

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

**SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED TO ACHIEVE READING AND MATHEMATICS SUCCESS IN THE EARLY GRADES FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN, KINDERGARTEN, FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD GRADE STUDENTS**

**COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY**

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

The recent release of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), The Nation's Report Card, Trial Urban District Reports in Reading and Mathematics, summarized the results of the 2024 National Assessment for Education Progress (NAEP) for students in grades 4 and 8 who attend schools in 26 large urban districts. While Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) students continue to exhibit strong academic performance on NAEP with a high percentage of students scoring at or above basic levels and achieving above average scale scores, M-DCPS had a decline in their average scale scores in Grade 4 Reading, Grade 8 Reading, and Grade 8 Mathematics, compared to previous student outcomes throughout the years. While these results are concerning, we must also keep in mind that in M-DCPS, approximately 5,400 students participated in the 2024 NAEP administration. This is just a sample of our student population.

It is also important to report that M-DCPS students continue to outperform in reading and mathematics in Florida and in other urban school districts in the nation who participated in the NAEP Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) in Reading and Mathematics, grades 4 and 8. One bright spot was the fact that there was an improvement in Grade 4 Mathematics average scale scores. At the same time, when the 2021 Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) was administered in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science, results for M-DCPS were above other school districts in the state, but in some grade levels, over 40% of the students were not proficient in ELA, mathematics, and/or science.

Our teachers have done a wonderful job in making sure that students continue to improve and have persistently provided them the tools and teaching strategies necessary to advance their reading and mathematics skills. The Office of Academics and Transformation annually reviews and develops a list of schools supported by the Educational Transformation Office (ETO). ETO provides outstanding assistance, guidance, and support to the identified schools. M-DCPS provides our most fragile students with after school tutoring, intervention teachers, intersession programs during winter and spring recess, Saturday academies, and many other strategies to support the instructional needs of our students. Additionally, continuous professional development for instructional staff is offered throughout the year and parents have a variety of opportunities to engage in courses offered by the Parent Academy.

Through the years, the School Board has been actively involved in ensuring that our students are provided the best instructional program and are proficient in reading and mathematics. The following are just some examples, as there have been many, of action agenda items proffered by Board Members:

- School Board Meeting of April 19, 2023, Agenda Item H-18, proffered by Board Member Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall – *STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS)*.

- School Board Meeting of August 18, 2021, Agenda Item H-15, proffered by Board Member Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall – *EXTENDING CLASSES FOR AFTERSCHOOL LEARNING DISTRICTWIDE AT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS.*
- School Board Meeting of October 21, 2020, Agenda Item H-15, proffered by Board Member Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall – *ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY AT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS).*
- School Board Meeting of September 6, 2023, Agenda Item H-9, proffered by Board Member Monica Colucci – *SYSTEMATIC AND EXPLICIT SUPPLEMENTAL EVIDENCED-BASED PHONICS PROGRAM IN GRADES K-2 FOR TIER 1 STUDENTS.*
- School Board Meeting of April 17, 2024, Agenda Item H-14, proffered by Board Member Danny Espino – *ENHANCING AND EXPANDING M-DCPS' EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OPTIONS,*
- School Board Meeting of February 10, 2021, Agenda Item H-21, proffered by Vice Chair Dr. Steve Gallon III, *CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS.*
- School Board Meeting of June 20, 2018, Agenda Item H-3, proffered by Board member Dr. Steve Gallon III, - *EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANT STUDENTS.*
- School Board Meeting of December 14, 2016, Agenda Item H-5, proffered by Board Member Dr. Steve Gallon III, -*STATUS UPDATE ON FRAGILE SCHOOLS.*
- School Board Meeting of September 6, 2023, Agenda Item H-2, proffered by School Board Chair Mari Tere Rojas – *PROPOSED MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS) 2024 STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM PRIORITY – STATE FUNDING FOR PROGRAMS TO SERVE PRE-K 3 STUDENTS.*
- School Board Meeting of August 16, 2023, Agenda Item H-2, proffered by School Board Chair Mari Tere Rojas – *INSTRUCTIONAL TRANSFORMATION TO SUPPORT RAPID AND SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT PROFICIENT IN READING AND MATHEMATICS IN THIRD THROUGH TENTH GRADE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS.*
- School Board Meeting of December 14, 2022, Agenda Item H-3, proffered by School Board Chair Mari Tere Rojas – *COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS FOR READING AND MATHEMATICS SKILLS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS).*
- School Board Meeting of March 17, 2021, Agenda Item H-6, proffered by School Board Member Mari Tere Rojas – *STUDENT REGRESSION AND LEARNING LOSS IN THE EARLY GRADES – PREKINDERGARTEN, KINDERGARTEN, FIRST GRADE, SECOND GRADE, AND THIRD GRADE.*
- School Board Meeting of October 20, 2021, Agenda Item H-9, proffered by School Board Member Mari Tere Rojas – *MID-YEAR REVIEW OF ACCELERATED LEARNING INITIATIVES AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PROGRESS DURING THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR.*

The success of a child's academic journey begins in the early years. Ensuring that all students are proficient in reading and math by third grade is not just an educational priority, it is the foundation for their future success. Third grade is a pivotal year in a child's academic journey. Research shows that students who are not proficient in reading by this time are four times more likely to drop out of high school. Reading proficiency shifts from "learning to read" to "reading to learn," meaning that students who cannot read well struggle to comprehend science, social studies, and word problems in math. They fall behind in all subjects, making it difficult to catch up.

Math proficiency is equally crucial. By third grade, students are expected to master foundational skills such as addition, subtraction, and the beginnings of multiplication. If these skills are weak, understanding more advanced concepts like division and fractions becomes an uphill battle. Struggles in math lead to lower confidence, test anxiety, and an increasing gap between struggling students and their peers.

The consequences extend beyond academics. Students who fall behind in reading and math by third grade often experience lower self-esteem, reduced motivation, and behavioral issues, aside from academic challenges. They may disengage from school altogether, having excessive absences, leading to a higher likelihood of grade retention, and ultimately, diminished career opportunities in adulthood.

With directed interventions, personalized instruction, and support from teachers, parents, and the community, students can develop the skills needed to succeed. Early identification and intervention are key. If educators and parents recognize the warning signs and provide structured reading programs and hands-on math activities, struggling students can bridge the gap before it widens.

Therefore, this agenda item seeks to direct the Superintendent of Schools to provide the Board with an updated analysis of the recent NAEP results as they pertain to M-DCPS students who did not score at or above the basic level; how M-DCPS is going to identify and support those students who continue to struggle in reading and mathematics, specifically in the early grades of Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, first, second, and third grade; what other research-based strategies may be implemented to ensure the success of struggling students in the early grades; and if these strategies will have a projected financial impact to the 2025-2026 budget.

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 to provide the Board with an updated analysis of the recent NAEP results as they pertain to M-DCPS students who did not score at or above the basic level; how M-DCPS is going to identify and support those students who continue to struggle in reading and mathematics, specifically in the early grades of Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, first, second, and third grade; what other research-based strategies may be implemented to ensure the success of struggling students in the early grades; if these strategies will have a projected financial impact to the 2025-2026 budget; and present a report to the Board at the Academics, Innovation, Evaluation, and Technology Committee, May 7, 2025.