

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Dr. Martin Karp, Board Member
 Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member } Added

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND EXCELLENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND COMPLIANCE REPORTING

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: INFORMED, ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Over six decades have passed since the U.S. Supreme Court declared education “a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.” In ruling that *separate* was in fact *not equal*, *Brown v Board of Education* forced federal, state and local governments to open public schools to all children in the community. This decision marked a huge victory for the civil rights movement. However, integrating schools would prove to be just the first step in an ongoing journey toward educational equity in the nation and throughout the community. There remained – and still remain – structural and social barriers to making a world-class public education “available to all on equal terms.” In fact, the National School Boards Association Beliefs and Policies on Equity reaffirmed that Public schools should provide equitable access and ensure that all students have the knowledge and skills to succeed as contributing members of a rapidly changing, global society, regardless of factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, English proficiency, immigration status, socioeconomic status, or disability (Center for Public Education, 2016). Education continues to remain the passport to the future and creates opportunity to ensure a level playing field for students who, through no fault of their own, are born or exist in debilitating circumstances that impede their ability to learn, progress, and achieve at high levels.

Ensuring that all students have an equal and equitable opportunity for learning and life-long success is a guiding tenet of public education and has served as the fulcrum of how students’ education in and across Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is to be provided. This serves as a framework for practice, as well as a theory of action and belief about meeting students where they are and giving them everything they need to achieve academic success despite race, gender, or class. As one of the largest and most diverse school districts in the nation, M-DCPS shoulders an even heightened sense of duty, responsibility, and accountability for meeting the varied and differentiated needs of its students.

As a District committed to diversity, equity, equality, and inclusion, this shouldering, however, provides an even greater opportunity to not only support students’ achievement toward learning and life-goals, but also helps in recognizing present and past inequities and in helping to rectify the economic and social inequalities and injustices of today. Such inequities and inequalities have too often resulted in poor students and those of color and with immigration status experiencing a lesser form of education, such as less qualified teachers, less course offerings, less culturally responsive teaching, and less programs of innovation and enrichment, and lower teacher expectations; yet, being subjected to higher rates of disciplinary action and referral and placement into special education.

Despite the inequalities and injustices historically sewn into the fabric of public education, M-DCPS remains committed to and maintains the goal of eliminating disparities and educational barriers in its continued quest toward racial parity and diversity in its schools and across the district. Following the United States District Court Order, issued by Judge William Dimitrouleas on June 21, 2001 and modified on August 16, 2001, which declared the District unitary, the Diversity, Equity, and Excellence Advisory Committee (DEEAC) was established.

Pursuant to School Board Policy 9142, the establishment of DEEAC further codified the District's commitment to educational equity and access. Pursuant to the provisions outlined in Policy 9142, DEEAC is charged with assisting the District with "creating and maintaining a multicultural school system." As a part of its roles and related processes, the DEEAC is charged with reviewing and making recommendations regarding the:

- Implementation of Board rules which relate to the District's unitary status and diversity;
- Student enrollment;
- Attendance boundary zones;
- Regional administrative centers;
- Recruitment and diversity of personnel;
- Transportation of students;
- Selection of school sites;
- Equitable distribution of educational resources and services;
- Annual District diversity compliance reports; and
- Other matters as may be assigned by the Board and/or the Superintendent.

In addition to and as a part of the District's commitment to the Court to provide a "high quality education to all students," School Policy 9142 requires that reviews and recommendations of the DEEAC are reported on an annual basis to the School Board by November 30th of each year. The Annual Report provided to the School Board as required by and aligned to Policy 9142 entitled **One or Two** was submitted on January 20, 2006. After over a decade, a second report entitled **Thinking Outside the Box**, was submitted on April 7, 2017. Consequently, a "hiatus" between 2006 and 2017 has resulted in only two required annual reports being published after the 2001 Court Order and 2011 adoption of Board Policy 9142.

DEEAC's work in alignment with and support of Board Policy 9142 is critical in providing a review of salient student, staff, program, and performance data in order to inform the District of its progress and opportunities for improvement in eliminating disparities and educational barriers and continued and unwavering efforts to achieve racial parity and diversity.

In order for M-DCPS to both embrace its fundamental tenet of ensuring that all students have an equal and equitable opportunity for learning and life-long success and comply with the declarations for unitary status and subsequent provisions outlined in Policy 9142, it is imperative that a review and assessment of the processes and procedures for DEEAC and related requirements for annual reporting be conducted.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, directs the Superintendent, in consultation and collaboration with the School Board Attorney, to:

1. Review the requisite elements of Policy 9142 to determine status of School Board compliance regarding same;
2. Review the organization and oversight of, and assistance and support provided to the Diversity, Equity, and Excellence Advisory Committee (DEEAC);
3. Engage the DEEAC members in a workshop to review policy provisions and expectations, discuss and clarify annual committee reporting deliverables, and solicit feedback and recommendations about ways to improve committee organization, assistance, support, engagement, and work; and
4. Provide status update to the Board inclusive of recommendations for enhancement to policy, practice, and/or personnel that will improve the organization and oversight of, and assistance and support provided to the DEEAC that will ensure compliance with Policy 9142 and related annual reporting requirements by the School Board Meeting of October 11, 2017.