

Ms. Mary Blanco, Board Member

SUBJECT: FEASIBILITY OF OPENING A GEORGE T. BAKER AVIATION AND AREOSPACE TECHNICAL COLLEGE SOUTH DADE CAMPUS AT MIAMI EXECUTIVE AIRPORT

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATIONS, EVALUATION, & TECHNOLOGY

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

The Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) 2.0 Act went into effect on July 1, 2023, providing support for district school boards, Florida College System Institutions, and other stakeholders in Florida's workforce development system to provide students with high-quality career and technical education (CTE) and other workforce education programs. Specifically, the bill provides financial support to school boards and colleges to fund the creation or expansion of CTE programs that serve secondary students.

The aviation sector is currently contending with a significant worker shortage ranging from pilots to maintenance, repairs, and technicians. Specifically, the aviation industry in the United States is facing a critical challenge with a growing shortage of aircraft mechanics. If unaddressed, it can stall an industry that supports over 10 million jobs and contributes \$1.8 trillion dollars to the economy. There is a widening gap between the number of retiring aircraft mechanics and those entering the field. There is currently a need to fill 10,000 aircraft mechanics annually to keep up with the demand and the current output falls short by approximately 30%. Miami-Dade County is considered a hot-spot for jobs in aircraft mechanics and service technicians with a high demand for workers.

Miami Dade County Public Schools Career Technical Education (CTE) is impacting the lives of Miami-Dade County students preparing them to be college and career ready through programs of study and career pathways aligned to Career Clusters. CTE students graduate with world-class academic and technological skills, plus industry-recognized certifications necessary to transition to higher education and careers. George T. Baker Aviation Technical College has been one of our leading schools. MDCPS' aviation program began in 1939 and moved to its present location in 1958. In 1961 it was named and dedicated to George T. Baker, founder of National Airlines, who donated the land to the school board.

George T. Baker Aviation Technical College has been a leader in preparing students to enter the workforce in aviation. It is accredited by the Council on Occupational Education (COE) and is one of only 2 schools in Florida to be accredited by the National Center for Aircraft Technician Training (NCATT). It is also certified by the Federal Aviation Administration under Part 147 of the Federal Aviation Regulations. Baker currently prepares 1,000 students annually for careers in aviation with a program for both adults and dual enrolled high school students. Baker provides hands-on training in addition to a classroom setting and is located near Miami International Airport. The average annual starting salary for students out of high school who attend Baker is about \$70,000 and many are hired before they even graduate. The dual enrollment program is highly sought after by many high school students, but the high demand and location can make it difficult for all those interested to attend.

In recent years, the aerospace and defense industry has seen tremendous growth. In 2022 the industry created a revenue of \$373 billion dollars, and it is estimated to be at \$750 billion dollars by 2030. Like the aviation industry, the aerospace and defense industries are also facing increased challenges in meeting workforce needs. Aerospace and defense companies are exploring ways to build a strong talent pipeline by collaborating with educational institutions. Most recently, Space Florida has created an Academy Program partnering with school districts across the state to support the needs of the aerospace industry by connecting career and technical education options that are in demand by the aerospace industry.

Given the increased demand for workers in aviation and aerospace coupled with the support of the state to expand CTE programs and the success of George T. Baker Aviation Technical College, it would be prudent for M-DCPS to consider opening a south campus that could provide more opportunities for our students to learn 21st century skills in aviation and aerospace. Opening this south campus in the southern part of our county inside an airport would allow us to increase opportunities for our students while simultaneously allowing us to marry supply with the workforce demand. Miami Executive Airport (TMB) is one of the busiest general aviation airports in Florida and is located just 15 minutes from the business centers of South Miami-Dade County and 30 minutes from the newly designated Homestead Spaceport Territory. TMB would be an ideal location for George T. Baker South Dade Campus due to its location and potential to cooperate with both public and private entities to support student learning and experiences.

This item seeks to explore the feasibility of opening a second George T. Baker Aviation Technical College at Miami Executive Airport by meeting with Miami-Dade County to explore the possibility of reaching an agreement to build a school inside the airport and by making this a legislative priority to secure funding sources.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. MARY BLANCO:**

That the School Board of Miami-Dade County authorizes the Superintendent to:

1. Explore the feasibility of opening a George T. Baker Aviation and Aerospace Technical College South Dade Campus at Miami Executive Airport.
 - a. Engage in communication with Miami-Dade County and express a desire to build a campus at Miami Executive Airport and create a Memo of Understanding if appropriate and any other documents as needed.
 - b. Explore funding sources through public and private entities.
 - c. Add to the M-DCPS 2025 state and federal legislative program priorities to request funding to support this proposal.
2. Provide an update at the Academics, Innovation, Evaluation, and Technology meeting of December 2024.