

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member

SUBJECT: APPROVE RESOLUTION 26-023 CALLING FOR A REFERENDUM RENEWAL TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026, SEEKING APPROVAL FROM THE VOTERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY FOR THE SCHOOL BOARD TO LEVY AN AD VALOREM ASSESSMENT TO RENEW AND CONTINUE IMPROVING COMPENSATION FOR TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL, AND IMPROVE STUDENT SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, INCLUDING PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS, WITH OVERSIGHT BY A CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Over the last decade, our school district has seen remarkable success. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) remains one of the highest-performing urban school systems in the nation, with a graduation rate that now exceeds 95 percent.

In 2018, the School Board recognized the need to identify supplemental revenue sources to support instructional personnel and school safety in light of the challenges presented by Miami-Dade's high cost of living, underfunded statutory mandates, and other issues impacting school funding and teacher salaries in M-DCPS. As a result, on November 6, 2018, the voters of Miami-Dade were asked to invest in our community's future by investing in M-DCPS. Proposition #362, the *Secure Our Future Referendum (SOFR)*, was approved and subsequently renewed by voters on November 8, 2022.

The current 2022 referendum funds continue to be vital, with 88% supporting teacher salaries—ensuring they exceed the national average—and 12% enhancing school safety by providing an officer at every school site. M-DCPS has been able to maintain an average salary for teachers that is higher than our neighboring districts, all of which also benefit from operational ad valorem millage levies within their counties. However, these voter-approved funds are set to expire on June 30, 2027, necessitating a renewal to maintain these critical investments in our workforce and student security. When the current referendum sunsets, the District to fiscally support “supplemented” compensation for teachers will also sunset, as will the ability to meet the requirement for a law enforcement officer to be on school premises from bell to bell, without impact to educational programs.

At the School Board meeting of February 11, 2026, the Board approved Agenda Item H-13, *Accomplishments of the Referendum Supporting Improved Teacher Compensation and School Safety and Related Recommendations*, proffered by School Board Member Dr. Steve Gallon III and unanimously co-sponsored by School Board Chair Ms. Mari Tere Rojas, School Board

**Good Cause
H-12**

Vice Chair Ms. Monica Colucci, and School Board Members Mr. Roberto J. Alonso, Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Ms. Mary Blanco, Mr. Danny Espino, Mr. Joseph S. Geller, and Ms. Luisa Santos. This agenda item requested that the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, allow the electors of Miami-Dade County to express their continued support for teachers and their commitment to school safety through a vote on a referendum. This item also required, among other things, that the Superintendent consult with the District's bargaining groups, parent groups and community groups about funding levels, review the expenditure of funds from the 2022 Referendum assessment of a 1.0 levy of ad valorem taxes to determine if the funds have been utilized for the purposes approved by the voters, analyze the levels and impact of the referendum funding, and make recommendations concerning the renewal of the referendum for the November 3, 2026, general election.

Pursuant to School Board Policy 9143, the Secure Our Future Advisory Committee (SOFAC), comprised of bargaining groups, parents, community stakeholders and business leaders, serves in an advisory and oversight capacity to review, monitor, and make recommendations regarding the use of referendum proceeds approved by voters in 2018 and 2022. In accordance with Item H-13, and Policy 9143, a SOFAC meeting was held on March 30, 2026, and the SOFAC approved the Committee's most recent Annual Reports which monitor the use and distribution of proceeds generated from the voter-approved referendum supporting teacher compensation and school safety. The SOFAC reports confirm that referendum revenues were properly utilized in accordance with the stated goals of the 2022 Referendum and continue to represent a critical funding source supporting the District's ability to maintain competitive compensation for instructional personnel and to sustain the levels of school safety personnel required under Florida law. The SOFAC reports further indicate that referendum funds provide Referendum Retirement Accruing Supplements (RRAS) to instructional personnel and safety personnel. These supplements are provided above base salary and are eligible for Florida Retirement System credit. The additional compensation has played a significant role in strengthening recruitment and retention of teachers and improving the District's overall average teacher salary. In reviewing these reports, two primary funding considerations emerge. First, referendum funds continue to play a critical role in supplementing teacher compensation and maintaining competitive salary levels relative to other districts. Second, the cost of maintaining required levels of school safety personnel represents a substantial and ongoing financial obligation, which is currently sustained through referendum funding.

It is estimated that the Board may be able to raise \$585 million annually, at a cost of less than \$316 per year, or \$0.86 per day, to the typical homeowner with a levy of a one (1) mill of ad valorem taxes. The renewal will continue to include charter schools in the shared proceeds based on their proportional share of student enrollment, calculated on an unweighted basis, to ensure the continuation of current compensation as well as enhancing both safety and security.

Approval of this Resolution will place the renewal of the one (1) mill ad valorem tax on November 3, 2026, general election ballot. This renewal is essential to continue the progress made in teacher compensation and to ensure the ongoing safety of all public-school students, including those in charter schools, under the continued oversight of a Citizen Advisory Committee. District staff participated in a roundtable discussion with representatives from several charter school operators to collaboratively draft the proposed ballot language. Pursuant to § 1011.73, Florida Statutes, the renewal, if approved, would be for a period of four (4) years, from July 1, 2027, to June 30, 2031, or until changed by another millage election. Approved by The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida on this 22nd day of April 2026.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the Office of the General Counsel as to form and legal sufficiency. This item does not appear on the published Agenda. There exists good cause to vary from the published Agenda because time is of the essence in order to meet applicable election deadlines.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. STEVE GALLON III**

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

1. Approve Resolution 26-023, calling for a referendum renewal to be held on November 3, 2026, for the purpose of seeking approval from voters of Miami-Dade County for the School Board to levy an ad valorem assessment of one (1) mill to continue improving compensation for teachers and instructional personnel, and improve student safety and security for Miami-Dade County Public Schools, including public charter schools, with oversight by a citizen advisory committee; and
2. In accordance with § 1011.73(2), Florida Statutes, direct the Miami-Dade County Commission to place the referendum on the November 3, 2026, general election ballot as authorized by Resolution 26-023; and
3. Authorize the Superintendent to use District resources to educate the community on the purpose and benefits of the proposed referendum.