

Mr. Roberto J. Alonso, Board Member

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

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INDEPENDENT AUDIT OF THE DISTRICT'S SCHOOL BUS SAFETY PROGRAM

COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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

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The safety of students traveling to and from school remains one of the most critical operational responsibilities entrusted to this District. In light of heightened public interest and recent developments reported in the media, this item proposes a thorough, independent audit of the District's School Bus Safety Program. The intent is to assess not only program outcomes but also the internal processes and operational procedures that support transparency, legal compliance, and public trust.

Although the program was originally introduced with the goal of enhancing student safety through the deployment of new technologies, concerns have recently emerged regarding the day-to-day operational execution and procedural integrity of the initiative. Families, community members, and public officials have raised valid questions that highlight the need for a detailed evaluation of how the program functions on both a technical and administrative level.

Florida law clearly prohibits vehicles from overtaking or passing a stopped school bus that is displaying its stop signal, and it imposes a civil fine of \$200.00 for such violations. The law further authorizes Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) to implement an infraction detection system aboard school buses, and to partner with private vendors to manage these systems for the purpose of capturing violations and collecting fines, including applicable administrative fees.

To this end, M-DCPS has entered into a contractual agreement with a third-party vendor to provide end-to-end support for the program. This includes the installation, operation, and ongoing maintenance of critical safety equipment; the implementation of structured workflows and enforcement protocols; and the provision of back-office services to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. Additionally, this partnership enables the District to continuously monitor both the exterior and interior environments of school buses, further supporting operational safety measures designed to protect students and reinforce public confidence in the system.

Due to recent changes at the county level and the possibility of new or amended legislation that may affect the program, the administration is directed to evaluate and report on any current or proposed legal changes that could impact the structure, legal authority, or operations of the School Bus Safety Program. This includes identifying potential effects on procurement processes, enforcement procedures, revenue management, or due process safeguards related to the program.

This board item directs the School Board's Chief Auditor to conduct a comprehensive audit of the procurement, implementation, and oversight of the School Bus Safety Program. The scope of the audit

will encompass the processes involved in establishing the program, including procurement procedures and contract design; the management and reporting of program-related funds or revenues; and an evaluation of the program's operational effectiveness, particularly its alignment with stated objectives and public safety goals.

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

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida,

- 1. Direct the Chief Auditor to:
 - a. Amend the Audit Plan to include conducting an audit of the procurement, implementation, and oversight of the School Bus Safety Program.
 - b. Include in the scope of this audit:
 - 1. an Evaluation of the District's process to establish the program, including procurement practices and contract structure;
 - 2. a review of the use of funds or revenues associated with the program, including how funds are allocated and reported;
 - 3. an evaluation of the program's operational effectiveness, including consistency with its stated goals and public safety objectives;
 - 4. Take necessary steps in anticipation that the final audit may be issued and presented at the September 16, 2025, Audit and Budget Advisory Committee Meeting.

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- 2. Direct the Superintendent, in consultation with the General Counsel, to:
 - a. Evaluate and report on any current or proposed legislative changes or county actions that may impact the School Bus Safety Programs and/or any related contracts;
 - b. Identify any legal, operational, or financial implications for the District; and
 - c. Provide a report with findings and recommendations, if any, at the June 11, 2025, the Fiscal Accountability & Government Relations Committee Meeting.

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