

Dr. Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair
Mr. Roberto J. Alonso
Mr. Danny Espino
Dr. Steve Gallon III

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SUBJECT: REIMAGINING EDUCATIONAL SPACES: TRANSFORMING UNDERUTILIZED SCHOOL SITES INTO EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS)

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

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

The tides of enrollment are shifting, and with them, the landscape of our district’s educational infrastructure. We have a unique opportunity to reimagine underutilized school sites as vibrant Early Childhood Centers dedicated exclusively to Pre-K education, specifically from birth to age four. Decades of research affirm that the earliest years of education are among the most critical, laying the foundation for literacy, cognitive development, and lifelong learning. By repurposing existing district assets, we not only preserve community investments but also create new avenues for academic excellence, equity, and innovation.

As our district continues to experience shifts in student enrollment, several school sites have been identified as potential Early Childhood Centers with a sole focus on Pre-K and early childhood education, specifically from birth to age four. This item requests that the Superintendent explore the feasibility of such an initiative.

This initiative also aligns with research that underscores the importance of early childhood education in improving academic outcomes, closing achievement gaps, and fostering long-term success for students. By repurposing existing infrastructure, the district can expand high-quality Pre-K access while maintaining community engagement and maximizing district resources.

There are also other possibilities that can be explored such as partnerships with local healthcare providers, social services, and nutrition programs to create holistic early childhood learning environments that address the needs of young learners and their families. Another possibility would be to develop bilingual Pre-K centers that cater to diverse linguistic communities, ensuring inclusivity and preparing students for a global society or possibly entertaining the idea of free or reduced cost Pre-K programs to incentivize families to enroll their children early, increasing participation and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the centers.

The transformation of excess school capacity into early childhood learning centers presents multiple benefits. Utilizing existing infrastructures promotes fiscal responsibility and economic efficiency. Enhancing Early Childhood Education access would increase the availability of pre-K and early learning programs, especially in underserved areas.

Repurposing underutilized schools into early childhood learning centers is a strategic, fiscally responsible, and socially beneficial initiative that should be considered. By leveraging existing resources

to expand early learning opportunities, we can strengthen the educational pipeline and increase community engagement, all while ensuring that the public infrastructure continues to serve future generations effectively. With careful planning, collaboration, and execution, this transformation can yield long-term benefits for students, families, and the broader community. This item seeks to direct the Superintendent and his Cabinet to explore the feasibility of examining underutilized buildings to create Early Learning Centers across Miami-Dade County.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. BENDROSS-MINDINGALL:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to explore the feasibility of repurposing underutilized buildings as Early Learning Centers for Pre-K programs by:

1. Conducting an enrollment trend analysis, demographic studies, and community surveys to assess feasibility and demand;
2. Identifying funding sources, including federal and state grants, private partnerships, and repurposed budgets;
3. Ensuring that early learning programs align with standards and best practices in early childhood education;
4. Planning the modification of existing structures to accommodate young learners, ensuring safe and stimulating learning environments;
5. Provide a report to the Board at the Academics, Innovation, Evaluation, and Technology Committee Meeting on July 16, 2025.