

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member

SUBJECT: COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS EFFORT TO VOLUNTEER THE NATION'S URBAN SCHOOLS WHO WANT TO VOLUNTEER AND PARTICIPATE IN THE DRIVE TO VACCINATE 100 MILLION PEOPLE AND REOPEN SCHOOLS

COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

On January 22, 2021, the Executive Committee of *The Council of the Great City Schools* submitted a letter to President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., pledging the collaboration and resources of urban public-school systems who want to volunteer and participate to meet the goals of the vaccination of 100 million citizens and reopening the nation's schools within 100 days. By enlisting one of the most trusted institutions in our communities, public schools, the Council is proposing to assist and "shape the confidence that the vaccines are safe and worthwhile." The Council has asked for those urban public school districts who wish to participate in this effort to notify them.

In the letter to the President, the Council has delineated some very important assets of urban public schools. In summary, it states the following:

- "Some 12,000 school buildings in every major city in the nation could be utilized as vaccination sites, rather than relying on centralized sites or hospitals that are sparsely located. Schools are in every corner of our communities, including our poorest communities, and they are often used now for COVID-19 testing purposes. Most of these facilities have all-purpose rooms that could be used for vaccinations, smaller rooms that could be used as observation sites for those just receiving their shots, and bathrooms for those having to wait in line.
- Tens of thousands of school buses and drivers could be deployed to transport individuals to vaccination sites or that might be able to be retrofitted to serve as mobile vaccination facilities. We have been able to effectively use our very large transportation systems throughout the pandemic to deliver millions of meals to children and families.
- Sophisticated communication systems that can reach out of tens of thousands of people at one time.
- About ten thousand school nurses, who with some modest training from their local hospitals, could be enlisted to administer vaccines.

H-18

- Thousands of school custodians who could be used to prepare and clean vaccination sites; security staff who might be deployed to ensure safety; human resources staff who might be used to keep track of who is receiving the vaccinations, and information technology (IT) staff who might be used to create data bases or to coordinate with other local officials who have already developed tracking systems.”

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has played a key role in delivering several additional support services to students and their families beyond those needs typically considered to be part of the school environment since the coronavirus pandemic hit in March 2020. Based on Board action, the District has been proactive in supporting not only the availability of providing COVID-19 testing sites to our employees (School Board Meeting, August 12, 2020, Agenda Item H-5, Revised, proffered by Board Member Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas), but also in advocating prioritizing the vaccination for teachers and all school district personnel (School Board Meeting, January 13, 2021, Agenda Item H-4, Revised 2, proffered by Board Member Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall). Furthermore, M-DCPS has partnered with Jackson Health Systems to provide COVID-19 vaccines to all district employees age 65 and older (Superintendent’s memorandum, January 20, 2021).

Our schools play an important role in our communities sharing a common goal of instilling in students a sense of civic and social responsibility. Now is the time to examine how schools can facilitate the possible task of serving as beacons of hope, not only for COVID-19 testing purposes, but also as centers of distributions when doses of the vaccines are more readily available, servicing and giving the opportunity for the entire population of eligible participants to receive their shots. These sites can not only provide the much-needed vaccines to members of the community, but also immediate and available access for teachers and staffs of the schools serviced.

It is within the School Board’s continued efforts to support our teachers, the workforce, and the communities we serve, that this agenda item seeks to authorize the Chair of the Board and the Superintendent of Schools to submit a letter to the Executive Committee of *The Council of the Great City Schools* for Miami-Dade County Public Schools to be included as part of the efforts to volunteer and participate in the drive to vaccinate 100 million people and reopen schools within 100 days, as delineated in the correspondence sent to the President January 22, 2021.

This 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, authorize the Chair of the Board and the Superintendent of Schools to submit a letter to the Executive Committee of *The Council of the Great City Schools* for Miami-Dade County Public Schools to be included as part of the efforts to volunteer and participate in the drive to vaccinate 100 million people and reopen schools within 100 days, as delineated in the correspondence sent to the President January 22, 2021.