

Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

SUBJECT: ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF FOREIGN STUDENT INFLUX

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC

PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED, & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Miami-Dade County, as a major entry point for foreigners to the United States, has experienced a significant influx of foreign-born families, many of whom do not speak English as their first language. This demographic shift of foreign-born students has presented unique challenges and opportunities for our school district, particularly in the areas of academic performance and standardized testing.

On several occasions the Board has requested information regarding the significant influx of foreign students. Recently, the Board was transmitted the April 22, 2024, report titled *English Language Learners and Their Academic English Language Acquisition Progress: 2022-2023*. The report described the demographic characteristics of students classified as English Language Learners (ELLs) and examined their progress on statewide assessments. It is noteworthy that many public schools with a higher percentage of recent foreign students have seen a decline in standardized test scores. This is often due to language barriers and the adjustment period required for these students to acclimate to a unfamiliar education system. Schools with a significant number of foreign students require additional resources, such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers, language and literacy support programs, tutoring services and other valuable support services. This can strain the existing resources and affect the overall budget allocation for the District.

There is a myriad of challenges that can make the transition into a new school feel like an uphill climb. These students may also encounter challenges caused by educational practices and expectations that may vary significantly between countries, and by having to adjust to different teaching styles, classroom behavior, and assessment methods. The process of adjusting to a new culture can be stressful and overwhelming, especially for younger students who may also be coping with the trauma of migration or separation from loved ones. Parents may also face language barriers, unfamiliarity with the new education system, and cultural differences in parental involvement in schooling. Students may also not see their cultures represented in the curriculum, school activities, or materials, leading to a sense of exclusion or isolation.

In addition to the forgoing challenges, a substantial number of foreign students enrolling in Miami-Dade County Public Schools are not reading at grade level and face significant language barriers. As a result, it is crucial to address these challenges to ensure that all students receive a high-quality education and that parents have meaningful choices for their children's schooling.

By addressing these challenges and implementing supportive measures where needed, schools can help foreign students adjust culturally, succeed academically, and feel included and valued in their new educational environment.

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

ACTION PROPOSED BY

DR. DOROTHY BENDROSS-MINDINGALL:

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

1. conduct a detailed analysis of enrollment to identify schools with the highest percentages of foreign students who enrolled in the District in the last three years;
2. review standardized test scores and performance metrics for these schools to assess the impact, if any;
3. gather feedback from schools administrators, teachers, and parents to understand the particular needs of the schools;
4. identify specific areas where additional support and resources are required and explore the feasibility of:
 - a) implementing targeted interventions in schools with high recent immigrant populations, focusing on language acquisition and academic support;
 - b). engaging with the foreign community to better understand their specific needs and to better provide support for parents to help their children succeed in school;
 - c). monitoring the performance of schools with high enrollment percentages of recent immigrant continuously and adjust strategies as needed to ensure sustained improvement; and
5. provide an update to the School Board at a Personnel Support Meeting no later than October 9, 2024.