passed all other high school graduation requirements and have been enrolled in school less than two consecutive years.”⁵

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

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent of Schools to include the use of Native Language Assessments for newcomers who enroll within two years of their graduation date in the Board’s M-DCPS 2024 Legislative Program Priority.

⁵ Board Item E-202, September 2023