

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING THE SECOND SCHOLAS CITIZENSHIP MIAMI PROJECT DURING THE SUMMER OF 2023

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS, & INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS

Scholas Citizenship is an international educational offering that affords a paradigmatic transformation in the conception of learning, service, and the educational space. The program, developed for young adults, is aimed at drawing them closer to the reality of what surrounds them through a method that enhances the importance of participation in social, civic, and political engagement. The program seeks to generate an environment where each student approaches its own community day-to-day issues from a constructive viewpoint, where the student participates through investigation and the subsequent presentation of proposals and solutions.

Scholas Citizenship has been developed and implemented with over 426 programs all over the world in 22 countries, including Argentina, Israel, Paraguay, Poland, Haiti, Italy, Australia, Mozambique, India, Japan, Spain, Mexico, Brazil, and the United Arab Emirates, connecting schools and educational networks. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) became the first school district in the United States to offer the program during the summer of 2019 with more than 100 students from nine high schools participating. Staff from M-DCPS Community Engagement did an outstanding job in facilitating the successful implementation of the summer 2019 program.

Scholas Citizenship is a program within the *Scholas Occurrentes* (Schools for Encounter) Foundation and as such shares its vision of transforming the world into a more integrated and peaceful society. The *Scholas Occurrentes* Foundation was created in 2013 by Pope Francis in order to promote educational projects around the world. It is an international organization of public good profit, of all religious, nonspiritual, and secular confessions to restore a culture of respect, responsibility, diversity, listening and dialogue, and teamwork for the creation of a more peaceful society through service and education.

The second *Scholas Citizenship Miami Project* aims at working with approximately 200 young students, preferably juniors and seniors in high school, attending various schools in Miami-Dade County during the summer of 2023. It is essential for the participants of the program to represent a multiplicity of schools from our diverse student population. Selection of student participants should be conducted by the school district and parental/guardian approval must be secured prior to the start of the project. The program is for five days, each day the *Scholas Citizenship* team will work with the participants for approximately five hours, except for the fourth day when a small

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group of students works three more hours together with the team to elaborate a report that will be presented to the School Board and the Superintendent of Schools.

The recent events in South Florida have prompted young high school students to be more involved and active in promoting citizenship commitment for the common good of all. The youth of South Florida is engaging adults, school authorities, law enforcement, politicians, and actively participating in energetic and positive dialogue to improve the lives of students and citizens in our communities. The second *Scholas Citizenship Miami Project* is an excellent venue for our students to engage, work together, develop ideas, possible solutions, and spread a new level of citizenship in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Furthermore, a community service project, incorporated by reference in School Board Policy 5410, *Student Progression Plan*, is required for graduation for those students who select a four-year, 24-credit standard program. Likewise, the *Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program* requires community service hours as part of the eligibility requirements. The *Scholas Citizenship Miami Project* could be a wonderful opportunity for our high school students, along with their peers, to identify a social problem of interest to them and the community, develop a plan, and evaluate and reflect upon the experiences they had in researching and implementing the identified solutions to the problem.

The *Scholas Citizenship Miami Project* will provide all the personnel for the implementation of the weeklong program, including student transportation. Therefore, there will be no cost to Miami-Dade County Public Schools. The District's commitment is only to support and approve the program and provide a high school setting with an auditorium, classrooms, and some technological support for the one-week program, preferably in June 2023.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the General Counsel's office as to form and legal sufficiency.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent of Schools to explore the feasibility of implementing the second *Scholas Citizenship Miami Project* in Miami-Dade County Public Schools during the summer of 2023, at no cost to the school district, and report back to the Board by May 9, 2023.