

Mr. Roberto J. Alonso, Board Member

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REVISÉD
AT DAIS
BY
BOARD
ACTION

SUBJECT: EXPLORING A PARTNERSHIP WITH MIAMI-DADE COUNTY FOR FREE STUDENT BUS PASSES

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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

Access to reliable transportation is vital for student attendance and academic success. Many students in Miami-Dade County face challenges commuting to and from school due to financial constraints or limited public transportation.

As both a School Board member and part of the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), I see a major opportunity to partner with Miami-Dade County to provide free public bus passes for students. This initiative would offer multiple benefits: easing traffic congestion, improving accessibility, and ensuring students have safe, reliable transportation.

National data highlights the success of similar programs. Studies show that each public bus can take 30 to 40 cars off the road during peak hours, directly reducing traffic. A program in New York City, for example, decreased vehicle trips by thousands daily while increasing student ridership by 15%. These programs not only reduce traffic but also improve school attendance and provide students with greater flexibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

Currently, many students in Miami-Dade rely on public transportation, but more could benefit if the cost barrier was removed. By providing free bus passes, we would relieve financial pressures on families while ensuring equitable access to Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

In addition to reducing congestion, this program could significantly improve student access to specialized magnet and choice programs. Many students are limited by transportation issues, but free transit would open doors for them to attend schools that align with their interests and career goals. This would promote equity, allowing all students to pursue the best educational opportunities, regardless of where they live.

This item seeks to request that the Superintendent of Schools work with the Miami-Dade County the Mayor and the Commission to explore the feasibility of offering free bus passes to all students. The study would examine current ridership numbers and identify how many additional students could benefit from such a service.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MR. ROBERTO J. ALONSO:**

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

1. review the current number of students who use the public transit and identify the potential number of additional students who could benefit from this service. This would include analyzing traffic patterns, magnet and choice programs, student demographics, and projected impacts on community congestion;
2. in collaboration with the Miami-Dade County, explore the feasibility to offer access to free public transportation to all eligible students via District issued student id's;
3. report back to the Board, with a comprehensive report detailing any financial impacts, discussions with county administration, potential ridership increases, increased access to programs, traffic reduction estimates, and possible implementation plan at the December 4, 2024, Personnel, Student, School & Community Support Committee Meeting.