

Ms. Luisa Santos, Board Member

SUBJECT: MILITARY EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS FOR POST-SECONDARY SUCCESS

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 unanimously approved School Board Agenda Item H-16, *Post-Secondary Success Commitment*. As set forth in Item H-16, “The Post-Secondary Success Framework” has eight best practices as outlined below:

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
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

As Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), we are committed to ensuring that all students have access to meaningful postsecondary opportunities, whether that means enrolling in college, going to a vocational or technical program, entering the workforce, joining the military, or pursuing other career pathways.

To advance this framework and the M-DCPS Strategic Plan Pillar I, Priority I “Ensure that all students graduate with a relevant, viable post-secondary plan” we track our graduating classes through the National Student Clearinghouse reports. These reports have reliable data on where M-DCPS students enroll for two-year and four-year colleges, persistence rates, and graduation rates, allowing us to measure their attainment and understand how well our schools prepare them for higher education. Through Scoir¹, M-DCPS has been a leader in tracking self-reported Post-Secondary Outcome Data, including military enrollment. However, we lack Department of Defense data on enlistment and persistence for students who choose military service. We do not know how many of our graduates enlist, what programs they complete, or how military service influences their long-term educational and career outcomes.

Our County houses the headquarters of the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), the Homestead Air Reserve Base, Coast Guard Air Station Miami, and the U.S. Army Garrison-Miami. Today there are 897 M-DCPS students, with a parent indicating that either the mother or father is a member of the military. Our community understands that military service is more than just enlistment. It offers structured training,

¹ Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and Division of Student Services. Postsecondary Outcome Data for the Class of 2024. Excel Spreadsheet. studentservices.dadeschools.net, Accessed 4 March 2025.

leadership development, and educational benefits that can lead to high-demand careers. Programs such as the G.I. Bill, the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) through the U.S. Department of Labor, and the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, offer pathways to higher education that many students might not otherwise afford.^{2,3,4} Through these programs and their services, service members gain marketable skills in high-demand fields and pursue higher education, while also developing essential interpersonal strengths like teamwork and leadership. Yet, because we do not track these pathways, we are unable to measure how military service contributes to our students' long-term success in the same way we can attribute their achievements to two-year or four-year college degrees.

National elected and education leaders have taken notice of this significant gap. In November 2023, 28 states' education officers and two territories joined Kansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Randy Watson in submitting a letter to the Department of Defense (DOD) urging the sharing of military data with states.⁵

In March 2024, Kansas Senator Jerry Moran led a bipartisan group of senators in urging the DoD to collaborate with state education and data officials to develop a secure protocol for sharing military service data with states. This initiative aims to provide educators with insights into students' post-high school outcomes, including military enlistment, thereby enhancing career guidance and preparation.⁶

In response to these efforts, the Military and Educational Data Integration Act was introduced, proposing that the DoD establish a data-sharing program to enable state and local education systems to access detailed information on the career trajectories of students who enlist in the military. This legislation seeks to empower education leaders to better guide students considering military careers and assess the effectiveness of preparatory programs.⁷

Additionally, an amendment titled the "Military and Education Data Integration Act" was proposed, emphasizing the need for the DoD to establish a process for securely sharing military service data with states. This bill would authorize the Department of Defense to establish, develop and implement a secure, data-sharing process that enables State and local educational agencies to, on a not less than annual basis, access data elements concerning military personnel maintained by the Department of Defense. The data elements would cover the military service of officers and enlisted personnel, disaggregated by State of secondary school graduation, the highest level of education attained by the service member, the service member's score on the Armed Forces Qualification Test, the date of accession into the Armed Forces by the service member, the current rank of the service member, the area of expertise or military occupational specialty (MOS) of the service member, the date of separation from the Armed Forces by the service member, and any other information deemed relevant by the Secretary of Defense. This bill would further authorize the Secretary of Defense to carry out the secure data sharing process required in a manner that protects individual privacy and data security, in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local privacy laws. The data collected pursuant to this subsection would be collected and maintained in an anonymous de-identified format.

This amendment underscores the importance of recognizing military enlistment as a successful post-secondary outcome and aims to facilitate better data integration between military and educational institutions.⁸

² "About GI Bill Benefits | Veterans Affairs." *VA.gov*, 29 November 2024, <https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/>. Accessed 4 March 2025.

³ "VETS Programs." *U.S. Department of Labor*, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/vets/programs>. Accessed 4 March 2025.

⁴ "Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) Home." *Veterans Benefits Administration*, <https://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/>. Accessed 4 March 2025.

⁵ Watson, Randall D, et al. "Re: Sharing Military Enlistment Data with States." Received by Lloyd J. Austin III, Secretary of Defense, Kathleen H. Hicks, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Ashish S. Vazirani, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Education.Nh.Gov, 13 Nov. 2023, <https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/sonh/sharingmilitaryenlistmentdatawithstatesletter.pdf>. Accessed 4 Mar. 2025.

⁶ Jerry Moran, Senator, et al. "Encourage Collaboration between the Department of Defense and the Departments of Education and Labor ." Received by Lloyd J. Austin III, Secretary of Defense. Ashish S. Vazirani, Acting Under Secretary of Defense Personnel and Readiness, *Www.Moran.Senate.Gov*, 6 Mar. 2024, https://www.moran.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/4/0/40b35c09-c44c-47fd-baed-36f81d42dc26/AA47ADB8570E74237F972508E4DBC74C.letter-to-dod---sharing-military-enlistment-data-with-states---march-4th-2024.pdf. Accessed 4 Mar. 2025.

⁷ "S.4588 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): Military and Educational Data Integration Act." *Congress.gov*, Library of Congress, 18 June 2024, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/4588>.

⁸ "S.Amdt.3290 to S.4638 - 118th Congress (2023-2024)." *Congress.gov*, Library of Congress, 4 March 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/amendment/118th-congress/senate-amendment/3290/text>.

These legislative efforts highlight a growing recognition of the importance of integrating military service data into educational metrics, ensuring that military enlistment is acknowledged as a viable and rewarding career option for students.

By tracking military pathways, we ensure that military service is recognized as a viable post-secondary option that often leads to higher educational opportunities. One that deserves careful measurement and evaluation. If we are to fully support our students and their families in making informed decisions about their futures, we must expand our understanding of where they go and how they succeed, no matter which path they choose.

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

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, reaffirm its commitment to Post-Secondary Success by directing the Superintendent to:

1. Express written support of federal efforts proposing that the Department of Defense establish, develop and implement a secure, data-sharing process that enables State and local educational agencies to, on a not less than annual basis, access education-related data elements concerning military personnel (officers and enlisted personnel) maintained by the Department of Defense related to each State's high school graduates; and
2. Include as a priority in the Board's M-DCPS 2025 Legislative Program the establishment and implementation of a secure, data-sharing process by the Department of Defense that enables State and local educational agencies to receive longitudinal, education-related data concerning military personnel.