

Mr. Joseph S. Geller, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall } REVISED AT DAIS BY BOARD ACTION
Dr. Steve Gallon III
Ms. Luisa Santos

SUBJECT: PRIORITIZING AMENDMENTS TO SCHOOLS OF HOPE LEGISLATION

COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

The implementation of Florida’s Schools of Hope legislation, including the most recent revisions to Rule 6A-1.0998271, has required school districts to navigate issues related to facility use, program continuity, student enrollment, safety, accountability, and long-term strategic development.

It is essential that the implementation of this statute and associated rulemaking does not lead to interruption of district operations and established educational programs. Any co-location or use of district facilities should support, rather than disrupt, student success.

At the School Board Meeting of September 10, 2025, the School Board voted to adopt the 2026 State and Federal Legislative Programs; among those, the Schools of Hope framework was listed. Recently, the District has also communicated specific feedback to the Florida Department of Education regarding Rule 6A-1.0998271. These concerns highlight areas where the rule may misclassify underutilized schools, impact district resources, disrupt future instructional planning, or create operational and safety challenges.

Some of the key highlights of the District’s communications include the need for clearer criteria to determine whether a facility is “underused”; recognition and protection of existing uses of a facility, such as VPK, Pre-K, Adult Education, Workforce Training, and community-serving programs; the importance of accurately accounting for specialized programs whose required spaces may appear as “excess seats”; concerns about unfunded mandates related to custodial, maintenance, and food service; ensuring equitable and non-disruptive access to shared spaces, such as cafeterias, gyms, and parking; and addressing grade-level alignment and safety if co-locating students belong to significantly different age groups.

From both a legal and policy perspective, there is also a need to clarify statutory and rule language, including requirements associated with the submission and expiration of notices. Additionally, it is essential to emphasize the importance of strategic development to preserve long-term district planning efforts, such as workforce housing initiatives, which require multi-year timelines and school-site space availability.

Given the significant potential operational, long-term planning, and fiscal impacts on the district, and the importance of maintaining safe, developmentally appropriate, and effective learning environments for all students, it is critical that the School Board formally prioritize legislative and rule amendments addressing these concerns. This item seeks to reaffirm and elevate those concerns, especially those related to cost-sharing obligations and age-appropriate space-sharing.

This item requests the Superintendent to prioritize these issues within the District’s State Legislative Program, consistent with the Board-approved legislative platform, and to continue pursuing statutory and rule changes that strengthen clarity, enhance safeguards for district operations, and ensure equitable educational outcomes. To provide data-driven support for the District’s advocacy efforts, this

item also recommends that the Superintendent directs staff to conduct a fiscal impact analysis, quantifying all anticipated and projected District costs that may be associated with Schools of Hope co-location, including facilities, operations, and services provided.

Additionally, this item requests that the Superintendent directs staff to meet with the appropriate legislative bodies in all municipalities with which the District has an educational compact, or those which are otherwise affected, for the specific purpose of conveying accurate information about the provisions of current statute and Rule 6A-1.0998271, the potential impact of such provisions within their respective municipal jurisdictions, and the statutory and rule changes the District is pursuing.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MR. JOSEPH S. GELLER:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida directs the Superintendent to:

1. Continue to prioritize the pursuit of statutory and rule amendments to the Schools of Hope legislation and Rule 6A-1.0998271 during the 2026 Legislative Session that address the concerns communicated by the District to the Florida Department of Education, especially those related to cost-sharing obligations, clarification of terms, and measures to ensure appropriateness of co-location arrangements; and
2. Conduct a fiscal impact analysis, quantifying all anticipated and projected District costs that may be associated with Schools of Hope co-location, including facilities, operations, and services to provide data-driven support for advocacy efforts; and
3. Continue to meet with the appropriate legislative bodies in all municipalities with which the District has an educational compact, or those which are otherwise affected, for the specific purpose of conveying accurate information about the provisions of current statute and Rule 6A-1.0998271, the potential impact of such provisions within their respective municipal jurisdictions, and the statutory and rule changes the District is pursuing; and
4. Continue to provide the School Board with consistent legislative updates during the 2026 Legislative Session.