

Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

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REVISED
AT DAIS
BY
BOARD
ACTION

SUBJECT: EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: PRIMARY FOCUS ON EQUITY AND ENGAGEMENT IN M-DCPS

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

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

This Board recognizes the importance of early childhood education and its critical role in shaping future generations. As we review the curricula mandated by the state of Florida for early childhood education, it is important to address the unique needs of Miami-Dade County's diverse communities, particularly those residing in targeted urban areas.

There are areas of interest, including, but not limited to, housing, economic development, and youth safety that are of growing concern in the South Miami, Naranja, Perrine, Carol City, and Opa-Locka sectors. The Disparity Study in April of 2024 placed emphasis on the need for support in these targeted urban areas.

There is a growing need to improve and maintain housing conditions for families, especially those in low-income areas. The rehabilitation assistance program (RAP) has been essential in helping families repair their homes, providing up to \$50,000.00 per household to ensure that properties are safe, up to code, and habitable. There is still a need to integrate housing security and stability education into early childhood curricula. This would not only inform families about available resources, but it would also place emphasis on the importance of preserving intergenerational homes, which would protect assets and wealth within the community.

Economic stability is also a key factor in a child's ability to thrive. Home buyer assistance programs have been highly effective for families who are traditionally underrepresented in receiving these benefits due to challenges such as low credit scores. A way to bridge this gap would be early childhood curriculum that would include foundational literacy components for families with a focus on financial education and planning. This early exposure could help to mitigate long-term economic disparities by allowing families to access home ownership opportunities, manage credit, and build generational wealth.

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Youth safety, both in schools and within the community is another major concern. Private and charter schools have been known to poach talented student-athletes from local schools, often without providing adequate emotional or educational support. In addition to which, mental health challenges among youth are increasing and there is a need for early intervention. The safety and well-being of young children should be a central focus of the early childhood curriculum, including both, physical safety in their environments and emotional safety through mental health support and family resources.

This Board item seeks to ensure that early childhood curricula in Miami-Dade County not only align with state standards but also address the specific needs of targeted urban areas within our communities most vulnerable populations. By encouraging engagement, improving access to information, and addressing disparities, we can create a stronger foundation for all of our children.

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

ACTION PROPOSED BY

DR. DOROTHY BENDROSS-MINDINGALL: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent of Schools to:

1. Review the early childhood curricula mandated by the state of Florida to ensure it reflects the specific needs of targeted urban areas in Miami-Dade County, particularly with regard to economic disparity, community engagement, and youth development;
2. Present suggestions on how we can improve parental/family engagement at the February 5, 2025, Academics, Innovation, Evaluation, & Technology Committee meeting.