

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Ms. Susie Castillo, Board Member  
Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member } Added

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAM AND RELATED SERVICES**

**COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, EVALUATION AND TECHNOLOGY**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS AND INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS**

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) posits that exceptional student education is an integral part of its total educational framework and should never be deemed separate and apart. In a public-school district, pursuant to federal and state laws, exceptional student education provides both a means and mechanism of enlarging and expanding the capacity of the system to serve the educational needs of all children. In fact, exceptional student education should function within and as a part of the regular, public school framework. Within this framework, the function of exceptional student education should be to participate in the creation and maintenance of a total educational environment suitable for all children.

Despite often misguided beliefs, understandings, and misconceptions, the fundamental purposes of exceptional student education are the same as those of regular education. These purposes reflect and are undergirded by a commitment to the optimal development of each student as a skillful, free, and purposeful person, and as one who can plan and manage his or her own life, reach his or her highest potential as an individual, and become a contributing, productive member of society.

In furtherance of this educational paradigm and related principles, School Board Policy 2460 requires the provision of a free, appropriate, public education for students with disabilities per State and Federal laws, rules, and regulations. The guidelines and protocols for implementation are codified in the *Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures (SP & P) 2015-2016 through 2017-2018*. This document, which expires at the end of the 2017-2018 school year and will require an update for submission to the Florida Department of Education, governs the District's implementation of the requirements of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 300 of the Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as well as state statutes and State Board Rules governing programs for exceptional students.

The fulcrum of this policy and the *SP & P* is to ensure adherence and compliance with the principles of law governing the educational program for exceptional students in M-DCPS in areas that include but are not limited to the following:

- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE);
- Identifying students with special needs;
- Appropriate evaluations;
- Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Educational Plans (EP);
- Parent/Student Participation in Educational Decisions;
- Procedural Due Process;

- Least Restrictive Environment; and
- Trained and dedicated teachers and staff.

In addition, M-DCPS is committed to ensuring that students educated in a special education program are provided with highly qualified, certified, and professionally trained and dedicated teachers and support staff, as well as adequate and appropriate educational and related resources.

In anticipation of a revised and/or updated *SP&P* to be submitted to the FDOE, as well as ensure that students in M-DCPS' special education are provided with the most effective and compliant educational program, and appropriate and requisite curriculum and personnel resources, a review of and update on the status of the exceptional student education program is prudent and being sought by this item.

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

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

1. convene a Task Force comprised of district and region administrators, principals, regular and exceptional student education teachers, counselors, school psychologists, parents, and community members to review, discuss, as well as solicit input from the Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities and make recommendations regarding ways to improve the educational program for exceptional students in M-DCPS; } Added
2. conduct a review of the educational program for exceptional students in M-DCPS to ensure compliance with all federal and state requirements, and those reflected in the 2015-2016 through 2017-2018 *SP&P*;
3. conduct an instructional program audit of the educational program for exceptional students in M-DCPS to ensure that all programs are provided with highly qualified, certified, and professional trained and dedicated teachers and support staff, as well as adequate and appropriate educational and related resources and coordinate with the offices of Human Capital and Budget Management regarding same; } Revised
4. provide a written status update to the Board, with recommendations for policy changes and/or allocation requests, where determined, by the Board Meeting of February 2018; and
5. incorporate any recommended and/or adopted changes into the *SP&P* to be submitted to the FDOE for the 2018-2019 through 2020-2021 school year cycles.