

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

Co-Sponsors:

Ms. Monica Colucci, Vice Chair
Mr. Roberto J. Alonso
Mr. Danny Espino
Dr. Steve Gallon III
Ms. Luisa Santos

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SUBJECT: METAL DETECTORS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS)

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL, & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: SAFE, HEALTHY, & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The School Board is constantly reviewing the safety and security of students and the workforce to establish a safe learning environment for all. Numerous actions have been taken by the Board to create different measures to implement a comprehensive plan that includes a number of strategic safety tools. Some of these include security monitors, closed circuit television systems, two-way radio monitoring, anonymous reporting technologies, and the largest school police in the nation, just to name a few. It has also developed a comprehensive safety awareness campaign for students, parents, and community stakeholders. Furthermore, the Board-approved Districtwide Safety and Security Committee meets regularly to discuss and progressively review current plans and security updates as needed.

A report from M-DCPS Office of Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis titled *Preventing Violence in Schools*, dated October 2009, describes a comprehensive review of the literature and the research regarding metal detectors in schools. This outstanding report provides insights as to the effectiveness, disadvantages, issues, funding, and alternatives to metal detectors, among others. It is also important to account that this 2009 report was issued before the heartbreaking incidents at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas Senior High School, in Parkland, Florida, on February 14, 2018.

Board Members have actively proffered agenda action items regarding the implementation of metal detectors in schools. Former School Board Member Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman submitted Agenda Item H-17 – *Random Weapon Searches*, at the Board meeting of February 10, 2010. Additionally, former School Board Member Ms. Susie V. Castillo, submitted Agenda Item H-7 – *Metal Detectors*, at the Board meeting of January 1, 2016; and Board Member Ms. Mari Tere Rojas submitted Agenda Item H-4 – *Authorize the Superintendent of Schools to Review the Possible Implementation of Metal Detectors and the Application of Limited School Entry Points as Potential Security Enhancements in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS)*, at the Board meeting of June 20, 2018. While these agenda items have produced some action, including the random use of metal detectors in M-DCPS, many school districts in Florida and throughout the nation are now implementing a comprehensive plan to install metal detectors in schools.

School Board Policy – *Plant Security* – states “The Superintendent is authorized to install metal detectors and other security devices which would assist in the detection of guns and dangerous weapons in school buildings and/or district property.” Additionally, School Board Policy 5771 – *Search and Seizure* includes the following language: “To deter individuals from bringing weapons to school, curtail the threat of violence, and foster a safe learning environment for students, staff, and visitors, metal detector searches are authorized without individualized suspicion pursuant to procedures established by the Superintendent.” In addition, School Board Policy 9160 – *Public Attendance at School Events* – states: “A Principal may also use detectors and other devices as necessary for the safety of participants and visitors.”

Although school violence is never preventable 100 percent of the time, one may contend that metal detectors in conjunction with other strategies may decrease the number of weapons in schools. Currently, there are two types of metal detectors commonly used in M-DCPS: metal detection wands and stationary metal detectors. Metal detection wands are used throughout the District in an appropriate and random manner. They may also be used for guests attending District-sponsored athletic events. Stationary metal detectors are used in the School Board Administration Building (SBAB) during a School Board meeting.

Therefore, this agenda item, pursuant to School Board Policy 0165 – *Public Meetings, Section G, Workshop*, seeks to direct the Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the General Counsel, to schedule a School Board Workshop no later than August 2, 2024, and provide a comprehensive report to include the possible implementation of metal detectors in high schools, cost consideration, effectiveness, potential sources of funding, legal issues, disadvantages, issues to consider, collective bargaining concerns, training, awareness campaign, inclusion of stakeholders, possible amendments to School Board policies, and any other aspects and/or recommendations for the Board’s consideration, that the Superintendent may deem to be appropriate to be discussed at this workshop.

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, direct the Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the General Counsel, pursuant to School Board Policy 0165 – *Public Meetings, Section G, Workshop*, to schedule a School Board Workshop no later than August 2, 2024, and provide a comprehensive report to include the possible implementation of metal detectors in high schools, cost consideration, effectiveness, potential sources of funding, legal issues, disadvantages, issues to consider, including any collective bargaining concerns, training, awareness campaign, inclusion of stakeholders, possible amendments to School Board policies, and any other aspects and/or recommendations for the Board’s consideration that the Superintendent may deem to be appropriate to be discussed at this workshop.