

Ms. Luisa Santos, Board Member

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SUBJECT: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOL PLANNING: STRENGTHENING ATTENDANCE BOUNDARIES, SCHOOL CHOICE, AND STUDENT ASSIGNMENT POLICIES & PROCESSES

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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

As stated in the *2026-2031 Strategic Plan*, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is serving students in a new landscape that includes fewer school-age children living in our community, resulting in an opportunity to strategically optimize our facility programming by investing dollars that maximize high-quality academic environments.¹ As enrollment patterns evolve, the District has an opportunity to ensure that limited operational, capital, and maintenance resources are directed toward delivering the highest-quality educational experiences possible for students. The Attendance Boundary Committee (ABC) has ensured community participation in M-DCPS boundary adjustments for over 45 years.² Guided by School Board Policies 5120 and 9140, the process now considers 11 factors, including enrollment trends, transportation efficiency, feeder patterns, community input, and more.³

Aligning the ABC process with the District's strategic priority of elevating student, family, and community experiences ensures that we are the best choice for our families. Adjustments such as the earlier release of boundary proposals and community meeting dates, multilingual communication, and user-friendly terms and materials will help families make timely and well-informed enrollment decisions.

¹ Miami-Dade County Public Schools. (2025, June). *Strategic Plan 2026-2031*.

https://pdfs.dadeschools.net/Bdarch/2026/Bd051326/agenda/Strat-Plan-Landscape_2026-2031.pdf

² School Board of Miami-Dade County. (2025). *Board Policy 5120: School Assignment and Attendance Boundary Committee*, <https://go.boarddocs.com/fl/sbmd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=DJ6HMM492AF1>.

³ School Board of Miami-Dade County. (2025). *Board Policy 5120: School Assignment and Attendance Boundary Committee*, <https://go.boarddocs.com/fl/sbmd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=DJ6HMM492AF1>.

As shown in the chart below, the annual ABC process, when compared to the Magnet Application timeline, demonstrates a prime opportunity to create an even more seamless and predictable planning experience for our families and school leaders.^{4 5}

Month	ABC Process Timeline: 2025–2026 Official Calendar	Magnet Application & Acceptance Timeline
October	Attendance Boundary Committee Orientation Reviews the purpose of the committee. Overview of Robert's Rules of Order.	Magnet application period is open.
November	Regions present targeted/advised schools to ABC. Principals are notified of targeted/advised schools and send written communication to parents.	Students continue applying
December	Principals and community leaders can appeal initial targeted/advised schools. ABC identifies final targeted/advised schools. Principals of final targeted/advised schools are notified. Regions submit community meeting dates/information to School Leadership and Performance.	Students continue applying
January	Community meetings held; proposed boundary recommendations presented.	Magnet application deadline.
February	Community feedback is due; ABC reviews and votes on recommendations.	
March	The Educational Opportunity Access Advisory Committee (EOAAC) reviews recommendations. Region Superintendents present ABC recommendations to the Superintendent. Principals send written communication to affected communities and schedule community informational meetings.	Parents are offered seats in magnet programs with a fixed timeline for accepting an offer.
April	Initial reading at School Board Conference Session. The Superintendent submits proposed changes.	Families continue to accept/decline magnet offers on a fixed timeline from the date of notice. Open Seat Magnet applications are opened for the remaining slots at programs that have available seats after exhausting waitlists.
May		

⁴ Miami-Dade County Public Schools, School Choice and Parental Options, *Magnet Application Process*, Your Choice Miami, accessed May 29, 2026, <https://yourchoicemiami.org/resources/magnet-application-process>

⁵ Miami-Dade County Public Schools. (2025). *Attendance Boundary Committee Calendar, 2025–2026*. Office of School Leadership and Performance. <https://api.dadeschools.net/WMSFiles/262/links/ABC%20Calendar%202025-2026.pdf>.

June	Final School Board action. New boundaries are put in place.	Open Seat Magnet applications continue for any programs with available seats.
July	Affected schools take needed actions.	
August	School year begins.	School year begins.

Because Magnet-related decisions commence in March, families affected by ABC changes that wish to make enrollment decisions would need to do so without knowing whether their boundary will change, leading some to seek options other than their newly assigned boundary school. The current notification timeline can be further enhanced by establishing notification windows that maximize predictability, ensuring our dedicated educators and families have optimal time to plan for the upcoming school year well in advance of major calendar breaks. Recent School Board discussions reaffirm the need for earlier timelines, clearer communication, and a process that supports student and staff stability by considering the alignment and optimization of multiple school choice and planning timelines.⁶

Considering that the newly adopted Strategic Plan prioritizes elevating community experiences, it is also valuable for families and students to hear important school planning updates from trusted and known sources, such as principals, teachers, and school-site support staff.⁷ Having school leaders engage impacted populations and organizations connected to the school, such as PTAs and other parent groups, strengthens trust and supports families in understanding school site changes. Plain language communication, multilingual materials, online access to meetings, and transparent feedback would allow M-DCPS families to participate meaningfully and strengthen trust in the District’s decision-making process.

The District’s 5-Year Capital Plan and Facilities & Maintenance Strategy are typically finalized between March and April, months before final boundary decisions are voted on in June.⁸ Finalizing boundary decisions earlier in the year would allow for better alignment with the District’s 5-Year Capital Plan and Facilities and Maintenance Strategy, by ensuring that enrollment projections, utilization trends, and potential consolidations inform capital investments and maintenance priorities. Incorporating pre-enrollment interest tracking into the ABC process may further strengthen enrollment projections by allowing the District to assess family demand for proposed configurations before capital and facilities decisions are finalized.

