

Dr. Lubby Navarro, Vice Chair

SUBJECT: JORGE MAS CANOSA MIDDLE SCHOOL

COMMITTEE: FACILITIES & CONSTRUCTION

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED, & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

For more than a decade, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has been at the national forefront of school choice by offering students and families access to over 1,000 unique programs aligned to a variety of themes, including international studies, visual and performing arts, technology, engineering, robotics, aviation, forensic sciences, and many others. Many of these programs leverage innovative school models, including schools that do not restrict students and parents to specific boundaries, virtual instruction, single-gender environments, and models embedded within business settings in the local community. The number and success of these unique programs have enabled M-DCPS to remain an attractive educational option for students and families across Miami-Dade County.

One model that has proven successful is the 6-12 school configuration, which offers students the option of exploring a specific area of interest beginning in the middle grades and seamlessly articulating into continued coursework in that program area throughout the high school grades, all within the same school. The District currently has six such 6-12 schools – Arthur and Polly Mays Conservatory of the Arts, iPrep Academy North, José Martí MAST 6-12 Academy, Miami Arts Studio 6-12 @ Zelda Glazer, Young Men’s Preparatory Academy, and Young Women’s Preparatory Academy – three of which were created through the conversion of existing middle school facilities. The robust programs the District has been able to provide students as a result of these conversions have allowed M-DCPS to remain competitive and strategic with its school choice options.

With the U.S. 2020 Census results indicating that some of the southwestern areas of Miami-Dade County are among those experiencing the greatest population growth, there exists a need to explore additional opportunities for M-DCPS to offer more innovative educational programming that meets the demands of students and families residing in this part of the community. One very in-demand school in the area is Jorge Mas Canosa Middle School, which, based on enrollment, is the largest middle school in the South Region and the second largest in the District overall. Leveraging the popularity of this school to create a new 6-12 program may allow the District to recapture enrollment lost to charter schools.

Thematic options could include the expansion of the current Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) program or other in-demand program offerings that would expand high-interest curricular choice options and in demand career pathways for students in that area. The following actions are recommended for consideration of the expansion: to conduct a study to determine impact of and interest in the Cambridge expansion for the Jorge Mas Canosa community; gather stakeholder community feedback on interest in and demand for other thematic magnet career pathway programs to include in the expansion of curriculum; and to explore possibility of aligning curriculum to university partners to expand career readiness and facilitate articulation to college.

This agenda item seeks to direct the Superintendent of Schools to conduct a feasibility study to expand the current Cambridge Middle School Program to a Cambridge 6-12 Preparatory Academy at Jorge Mas Canosa Middle School, in order to provide a new choice model for students and families in the southwestern area of Miami-Dade County.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the Office of the General as to form and legal sufficiency.

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

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

1. explore the academic and operational feasibility of implementing a 6-12 Cambridge Preparatory Academy to determine impact of and interest in the Cambridge expansion, in order to provide a new choice model for students and families in the southwestern area of Miami-Dade County.
2. explore from a facility perspective to house the 6-12 Preparatory Academy at the Jorge Mas Canosa Middle school site or at an adjacent district property available that is within close proximity to the school.
3. report back to the Board no later than January 18, 2023.