

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

Co-sponsors:

Ms. Monica Colucci, Vice Chair  
Mr. Roberto Alonso  
Ms. Lucia Baez-Geller  
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall  
Ms. Mary Blanco  
Mr. Daniel Espino  
Dr. Steve Gallon, III  
Ms. Luisa Santos

REVISED  
AT DAIS  
BY  
BOARD  
ACTION

**SUBJECT: MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS)  
HURRICANE HELENE RELIEF EFFORTS FOR THE MOST  
AFFECTED STATES: FLORIDA, GEORGIA, AND NORTH  
CAROLINA; AND THE STORM IMPACTED FLORIDA GULF  
COAST AND CENTRAL FLORIDA DUE TO HURRICANE  
MILTON**

**COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS**

Hurricane Helene, a powerful Category 4 storm when it made landfall Thursday, September 26, 2024, carved out a destructive path from Florida’s Gulf Coast through the Southeast and particularly ravaged western North Carolina with floods and mudslides. Helen’s path of destruction stretched more than 500 miles, from coastal Florida to the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Helene barreled into Florida’s Big Bend region packing 140-mile-per-hour winds. Powered by very warm ocean temperatures, the storm was the strongest ever to strike the Big Bend region. Helene, which was the third hurricane to hit the Big Bend in 13 months, broke storm surge records across the Gulf Coast, many of which were last set just over a year ago, when Hurricane Idalia saturated the same area. Helene’s immense circumference, around 400 miles across, powered its record-breaking storm surge along the Gulf Coast, from Tampa Bay, which saw more than six feet of water, up to the beach towns of the Panhandle, which saw close to 20 feet.

Helene brought tropical storm-force winds, heavy rains, lightning, and serious flooding to the north Georgia area. In Atlanta, Georgia, even with the storm largely sparing the city, several neighborhoods have endured flooding, and about 100,000 households in the area had their power knocked out on. Georgia Power estimates the damage from the storm was more than twice the last hurricane that hit the state. Over 500,000 customers still remain without power. According to media outlets, Georgia, reports at least 15 storm-related deaths reported so far.

Across western North Carolina, towns were destroyed, gas stations were running out of fuel, and residents were in a communications black hole, scrambling for Wi-Fi to try to reach their friends and family. State and local officials were racing to find victims, rescue people and restore flood-damaged water systems. In Buncombe County, which includes Asheville, the sheriff said that there were at least 30 storm-related deaths. Extensive power outages endure across the region, although some progress has been made in restoring critical infrastructure damaged by Helene.

Media reports that as of October 7<sup>th</sup>, more than 230 people were confirmed dead across six states: Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. Causes of death ranged from rising floodwaters, falling trees, car crashes and a tornado produced by the storm. Many details on the victims were still unknown. Officials have received more than a thousand missing persons reports amid widespread communication outages. The number of deaths is expected to rise. While power outages have fallen below 2 million for the first time since the storm, approximately 1.6 million homes and businesses remain without electricity in the hardest-hit states as of Tuesday.

Wednesday night, October 9, 2024, Hurricane Milton landed across the Florida Peninsula tearing a path of destruction from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean, killing at least eight people, with media reporting two deaths confirmed in St. Petersburg, one in Volusia County, and five more were confirmed in St. Lucie County on Florida's east coast following tornadoes there. Recent reports have stated that Hurricane Milton impact has been massive flooding neighborhoods, destroying homes, ripping the roof off a major sports venue and toppling a massive crane into an office building.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools leadership, professionalism, and inclusiveness in response to natural disasters has been well documented and has served as a hallmark of the services provided to hurricane affected areas throughout the years. Whether through concerned efforts in organizing drives to collect needed resources or through the deployment of outstanding administrators, staff, and specialized teams within the organization, our school district has provided much needed relief and humanitarian aid to communities throughout the nation and the world.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR  
MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:**

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

1. in consultation with designated state and local officials, provide any assistance or humanitarian aid, as appropriate, to the states mostly affected by Hurricane Helene - Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina; and the storm impacted Florida Gulf Coast and Central Florida due to Hurricane Milton;
2. if deemed necessary, pursuant to School Board Policies 5830 – Student Fundraising, and 9700 – Relation With Special Interest Groups; authorize the Superintendent of Schools, at his discretion, to allow fundraising initiatives in support of these activities; and
3. pursuant to School Board Policy 9120 – Public Information Program, if appropriate, inform the general public of M-DCPS efforts to support and assist those states affected by Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton.