

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

**SUBJECT: FOUNDATIONAL FACTOR IN BUILDING PROFICIENCY IN READING AND MATHEMATICS – REGULAR STUDENT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

**COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

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

Regular student attendance in K–12 education is a foundational factor in building proficiency in reading and mathematics. These core subjects are cumulative, meaning new skills rely heavily on mastery of earlier concepts. When students attend school consistently, they receive continuous, structured instruction that helps them develop phonics, fluency, comprehension, number sense, and problem-solving skills in logical progression. Missing instructional time interrupts this sequence, making it harder for students to grasp new material and keep pace with grade-level expectations.

In reading, consistent attendance allows students to engage daily with texts, vocabulary, and guided practice, which are essential for developing fluency and comprehension. For example, early literacy skills, such as letter recognition and decoding, are especially sensitive to gaps in instruction; even small amounts of missed time can slow progress and lead to long-term challenges. Similarly, in mathematics, concepts are built step by step from basic operations to more complex reasoning. Absences can cause students to miss critical explanations or practice opportunities, resulting in misunderstandings that compound over time and affect overall proficiency.

Beyond academics, regular attendance also supports positive learning habits, social development, and classroom engagement. Students who are present consistently are more likely to participate in discussions, receive timely feedback, and build confidence in their abilities. Over time, strong attendance patterns are most likely to be closely linked to higher achievement in reading and math, better academic outcomes, and increased readiness for future learning.

To address attendance challenges systematically, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) should develop a clear, actionable attendance improvement plan. The first step in this process is conducting a thorough needs assessment. M-DCPS can analyze attendance data to identify trends, such as grade levels or student groups with higher rates of chronic absenteeism, and examine root causes through surveys, family outreach, and collaboration with school staff. This data-driven approach ensures that interventions are targeted and responsive to local needs.

Once priorities are identified, M-DCPS can establish measurable goals and benchmarks, such as reducing chronic absenteeism by a specific percentage or increasing average daily attendance within a defined timeframe. These measurable goals should be considered to be included in the new Strategic Plan being developed by the District. These goals should be clearly communicated to school leaders, staff, families, and community partners to build shared accountability. Assigning roles and responsibilities such as designating attendance teams at the district and school levels should help ensure consistent implementation and follow-through.

The action plan should include layered strategies that combine prevention, early intervention, continuous monitoring, and intensive support. Preventive measures may include attendance awareness campaigns, positive school climate initiatives, and family education on the importance of daily attendance. Early intervention strategies can involve monitoring attendance weekly, reaching out promptly to families after initial absences, and providing academic or social-emotional support to students who begin to miss school. For students with chronic attendance issues, M-DCPS can coordinate individualized plans that may include mentoring, counseling, transportation assistance, or connections to community resources. Schools must be guided and fully supported with district and region level assistance as the attendance action plan is developed and implemented to ensure consistent, effective practices across all sites. Parents and students are also expected to uphold their shared responsibility for regular school attendance, and M-DCPS must consistently enforce state attendance laws through clear communication, early intervention, and appropriate corrective actions to ensure every student has equitable access to learning.

Ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement are essential components of an effective action plan. M-DCPS should continue to regularly review attendance data to assess progress toward goals, evaluate which strategies are working, and make adjustments as needed. Celebrating successes—such as improved attendance at a school or grade level—reinforces positive behaviors and maintains momentum. Through a comprehensive attendance action plan grounded in data, collaboration, and student-centered supports, districts can strengthen attendance, improve proficiency in reading and math, and promote long-term academic success for all students.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the Office of the General Counsel 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. conduct a thorough needs assessment of current student school attendance data, implementation procedures, and current district and school actions to ensure that students attend school on a regular basis;
2. assess school-sites daily student attendance and further assess if there is a correlation between attendance and the reading and math proficiency levels of the schools;
3. review School Board Policy 5200 – *Attendance*, and make recommendations for amendments specifically in the areas of parent and student responsibilities and the enforcement of attendance laws;
4. consider developing a clear actionable districtwide attendance improvement plan to be implemented during the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year;
5. consider including measurable student attendance goals and benchmarks to increase daily attendance within a defined timeframe in the next M-DCPS Strategic Plan; and
6. provide a report to the Board on the June 10, 2026, Personnel, Student, School & Community Support Committee.