

Dr. Martin Karp, Vice Chair

Co-Sponsors: Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall
Ms. Susie V. Castillo
Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman
Dr. Steven Gallon III
Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas

SUBJECT: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

COMMITTEE: ACADEMIC, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC

BLUEPRINT: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS & INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has historically been a strong proponent of Holocaust education. M-DCPS implements district-created curriculum and numerous activities at our school sites. For a number of years, M-DCPS has also allowed for many outside-the-classroom experiences including study abroad programs.

The International March of the Living (March) is an annual educational program bringing individuals from around the world to Poland and Israel to study the history of the Holocaust and to examine the roots of prejudice, intolerance and hatred. Since its inception in 1988, more than 260,000 alumni from 52 countries have marched down the same 3-kilometer path leading from Auschwitz to Birkenau on Holocaust Remembrance Day—Yom Hashoah—as a tribute to all victims of the Holocaust.

While high school students in 10th through 12th grades are eligible to participate in the March, most students who attend are seniors. In fact, the Miami program run through the Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education (C.A.J.E.) only accepts high school seniors.

Unfortunately, the March and International Baccalaureate (IB) testing is scheduled at the same time this year. IB Students who expressed interest in participating in the March and were told of the conflict were under the impression that they would miss the testing if they attended the March. In 2016, 2017 and 2019 there were overlaps with IB testing and the March. Also, C.A.J.E. estimated that next year in 2020 and in the year 2022 the IB testing will interfere with the March.

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Upon further research it was discovered that IB has a testing calendar with dates before and after the March of the Living trip and that test dates could be moved and exceptions could be made. M-DCPS asked over 6 months in advance for an exception in order for students to attend the March of the Living. The request was denied.

Revised²
H-10

After this board item was submitted, M-DCPS was informed that students attending the March could take the IB test while in Poland at the same time others take the test instead of IB offering a makeup day. This proposal came months after the original request and is not a solution since the trip has a prepared itinerary including days of traveling. To stop the planned trip for students to take a test, and to find a classroom and a proctor is not realistic.

As M-DCPS advocates for a reduced emphasis on testing and giving our students the world, the denied request sends a message that a test has greater value than a lifetime educational experience. The rationale that IB programs are worldwide in scope and offered in 4,000 schools, and that it would be logistically implausible to make exceptions for Miami-Dade students, makes the case for a different argument—a denial for an exception has consequences that extend far beyond our District. Students worldwide may have been discouraged from, or perhaps advised against, participating in the March.

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This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney's office as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. MARTIN KARP:**

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

1. Communicate the School Board's concern regarding IB's response regarding the conflict with the March of the Living program and IB testing; and
2. Seek a solution with the IBO for future years in an effort to avoid a repeat of this year's outcome; and
3. Provide an update to the School Board.

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