


MEMORANDUM

September 20, 2019

TO: The Honorable Chair and Members of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

FROM: Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools 

SUBJECT: STAFF FOLLOW-UP: SCHOOL BOARD MEETING OF MARCH 13, 2019, AGENDA ITEM H-10, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

At the School Board meeting of March 13, 2019, the Board approved Agenda Item H-10, proffered by School Board Vice Chair Dr. Martin Karp and co-sponsored by School Board Chair Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman and School Board Members Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Ms. Susie V. Castillo, Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Dr. Steve Gallon III, and Ms. Mari Tere Rojas. This item directed 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; 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 no later than the School Board meeting of October 2, 2019.

As a follow-up to this item, the attached written correspondence was sent to the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) on June 27, 2019. The letter expressed the District's dissatisfaction with the possible solutions offered by IBO and requested them to consider offering alternative test dates for IB exams to seek a solution for future years and ensure students around the world have the opportunity to participate in educational and meaningful events like the International March of the Living.

On September 13, 2019, IBO replied to the District via the attached correspondence, indicating that the solution proposed by Miami-Dade County Public Schools would not be workable for them and that their assessment structure would not lend itself to adding a third assessment period annually to the two they already have. It is our intent, however, to intensify direct and indirect outreach to IBO in our efforts to seek a solution for the benefit of students not only in our District but around the world.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Ms. Marie Izquierdo, Chief Academic Officer, Office of Academics and Transformation, at 305 995-1451.

AMC:kh
M317

Attachments

cc: School Board Attorney
Superintendent's Cabinet
Ms. Lisette Alves
School Board Agenda Office



Miami-Dade County Public Schools

giving our students the world

Superintendent of Schools
Alberto M. Carvalho

Miami-Dade County School Board
Perla Tabares Hentman, Chair
Dr. Martin Karp, Vice Chair
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall
Susie V. Castillo
Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman
Dr. Steve Gallon III
Lubby Navarro
Dr. Marta Pérez
Mari Tere Rojas

June 27, 2019

Dr. Siva Kumari, Director General
International Baccalaureate Organization
Route des Morillons 15
Grand-Saconnex, Geneva
CH-1218, Switzerland

Dr. Kumari:

This school year, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) worked with the International Baccalaureate Organization's (IBO) Regional Office in the Americas to assist a M-DCPS student who wished to participate in the *International March of the Living* and requested to reschedule his IB exams that conflicted with participating in this event. The IB exam schedule has conflicted with the *International March of the Living* event for several years now and has affected student participation for many of our students. This impactful experience is completely in line with the IB mission statement which "aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect." Participants study the history of the Holocaust, examine roots of prejudice and intolerance, and communicate with Holocaust survivors, making this experience timely and relevant as the number of survivors decreases with each passing year.

Unfortunately, the IBO rejected the request to reschedule the exam. I sent a letter to Dr. Weiss in February requesting that the IBO reconsider their position. Dr. Weiss's letter of response clarified IBO's rescheduling policy and provided possible solutions, including alternative venues and retaking exams during the following November exam session. However, the alternative venue option is quite costly and challenging to coordinate with other IB schools outside of the United States. Additionally, this student, and other students who wish to attend *International March of the Living*, are seniors and will be in college, possibly outside the state of Florida during the following November exam session, making it very difficult and costly for these students to exercise this suggested option. Simply, these possible solutions do not work for our students and families in Miami-Dade County.

I would like to propose another solution. I would like you to consider offering alternative test dates for IB exams, so students around the world can participate in educational and meaningful events like the one mentioned above. As I am sure you are aware, the

College Board provides alternative test dates for each of their Advanced Placement exams when conflicts arise for students.

The exam is a different form than the exam given previously on the original exam date, ensuring the security and integrity of the examination process. This solution provides a necessary flexible option for schools, students, and families when conflicts arise.

I appreciate your consideration in providing this exam solution for all IB students around the world who may want to participate in this life-changing experience and other similar experiences. We are also open to any other possible solutions that IBO may propose.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Marie Izquierdo, Chief Academic Officer, Office of Academics and Transformation, at 305 995-1451.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alberto M. Carvalho', written over a horizontal line.

Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent of Schools

AMC:lr
L1351



Mr. Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent of Schools
Miami-Dade County Public Schools
School Board Administration Building
1450 N.E. 2nd Avenue
Miami, Florida 33132

September 13, 2019

Dear Superintendent Carvalho,

On behalf of the IB Director General, this letter is in response to your letter of June 27, 2019 requesting that the IB add another set of testing dates in May to accommodate students wishing to participate in the International *March of the Living* as well as complete the requirements for the IB Diploma Programme. I am aware of your earlier correspondence with David Weiss regarding possible solutions and the issues you see associated with them. I have discussed this issue with our leadership team, and our Chief Assessment Officer, and I am sorry to say that the solution you propose will not be workable for us. Our assessment structure differs from the design of the College Board assessments and will not lend itself to adding a third assessment period annually to the two we already have.

The value of the International Baccalaureate grades are based in large part because of their reputation of integrity, validity for global context to demonstrate candidate performance. One of the biggest challenges to this integrity and validity is exam paper security. The organizations around the world who accept the IB Diploma and examinations as a credential expect us to insure these core values. Given the global nature of our programmes, time zone cheating is already a matter of concern and rescheduling examinations increases this risk exponentially. When we do allow limited rescheduling under strong controls to minimise and contain the risk. As noted in your letter, none of these are available in this case. We have a clear approach to when to allow rescheduling which all agree do not apply in this case.

The IB approach to assessment is based on the creation of a range of long and short assessment items which are developed over an 18-month period for each paper in each subject. We have these available to schools twice a year, for the May and November sessions. We have offered the second exam session, in November to you as an option for students who miss the May session. Creating an additional set of examinations for a small number of students (which in this case is the occasional student in Miami), together with the costs of ensuring exam integrity, marking and grade award is economically, operationally & logistically very challenging. For the sake of fairness, if we were to undertake this for May, we would also need to do so for our southern hemisphere schools who examine in November. IB takes tremendous care and is recognized for the design and quality of our assessment system. Maintaining consistent standards and quality in the criteria used for grade

awarding becomes very challenging when a small number of candidates are participating in an exam session. With the two sessions, we ensure that we are using comparable grade boundaries between the May and November sessions, and year-by-year. Adding additional sessions would further complicate the processes that are in place to ensure this is done with consistency and fairness.

In addition to the reasons outlined above, please note the scope of our assessment system. We offer over 30 IB Diploma subjects, most at two different levels (SL and HL), in three languages. Additionally, our Language A exam is offered in 17 languages, and our Language B exam in over 30. Most of these assessments have three written papers.

While we share your passion for offering students enriching educational experiences that help students become the leaders of future generations, we also have a need to ensure that we are able to equitably address such needs across a globe where others may also have chosen activities of such a noble nature. Unfortunately, the IB simply cannot accommodate all such requests.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you need to discuss this further.

Best regards



Adrian Kearney

Director, IB World Schools

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International Baccalaureate Organization (registered with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce under number 50776355 and having Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling status) is a branch of the Swiss foundation, Organisation du Baccalauréat International, which is registered with the Geneva Chamber of Commerce under number CH-660-0250968-3 and headquartered at Route des Moillans 15, CH-1218 Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland.