Other large public school districts across the nation have recently revisited school boundary and enrollment planning processes in response to facility utilization changes. For example, Santa Clara Unified School District has framed this work through a “rightsizing” initiative focused on long-term sustainability and strategic investment, while Cleveland Metropolitan School District and DeKalb County School District have incorporated extensive stakeholder engagement, accessible digital planning tools, and community feedback mechanisms into their planning processes.^{9 10 11} Reviewing these emerging practices may help inform opportunities to strengthen and modernize the M-DCPS ABC process even further.

⁶ Miami-Dade County Public Schools, *School Board Committee Meeting of April 15, 2026*, video recording, April 15, 2026, <https://m-dcps.eduvision.tv/Default.aspx?q=d0F7qPKKlcfXeY4VUDryXmuz51mhRC6h>.

⁷ Miami-Dade County Public Schools. (2025, June). *Strategic Plan 2026-2031*. https://pdfs.dadeschools.net/Bdarch/2026/Bd051326/agenda/Strat-Plan-Landscape_2026-2031.pdf

⁸ Miami-Dade County Public Schools. (2025). *District Educational Facilities Plan (DEFP) 2025 Submission*. Florida Department of Education, <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/9948/urlt/DADE2025.pdf>.

⁹ Santa Clara Unified School District, *What Is Rightsizing?*, accessed May 29, 2026, <https://www.santaclarausd.org/about-us/departments/fiscal-services/district-financial-reports/what-is-rightsizing>.

¹⁰ Cleveland Metropolitan School District, *Building Brighter Futures*, accessed May 29, 2026, <https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/building-brighter-futures>.

¹¹ DeKalb County School District, *Student Assignment Project Survey*, accessed May 29, 2026, <https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/divisions/access-and-opportunity/sap/sap-survey/>.

Modernizing the ABC process by revising our policies can strengthen outcomes for communities. Today, over 65% of M-DCPS students attend an M-DCPS school other than their assigned boundary school by exercising a Choice option.¹² Currently, board policies have adapted to shifting enrollment patterns by increasing allowance for non-traditional grade configurations, such as K-8 centers and 6-12 academies. However, board policies such as 2215.01 still place restraints on necessary seat allowances in K-5, 6-8, and 9-12.¹³ Revising these policies to align with increased parent voice through mechanisms like the Choice Application will give families confidence that the seats they want are made available while also allowing the District to ensure excess seats are not mandated.

A modernized, community-centered ABC cycle will therefore strengthen fiscal stewardship, improve transparency, and support equitable access to high-quality learning environments across the District. M-DCPS affirms its commitment to ensuring informed, engaged, and empowered stakeholders by directing the Superintendent to develop an ABC process that reflects our new realities and best prepares our students for success.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. LUISA SANTOS:**

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

1. Review Board Policies, including but not limited to, 2215.01, 5112, 5120, and 9140, along with related administrative procedures, and, if deemed appropriate, initiate rulemaking to modernize the District's attendance boundary, school choice, and student assignment policies to:
 - a. Align ABC, Magnet, and Choice timelines, so families can make informed and reliable decisions before boundary changes take effect;
 - b. Provide earlier visibility into prospective boundary proposals and corresponding staff analysis regarding enrollment trends, facility utilization, regional capacity needs, and programmatic opportunities;
 - c. Take into account school-based calendar breaks and holiday schedules to maximize predictability for school communities;
 - d. Provide individualized guidance for families at key operational milestones to enhance student retention in the District and support families;
 - e. Align attendance boundary planning with capital planning and facilities maintenance timelines so enrollment projections, utilization trends, and proposed boundary adjustments can inform long-term facility investment decisions;
 - f. Provide a mechanism for families to formally indicate interest or pre-enroll in proposed new configurations, so the District can cultivate interest, gauge demand for specialized program expansions, and proactively assign future programmatic resources during the planning cycle;

¹² Miami-Dade County Public Schools Office of Academics and Transformation. (2026). [Internal report]

¹³ School Board of Miami-Dade County (2011). *Board Policy 2215.01 K-8 Centers*, <https://go.boarddocs.com/fl/sbmd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=BK6KN34FFC2D>

- g. Determine whether revisions are needed to clarify student assignment rules and modernize or update definitions of home schools, boundary options, and flexible seat allocation frameworks to safeguard the stability of neighborhood schools while expanding access to innovative district choice options; and
- 2. Ensure equitable access to accurate information and community participation regarding the District's attendance boundary, school choice, and student assignment policies by developing comprehensive engagement strategies, which may include mechanisms such as:
 - a. Enhanced online forums, digital translations of meetings, release of proposed and prospective school changes and programmatic models, and information presented in clear, accessible, and user-friendly language prior to community and ABC meetings;
 - b. A regularly updated public-facing, digital, multilingual ABC dashboard that includes current enrollment, utilization trends, program capacity, and draft boundary scenarios;
 - c. Regional or area-based informational opportunities scheduled at convenient times, utilizing virtual and hybrid participation options where feasible, with follow-up summaries for families and community members;
 - d. Transparent documentation of how community feedback is collected, reviewed, and incorporated into recommendations;
 - e. Resources and engagement opportunities for PTAs and parent groups, independent of school administration; and
- 3. Produce a summary of enrollment optimization trends, stakeholder perspectives, and finalized planning adjustments into existing annual District publications or accessible digital updates, ensuring this information is available in multilingual formats; and
- 4. Present findings, recommendations, and any proposed policy revisions to the Personnel, Student, School & Community Support Committee no later than July 2026.