

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member

**SUBJECT: FINANCIAL, LEGAL, OPERATIONAL, AND INSTRUCTIONAL FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A PARENTAL CHOICE OPTION FOR ONLINE SCHOOL HOUSE LEARNING CENTERS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS) UTILIZING THE MY SCHOOL ONLINE MODEL**

**COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

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

At the Special Board meeting of July 1, 2020, the School Board received and accepted the 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan, including three instructional models –The School House Model, The Hybrid Model 1 and 2, and the My School Online Model. These instructional model options considered the following concerns and recommendations: 1) preserving in-school instruction, whenever possible; 2) providing a distance learning option; 3) addressing students’ academic, emotional, and social needs; 4) minimizing health risks at school; and pivoting with agility to distance learning in the event of a subsequent school closure. In addition, four guiding principles guided the reopening of schools: a) ensuring the safety and wellness of students and staff; b) delivering high-quality instruction to students, regardless of delivery model; c) providing parents flexibility and choice in delivery model; and d) optimizing use of resources.

Results of the *Instructional Delivery Model Choice Survey* to parents between July 6 and July 15, 2020, asked parents to declare their child’s instructional delivery option for Phase 2 during the 2020-2021 school year. While the My School Online option was selected for approximately 51% of students, the option for attending school physically was selected by approximately 49%. At the Special Board meeting of July 29, 2020, the Board was provided a venue for an open dialogue between the administration and the Board to further discuss the My School Online Model and receive additional information regarding the status of the school reopening plan. No action items were presented at this Board meeting. The Superintendent of Schools submitted the reopening plan for Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) to the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) and approval was granted by the FDOE on July 31, 2020. The My School Online Model is scheduled to take effect on August 31, 2020 when students return for the 2020-2021 school year.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is an important part of the organization and structure of local communities as this school district delivers a safe, supportive learning environments for over 350,000 students, hires approximately over 40,000 employees including teachers, administrators, and other supportive and dedicated staff. Schools provide available critical services that help to lessen health disparities, such as school breakfast and lunch programs; and social, physical, behavioral, and mental health services. School closures may interrupt the delivery of these services to children and families, and may further place additional economic and psychological stress on the families M-DCPS serves. Schools also facilitate and enable parents, guardians, and caregivers to be able to go to work.

As the school year begins, parents, guardians, and caregivers have to make important decisions based on numerous factors such as individual preferences, health concerns, and work situations. As these decisions are contemplated and resolved, there are other factors to consider beyond academics, such as access to school meals, social services, before and after school care, social and emotional support from peers and teachers, and transportation, among others. Therefore, it is imperative that all options and choices available to parents and students be carefully explored and implemented if feasible. One choice option that may be considered at this time is a concept where a group of students comes to the school house and learns through the My School Online Model having direct access to teachers, effective and prompt technology support, while maintaining social distance, following CDC guidelines, and providing an avenue for parents to be able to go to work without worries and be able to support their families with pride and dignity.

Miami-Dade County continues to report fewer people receiving positive results after getting tested. The county is reporting testing positivity rates below 10% during the last few days. In the event M-DCPS is able to start the school house model prior to October 5, 2020, this model could be considered for implementation as a transitional model and it could also be ready if school closures become an ill-fated and unfortunate reality in the near future.

This agenda item seeks to direct the Superintendent of Schools, in collaboration with the School Board Attorney, to research and analyze the financial, legal, operational, and instructional feasibility of establishing a parental choice option for online school house learning centers in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) utilizing the My School Online Model pursuant to the four guiding principles of the reopening of schools; provide a report to the Board by September 24, 2020; and based on the report to the Board, if it is deemed appropriate and within CDC guidelines, state and/or local health guidelines, authorize the Superintendent of Schools to implement a parental choice option for online school house learning centers in Miami-Dade County Public Schools by October 5, 2020.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:**

- That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida,
1. direct the Superintendent of Schools, in collaboration with the School Board Attorney, to research and analyze the financial, legal, operational, and instructional feasibility of establishing a parental choice option for online school house learning centers in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) utilizing the My School Online Model pursuant to the four guiding principles of the reopening of schools;
  2. provide a report to the Board by September 24, 2020; and
  3. based on the report to the Board, if it is deemed appropriate and within CDC guidelines, state and/or local health requirements, authorize the Superintendent of Schools to implement a parental choice option for online school house learning centers in Miami-Dade County Public Schools by October 5, 2020.