

Dr. Lubby Navarro, Board Member

SUBJECT: RENEWAL OF REFERENDUM IN SUPPORT OF TEACHER SALARIES, SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

LINK TO STRATEGIC

PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED, & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Over the last decade, our school district has seen remarkable success. An “A” rated district, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is one of the highest performing urban school systems in the state and in our nation. This performance has been the result of the outstanding work of teachers and instructional personnel in the classroom. Financially, the District navigated the Great Recession and most recently a pandemic. Through said challenges, efficiencies were created through innovation while protecting the classroom, the workforce, and programs such as art, music, and world languages.

In 2018 the Board recognized the need to identify supplemental revenue sources to support educators and public education in light of the challenges and issues impacting school funding and teacher salaries in M-DCPS through initiatives put forth by School Board members. At the January 17, 2018 School Board Meeting, I proffered item H-7 (“Explore Available Supplemental Revenue Sources to Support Educators and Public Education”), which was approved by the Board and sought to explore available revenue sources to specifically support our educators and requested a Board workshop to discuss options to increase funding for public education. Additionally, at the same School Board meeting, the School Board approved Agenda Item H-6 (“Exploration and Examination of Alternate Funding Sources and Solutions to Improve Teacher Salaries), presented by Dr. Steve Gallon III. Also, at the School Board meeting of April 25, 2018, the Board approved Agenda Item H-8 (“Teacher Compensation”) which was proffered by School Board member Mari Tere Rojas. The item sought to ensure that teacher compensation and school safety and security remained a priority for our school district.

The cumulative effect of the Board’s approval of these Agenda Items is to reinforce the Board’s continued commitment to improving teacher salaries and maintain and improve school safety and security.

In accordance with the Board’s approval of the foregoing Agenda Items, District staff, along with the Teacher Salary Task Force, which included stakeholder and community input, explored all avenues to secure additional funding. On June 27, 2018 the task force presented its recommendations to the Board during a workshop. In accordance with Sections 1011.71(9) and 1011.73, Florida Statutes (2020), school boards are authorized to impose a levy of ad valorem taxes for up to four (4) years for operating expenses, subject to approval of a referendum by the electors of the county voting on the referendum.

On November 6, 2018 Miami-Dade voters resoundingly approved Referendum 362 to increase teachers' salaries, increase school safety and security through the assessment of a 0.75 mill levy of ad valorem taxes. This levy has allowed M-DCPS to raise \$232 million annually, while limiting assessment to the average homeowner to a would contribution of approximately \$0.39 a day, or \$12 a month. In accordance with the referendum, the Secure Our Future Advisory Committee, a citizens' oversight committee, was established to monitor the use of proceeds generated by the referendum and to safeguard taxpayers' investment.

Building from the foundation laid by the past work of this Board, this item seeks to initiate the renewal of a referendum in support of teacher compensation and school safety and security, which was approved by the Miami-Dade County electorate in 2018 to generate revenue to increase teachers' salaries and for school safety and security through the assessment of an appropriate millage levy referendum of ad valorem taxes. Pursuant to Board policy and state statutes, if a new Board referendum seeking a levy for additional millage for school operational purposes is approved by the voters in the future, such referendum proceeds shall be distributed in accordance with F.S. 1011.71.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. LUBBY NAVARRO:**

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

1. initiate process to bring forth the renewal of a referendum to improve teacher compensation, school safety and security to be placed on November 8, 2022 ballot for voter approval, by:
2. re-establish a Task Force comprised of School Board Member appointees, district administrators, principals, teachers, labor union representatives, parents, community and business leaders, and other stakeholders to review and address issues relative to improvement of teacher salaries in M-DCPS and providing additional support for maintaining and improving school safety and security, including but not limited to, renewal of a referendum by the electors of the county voting to increase teachers' salaries and for school safety and security;
3. designate appropriate staff to support and facilitate the purpose of the Task Force and collect, analyze, and report, re-establish a timeline for the Task Force to report its findings and proposed recommendations to the School Board no later than its meeting of April 13, 2022; and
4. schedule a workshop to address the Task Force's findings and recommendations.