

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Chair

**SUBJECT: FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A PROGRAM FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS) STUDENTS WHO MAY WISH TO PURSUE A CAREER AS AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER SPECIALISTS**

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

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

Air traffic controllers (ATCs) are individuals accountable for the coordination of traffic in their assigned airspace. Generally, stationed in air traffic control centers or control towers, they monitor the position, speed, and altitude of aircraft and communicate with the pilots via radio. Controllers safeguard appropriate distances between the different aircrafts.

The profession is deemed to be highly demanding and stressful due to the need for continuous decision-making and adherence to strict safety regulations. Factors such as equipment reliability, traffic volume, weather conditions, and airspace restrictions can further influence workload and stress level. Notwithstanding these challenges, the role offers competitive salaries and strong job security often cited as key benefits.

As reported by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in Florida, air traffic controllers make an average of \$137,162 per year. Salary by seniority includes the following:

- Top-level: Air traffic controllers at the top of their field earn at least \$181,772 per year.
- Senior-level: Earn at least \$137,483 per year.
- Mid-level: Earn at least \$100,810 per year.
- Junior level: Earn at least \$73,919; and
- Starting earnings for air traffic controllers start at least with \$55,908 per year.

Some of the minimum qualifications from the Federal Aviation Administration, which may have evolved throughout the years, to be eligible for the Air Traffic Controller position include the following:

- Be a United States Citizen
- Be under the age of 31
- Pass a medical examination
- Pass a security investigation
- Pass the FAA air traffic pre-employment tests, including the Air Traffic Controller Specialists Skills Assessment Battery (ATSA)
- Speak English clearly enough to be understood over communications equipment
- Have either one year of general work experience or four years of education leading to a bachelor's degree, or a combination of both.
- Be willing to relocate to an FAA facility based on agency staffing needs.

This agenda item seeks to direct the Superintendent of Schools to explore the feasibility of developing and implementing a program for M-DCPS students who may wish to pursue a career as air traffic controller specialists. It includes the collaboration of the Miami-Dade Aviation Department for their support and guidance. It further seeks a collaboration with a local institution of higher learning, creating a clear pathway for students to earn both their high school diploma and an associate degree ensuring that high school courses align with college credit requirements.

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 explore the feasibility of developing and implementing a program for Miami-Dade County Public Schools students who may wish to pursue a career as air traffic controller specialists, in collaboration with the Miami-Dade Aviation Department for their support and guidance; and a local institution of higher learning, creating a clear pathway for students to earn both a high school diploma and an associate degree ensuring that high school courses align with college credit requirements; and provide a report to the School Board by May 9, 2025.