

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

Co-Sponsors: Mr. Roberto J. Alonso
Ms. Lucia Baez-Geller
Ms. Mary Blanco
Ms. Monica Colucci
Dr. Steve Gallon III
Ms. Luisa Santos

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT OF A FEASIBILITY STUDY REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING PAID PARENTAL LEAVE FOR FULL TIME MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS) EMPLOYEES

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL, & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and the Cabinet approved the expansion of maternity and family leave for Florida state employees on September 18, 2023. Eligible state employees can now receive paid maternity leave for up to seven (7) weeks and parental leave for two (2) weeks, which can be combined to provide nine (9) weeks of paid leave for mothers. The new policy covers any mother or father that has been a full time state employee for at least one year. At this meeting, the Governor and the Cabinet also approved rules to allow paid family leave insurance to be offered in the state, providing a mechanism for Florida employers to offer similar benefits through supplemental insurance benefits for their own employees.

The new state paid leave benefits will allow mothers appropriate time to recuperate after the birth of a child and allow both parents the opportunity to care for and bond with their new baby or newly adopted child without the financial concern of lost earnings. Early parental closeness with newborns will greatly impact their social and cognitive developments.

Miami-Dade County provides some paid parental leave for its employees. The County's Leave Manual, page 204, Section 30.04.00 states the following: "Paid parental leave shall be up to six weeks long and may be taken by day or week during the first year after birth, adoption, or foster care intake of the child or children. The leave period is fixed regardless of the number of children born, adopted by the employee, or placed in the employee's home through foster care. During the leave period, the employee shall be paid 100 percent of his or her base wages for the first two weeks, 75 percent of his or her base wages for the following two weeks, and 50 percent of base wages for the remaining two weeks. Employees shall be eligible to use any accrued leave in order to receive compensation up to 100 percent of base pay during the weeks reimbursed at the rates of 75 percent and 50 percent."

The federal government has also created a paid leave category for federal workers of paid parental leave (PPL). Under the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2019 (FEPLA), most federal workers can take up to 12 weeks of PPL, covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993, in connection with the birth of a child. Employees may also use federal paid parental leave for the placement of a child under their care. This includes documented situations like adoption and foster care. PPL can be used any time following the birth or placement of an employee's son or daughter.

Therefore, this item seeks to direct the Superintendent of Schools to develop a feasibility study regarding the possibility of providing paid parental leave, following the birth, adoption, or foster care intake of an employee's child or children, for full time Miami-Dade County Public Schools employees, including projected annual cost, procedures for implementation, number of weeks eligible for paid leave, years of employment service before employee may be eligible for this benefit, different examples of benefit selections that may be considered, legal issues regarding offering paid parental leave benefits, the option of offering comparable benefits through a supplemental insurance plan, and any other issues or information that will be valuable to the School Board in the event that the Board may want to pursue such benefit through the collective bargaining process.

This revised 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, direct the Superintendent of Schools to develop a feasibility study regarding the possibility of providing paid parental leave, following the birth, adoption, or foster care intake of an employee's child or children, for full time Miami-Dade County Public Schools employees, including projected annual cost, procedures for implementation, number of weeks eligible for paid leave, years of employment service before employee may be eligible for this benefit, different examples of benefit selections that may be considered, legal issues regarding offering paid parental leave benefits, the option of offering comparable benefits through a supplemental insurance plan, and any other issues or information that will be valuable to the School Board in the event that the Board may want to pursue such benefit through the collective bargaining process, and provide a report to the Board by March 1, 2024.

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