

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Vice Chair

**SUBJECT: MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS RECEIPT, PLAN AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR NEARLY \$1.1 BILLION FROM THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021**

**COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES**

On March 11, 2021, President Joe Biden signed into law The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill passed by the 117<sup>TH</sup> United States Congress. Its intent is to speed up the United States recovery from the economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing recession which was educed as a consequence. First proposed on January 14, 2021, the package builds upon many of the measures in the CARES Act from March 2020 and in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 from December 2020.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provides \$1,400 direct payments to individuals making up to \$75,000 annually, \$350 billion in aid to state and local governments and \$14 billion for vaccine distribution. It also provides \$130 billion to elementary, middle and high schools to assist with safe reopening, with Florida slated to receive approximately \$7.4 billion. Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the state's largest school district and having the highest proportion of economically disadvantaged students, is estimated to receive \$1.1 billion. The bill will also directly impact local students and families through individual relief measures, including child tax credits that are projected to reduce child poverty substantially.

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools is committed to its students and has remained focused on addressing vexing, seemingly intractable issues related to student learning, especially those students with the greatest needs. In doing so, it expanded its focus and attention on students whose learning and lives have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through the adverse consequences of distance learning and other innovative, nontraditional learning approaches.

With the infusion of these unprecedented funds, the District will enhance its capacity to mitigate and address the unprecedented adverse impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on its students and their learning for over a year, with studies anticipating that learning loss will be greater among low-income, Black, and Hispanic students---a demographic highly concentrated in Miami-Dade County Public Schools and whose anticipated academic, social, and emotional needs exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic in large part and generated the unprecedented amount of federal funds.

**H-17**  
**Good Cause**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County remains committed to promoting and maintaining a high level of accountability, integrity, and transparency in the operation of the school district, including those that involves expenditures, procurement, and related financial matters. In fact, the ultimate authority and as a result, accountability rests with the School Board, as stipulated in F.S. 1001.42. Thus, the School Board must continue to work collaboratively with the Superintendent in developing a cohesive, yet comprehensive plan of action for the use of funds allocated to the District through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. In doing so, it will provide leadership, direction, and engagement to ensure that all resources and federal funds are targeted and used as intended and include measures that ensure proper planning, budgeting, accountability, transparency, and impact.

Although previous federal funds expended for COVID-19 relief to the District were used to provide for the safety, health, and welfare of students and employees in schools, and to support digital learning at home, the allocation of previous funds and circumstances surrounding the district's response to the new pandemic and related issues, did not provide an opportunity for the School Board and Superintendent to engage in prudent, pragmatic, and policy-driven decision-making regarding the use of said funds; the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 affords the Superintendent and the Board an opportunity for a timely examination of the appropriate and prudent use of these funds. As discussed, and mutually agreed to by the Superintendent and members of the Board at the Academics, Innovation, Evaluation, & Technology Committee Meeting of March 10, 2021, a collaborative review and planning session should be held to discuss the educational, fiscal, and operational impact and implications of the nearly \$1.1 billion dollar allocation via the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 as is contemplated by the Board. It will also provide an opportunity for the public to be informed about and serve witness to policy, practices, and procurement decision-making process involving nearly \$1.1 billion that have been allocated to enhance and uplift the learning and lives of our students---especially those facing the greatest challenges and with the greatest needs.

This item seeks to direct the Superintendent to schedule a Board Workshop to discuss and review the allocation and allowable use of funds to the District via the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; review the prior allocation, expenditure, and planned use for remaining funds allocated to the District through the CARES Act from March 2020 and in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 from December 2020; and establish a system and structure for quarterly reporting of all funds expended through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and make available for easy public access and review on the District website no later than May 14, 2021.

Good cause exists to vary from the established agenda because the allocation of nearly \$1.1 billion in federal funds to Miami-Dade County Public Schools arose after the agenda was published, and the receipt, planned use, and accountability for said funds are a matter of great public importance.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney for legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY  
DR. STEVE GALLON III:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to:

1. schedule a Board Workshop no later than May 14, 2021 to discuss and review the allocation and allowable use of funds to the District via the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, inclusive of a review of the prior allocation, expenditure, and planned use for remaining funds allocated to the District through the CARES Act from March 2020 and in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 from December 2020 ;
2. establish a system and structure for quarterly reporting to the School Board of all funds expended through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; and
3. make available a summary of all funds expended through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for easy public access and review on the District website.