

Jose L. Dotres, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT: APPROVE RESOLUTION 22-030 CALLING FOR A REFERENDUM TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022, SEEKING APPROVAL FROM THE VOTERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY FOR THE SCHOOL BOARD TO LEVY AN AD VALOREM ASSESSMENT TO CONTINUE IMPROVING COMPENSATION FOR TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL, AND IMPROVE STUDENT SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, INCLUDING CHARTER SCHOOLS, WITH OVERSIGHT BY A CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS**

Over the last decade, our school district has seen remarkable success. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) remains one of the highest-performing urban school systems in the nation, with a graduation rate that exceeds 90 percent. In 2018, the School Board recognized the need to identify supplemental revenue sources to support instructional personnel and school safety in light of the challenges presented by Miami-Dade's high cost of living, underfunded statutory mandates, and other issues impacting school funding and teacher salaries in M-DCPS. As a result, on November 6, 2018, the voters of Miami-Dade were asked to invest in our community's future by investing in M-DCPS. Proposition #362, the *Secure Our Future Referendum (SOFR)*, authorizing an ad valorem tax levy for operational expenses passed with 71.14 percent approval of votes cast.

Since that time, the proceeds of this referendum have been used to improve compensation for teachers and instructional personnel and to enhance safety and security for our students, faculty, and community who use our schools and other educational facilities. Further, the use of these proceeds has been overseen by a citizen oversight group. To date, the Secure Our Future Advisory Committee (SOFAC) has issued two annual reports providing assurances to the public that the District is meeting its fiduciary responsibility and that all funds are being used in accordance with the promises made to the voters.

**Good Cause  
A-2**

As a result of the investment made by our citizens since 2018, M-DCPS has been able to maintain an average annual salary for teachers that is higher than our neighboring districts, all of which also benefit from operational ad valorem millage levies within their counties. The SOFR proceeds are critically important to our District's ability to compete for high quality talent. Moreover, funds provided through our current referendum have allowed Miami-Dade Schools Police to nearly double in size to provide a certified law enforcement officer at every school site to comply with Florida law. When the current referendum sunsets on June 30, 2023, the ability for the District to fiscally support "supplemented" compensation for teachers will also sunset, as will the ability to meet the requirement for a law enforcement officer on school premises from bell to bell, without impacts to educational programs.

In recognition of the upcoming expiration of authorization for the SOFR, the School Board unanimously approved Agenda Item H-3 proffered by Board Member Navarro directing the administration to initiate the process to bring forth the referendum renewal request to the voters in November 2022. Consequently, staff, along with the Secure Our Future+ Task Force (Task Force), have reviewed the current use of 2018 referendum proceeds, current revenue levels, statutory requirements, and other factors related to such a renewal. The Task Force recommendations were presented to the Board at a workshop on May 11, 2022, wherein it was also delineated that Section 1011.71(9) requires funds levied through a voter referendum be shared with charter schools sponsored by a school district and that Section 1011.73, Florida Statutes, authorizes the imposition by school boards of a levy of ad valorem taxes for up to four (4) years for operating expenses, subject to approval by the electors of the county voting in a referendum.

It is estimated that the Board may be able to raise \$395 million annually, at a cost of less than \$219 per year, or \$0.60 per day, to the typical homeowner with a levy of 1.0 mill of ad valorem taxes. Inasmuch as Florida law now requires that proceeds be shared with charter schools based on an unweighted proportional share of student enrollment, it is necessary to move from a 0.75 mill levy to 1.0 mill in order to maintain a continuation of current compensation and safety and security improvements.

Therefore, to continue securing the future of public schools, as described above; and based on the recommendations of the Secure Our Future+ Task Force, as well as consensus provided by the Board at its Workshop of May 11, 2022, Resolution 22-030 seeking approval from the voters of Miami-Dade County for the School Board to levy an ad valorem assessment for a period of four (4) years, beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027, to continue improving compensation for teachers and instructional personnel, and improve student safety and security for public schools, including charter schools, with oversight by a citizen advisory committee is being recommended to be placed on the November 8, 2022 ballot.

This item does not appear on the published agenda. There exists good cause to vary from the published agenda because the School Board Workshop wherein the Board provided direction regarding essential elements of the referendum was held on May 11,

2022, after publication of the agenda and because time is of the essence in order to meet applicable election deadlines.

- Recommended: That the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida,
- 1) approve Resolution 22-030, calling for a referendum to be held on November 8, 2022, for the purpose of seeking approval from the voters of Miami-Dade County for the School Board to levy an ad valorem assessment of 1.0 mill to continue improving compensation for teachers and instructional personnel, and improve student safety and security for public schools, including charter schools, with oversight by a citizen advisory committee; and
  - 2) in accordance with Section 1011.73(2), F.S., direct the Miami-Dade County Commission to place the referendum on the November 8, 2022 general election ballot as authorized by Resolution 22-030; and
  - 3) authorize the Superintendent to use District resources to educate the community on the purpose and benefits of the proposed referendum.