

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member

SUBJECT: ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION PROCESSES FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS ENTERING MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

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

The School Board of Miami-Dade County is committed to ensuring that parents and family members play a pivotal role in the education and development of its students, especially school-aged children. This commitment is affirmed and codified in School Board Policy 2111, *Parent Involvement, A Home-School-District Partnership*, which states that “strong, continuing family and community involvement in all aspects of school programs and activities provides support for measurable improvement in student achievement.” The policy further promotes and encourages a collaborative environment in which parents and families are meaningfully engaged as partners in the education of students.

This commitment is also aligned with the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), Title I, Part A, which requires school districts receiving Title I funds to implement programs, activities, and procedures for the meaningful engagement of parents and families. ESSA explicitly recognizes parents as equal partners in their children’s education and requires districts to provide families with timely information, capacity-building opportunities, and support to understand academic standards, assessments, and expectations. ESSA further requires that districts ensure parents are informed of their rights, available services, and the ways in which they can support student learning both at school and at home.

The importance and impact of parental involvement in a child’s education cannot be overstated. Research spanning more than five decades consistently demonstrates that when parents are actively engaged, students experience higher academic achievement, improved attendance, stronger social skills, better behavior, and enhanced mental health outcomes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identifies parental engagement as a protective factor that supports student learning and well-being. Studies conducted by the Harvard Family Research Project, the National PTA, and the U.S. Department of Education further demonstrate that families who receive early, clear, and ongoing guidance regarding academic expectations, school culture, communication systems, and available supports are more likely to remain engaged and advocate effectively on behalf of their children.

One critical role schools must consider is the process by which students and families are registered and enrolled in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) for the first time. As educational choice options continue to expand throughout the district and the state, parents are increasingly navigating transitions from charter schools, private schools, home education settings, and other school districts. These transitions require families to adapt to new academic expectations, accountability systems, language, technology platforms, and parental engagement structures unique to M-DCPS. ESSA Title I emphasizes that districts must proactively assist parents in understanding such systems to ensure equitable access to educational opportunity. Any failure to effectively support students and families through this transition process may adversely impact parent trust, student engagement, and academic success.

School Board Policy 5112, *Entrance Requirements*, appropriately emphasizes statutory documentation and enrollment procedures for initial entry. However, while compliance with state requirements is essential, national best practices and ESSA guidance make clear that ministerial enrollment functions alone are insufficient to ensure student success. Section D. of Policy 5112 references compliance with the District's Student Progression Plan, yet the policy framework does not fully address the importance of orienting families to academic expectations, assessment systems, intervention supports, digital platforms, and opportunities for meaningful parental engagement as required under ESSA.

Best practices in large, urban school districts emphasize that orientation is not a single event, but an ongoing process that begins at enrollment and continues throughout a student's first year. ESSA Title I specifically encourages districts to build the capacity of parents through training and resources so they can effectively support their children's learning. Effective transition models include clear explanations of academic standards and graduation requirements; guidance on student progression, assessments, and interventions; training for parents on digital platforms used to monitor progress; and intentional relationship-building between families, school staff, and district support offices. Such practices are especially critical in districts as large, diverse, and complex as M-DCPS, where families may be navigating not only a new school, but a new educational system, language, culture, and set of expectations.

M-DCPS already employs a wide array of research-aligned tools and systems designed to support student learning and parental engagement, many of which directly support ESSA Title I requirements. These include the M-DCPS Parent Portal, which provides families real-time access to attendance, grades, assessments, graduation requirements, and teacher feedback; the District's Student Progression Plan; Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS); school-based parent liaisons, counselors, and Community Involvement Specialists; districtwide communication platforms such as ClassDojo and school websites; and Parent Academies and Family Empowerment initiatives that provide workshops on literacy, mathematics, digital access, college readiness, and social-emotional development. However, research and ESSA guidance indicate that access alone is insufficient. Without explicit orientation, training, and ongoing support, families—particularly those new to the district or unfamiliar with large public-school systems—may struggle to fully utilize these resources, thereby limiting their effectiveness and undermining equity.

The need to strengthen orientation practices is further underscored by the increasingly competitive school choice landscape. ESSA promotes informed parental choice and transparency, requiring districts to ensure parents understand their options and the supports available to their children. A structured, welcoming, and comprehensive orientation process strengthens trust, reinforces confidence in district schools, improves student retention, and positions M-DCPS competitively amid expanding educational options. Ensuring that families begin their relationship with the District informed, supported, and empowered is both an educational obligation and a strategic necessity.

Accordingly, this item seeks to strengthen and clarify district policy and practice by directing the Superintendent to review existing protocols, procedures, and practices governing the registration, enrollment, and initial entry of students and families new to Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and existing as may be appropriate, with specific attention to compliance with ESSA Title I family engagement requirements; develop and implement a comprehensive, districtwide orientation framework, which allows for school-based enhancements, for students and parents entering M-DCPS for the first time, inclusive of academic expectations, student progression requirements, graduation pathways, parental rights, and available district and school-based supports and related technologies; ensure that parents and families receive training and guidance on accessing and effectively using district digital platforms and tools designed to monitor student progress and facilitate communication, consistent with ESSA capacity-building provisions; identify and incorporate best practices related to family engagement and student transitions; examine how strengthened orientation and family engagement practices can support equity, improve student outcomes, and enhance M-DCPS's competitive position within the evolving school choice landscape; collaborate with relevant district departments, Title I offices, school administrators, and parent engagement teams to

ensure consistent and effective implementation; initiate rulemaking to amend applicable School Board policies and administrative guideline revisions, where appropriate; provide a written update to the School Board outlining findings, recommendations, and implementation timelines for the 2026-2027 school year at the Academics, Evaluation, and Technology Committee Meeting of April 15, 2026.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. STEVE GALLON III:**

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

1. review existing protocols, procedures, and practices governing the registration, enrollment, and initial entry of students and families new to Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and existing as may be appropriate, with specific attention to compliance with ESSA Title I family engagement requirements;
2. develop and implement a comprehensive, districtwide orientation framework, which allows for school-based enhancements, for students and parents entering M-DCPS for the first time, inclusive of academic expectations, student progression requirements, graduation pathways, parental rights, and available district and school-based supports and related technologies;
3. ensure that parents and families receive training and guidance on accessing and effectively using district digital platforms and tools designed to monitor student progress and facilitate communication, consistent with ESSA capacity-building provisions;
4. identify and incorporate best practices related to family engagement and student transitions;
5. examine how strengthened orientation and family engagement practices can support equity, improve student outcomes, and enhance M-DCPS's competitive position within the evolving school choice landscape;
6. collaborate with relevant district departments, Title I offices, school administrators, and parent engagement teams to ensure consistent and effective implementation;
7. initiate rulemaking to amend applicable School Board policies and administrative guideline revisions, where appropriate; and
8. provide a written update to the School Board outlining findings, recommendations, and implementation timelines for the 2026-2027 school year at the Academics, Innovation, Evaluation, and Technology Committee Meeting of April 15, 2026.