

Ms. Lubby Navarro, Board Member

**SUBJECT: CENSUS 2020**

**COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

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

Accurate Census data are of paramount importance to our nation. Our future prosperity and well-being depend upon the quality of the crucial information collected by the Census Bureau about our population and infrastructure. Census data guide a wide range of decisions made in the public and private sectors that affect the lives of all Americans. They are used to ensure the effective and proportional allocation of billions of dollars in federal, state and local funding. Local and state government officials and staff rely upon the Census Bureau for data that show where population growth justifies building a new school, or where particular resources, such as English language instructional programs for students, are most needed. Reliable Census data also ensures fair and representative reapportionment and redistricting, and the just application of civil rights protections such as the provisions of the Voting Rights Act that require language assistance in elections where large numbers of U.S. citizens are not yet fully fluent in English.

The 2020 Census has the potential to be the most innovative decennial census in modern history, harnessing unprecedented use of technology, including Internet response, digital mapping and imagery to update address lists, and administrative data to reduce the cost of address list updating and field operations. If successful, these new methods and operational reforms could save taxpayers \$2 billion over the lifecycle of the 2020 Census and produce a more cost-efficient and accurate census.

However, if not fully researched and thoughtfully implemented, these proposed changes could hurt the accuracy of Census enumeration, particularly in Miami-Dade County. Communities that have been most often missed and undercounted in previous Census surveys include key constituencies of the Miami-Dade County Public School system: Latinos and African Americans, residents with immigrant origins, and people who speak languages other than English. For example, in 2010, more than 7% of all Latino children aged 0-4 Latino nationwide were not counted in the decennial Census; with approximately 18,000 child residents missed, Miami-Dade County had the third-highest total number of uncounted children of all counties in the country. If our residents are undercounted, funding and planning for our schools will suffer direct and negative consequences.

This item requests that the School Board amend its 2018 Federal Legislative Program to support Congressional allocation of increased appropriations to the Census Bureau in FY19, which will ensure the Bureau's ability to conduct a modernized and accurate decennial Census, and help to ameliorate the undercount in Miami-Dade County of communities of color, individuals of immigrant origin, and individuals who are not yet fully fluent in English. Fair and accurate Census enumeration will, in turn, ensure that Miami-Dade County Public Schools receive the resources, support, and information needed to provide the best possible education to all of our children.

Moreover, the difficulty of securing an accurate count of our county's population will be exacerbated by the last-minute decision the Administration to add an untested citizenship question to the decennial 2020 Census form, which every household in the country will be asked to complete. No such question has been asked of every resident in United States, since 1950, but enumerators taking sample surveys that include this inquiry have observed unprecedented displays of fear and non-cooperation in response over the past two years. In addition, authorities including the United States Department of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, have stated that the more questions asked on a Census, the fewer households can be expected to participate. Use of a longer and more intrusive Census questionnaire is likely to further depress response rates among members of chronically undercounted communities in Miami-Dade County, including individuals born outside the United States and their families, who constitute more than half of our population. Additional resources will be necessary to dispel concerns and to raise awareness of the benefits of being counted.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
LUBBY NAVARRO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, amend its Federal Legislative Program to support:

- 1) increased federal funding to the United States Census Bureau for the 2020 Census; and,
- 2) support the opposition of the inclusion of the citizenship question on the 2020 decennial Census and communicate said action to the Federal Administration and other District stakeholders.