

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member

**SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES DURING
GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN**

**COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: SAFE, HEALTHY & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT**

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has a long standing and distinguished record of altruism and of standing in the gap of service and support for students and families in need. Consistently, the School Board and the Superintendent have been a strong, unified voice on issues of provision, advocacy, equality, and social justice. From providing assistance and relief to areas and nations devastated by disasters to taking an affirmative position on issues that adversely impact immigrants, the School Board, along with the Superintendent, employees, and even students themselves, have responded with love, compassion, generosity, and kindness to those in need. It has been during these times that the community, nation, and world have seen the beauty and humanity of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Although the community or nation is not presently responding to an imminent climate threat or disaster such as a hurricane, natural disaster, or even violent tragedy, there exists a looming conundrum that threatens the financial, emotional, and physical security of nearly one million people. The political gridlock that currently exists in Washington, D.C. has brought certain sectors of government operations to a grinding halt and has officially resulted in a government shutdown. A government shutdown occurs either when Congress fails to pass funding bills or when the president refuses to sign a funding bill before the current appropriations expire. During a government shutdown, federal agencies must cease all operations and services deemed non-essential while essential functions such as airport security and law enforcement continue to be performed. Laid off workers are sent home without pay while other employees must work without getting paid. The common denominator is that people do not get paid and their financial stability is devastated---leading to an imminent threat and harm to them meeting their basic needs such as housing, food, clothing, and in some instances, medical needs.

The present government shutdown, which directly impacts nearly a million employees and vicariously impacts millions more, is entering three weeks and is now the second longest government shutdown in U.S. history.

**GOOD CAUSE
H-15**

Hidden and lost amid the political rhetoric, wrangling, and partisanship, is the real, painful impact that the government shutdown has already had and will continue to have on employees, families, and inevitably, children. Aside from the impact that directly results from employees that are not working or working and not being compensated, is the vicarious, silent, almost invisible impact that may result from families that depend on governmental assistance and support such as those linked to Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), United States Department of Agriculture, Social Security, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and even the Internal Revenue Service, which has indicated that tax refund payments may be held up---payments that many families rely upon to close financial gaps each year.

As South Florida is home to many employees and families who are being impacted by the government shutdown and whose children attend Miami-Dade County Public Schools, it is incumbent upon the District to contemplate potential impacts on the learning and lives of its students and their families, assess ways in which such impacts may manifest in schools and classrooms, and explore ways in which to offer support, resources, and assistance to mitigate and abate such adverse impacts.

The School Board and the Superintendent, as well as employees and members of the greater South Florida community, have consistently answered the call for service, rising to answer the call for support, assistance, generosity, humanity, and love. The present government shutdown has resulted in both an opportunity and obligation for the District to once again answer the call.

This item seeks to affirm the School Board's recognition of the potential adverse impact that the present government shutdown may have on its students and their families and their commitment to provide additional support and assistance, where feasible and appropriate. It also authorizes the Superintendent to contemplate and examine the potential impact on the learning and lives of students, assess ways in which supports, partnerships, resources, and assistance that may be available and provided for students that are adversely impacted by the government shutdown.

This item does not appear on the published agenda. There exists good cause to vary from the published agenda as it has now been almost twenty (20) days since the government shutdown began and any assistance the District can provide to impacted government employees and their families should be initiated as soon as practicable.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney for legal sufficiency.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, affirm its recognition of the potential adverse impact that the present government shutdown may have on its students and their families, and their commitment to provide additional support and assistance, where feasible and appropriate, and authorize the Superintendent to:

1. contemplate and examine the potential impact that the present government shutdown will have on the learning and lives of M-DCPS students and their families;

2. explore partnerships, resources, and assistance that may be available and provided to students and their families that are directly and adversely impacted by the government shutdown;
3. provide appropriate information to schools on partnerships, resources and supports available for students and their families that are directly and adversely impacted by the government shutdown;
4. take additional steps, as determined appropriate, to provide resources, support, and assistance to students and their families that are directly and adversely impacted by the government shutdown; and
5. provide an update to the School Board by January 31, 2019.