

Dr. Steve Gallon III, School Board Member

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SUBJECT: REVIEW OF UNDERENROLLED SECONDARY SCHOOLS, ATTENDANCE BOUNDARIES, AND THE FEASIBILITY OF EXPANDING 6–12 SCHOOL CONFIGURATIONS, INCLUDING NORTH DADE MIDDLE SCHOOL

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL, & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS, & INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, is committed to ensuring that the assignment of students to schools is consistent with the best interests of students and the effective and efficient use of District resources. This commitment is reflected in the District’s attendance boundary process, which provides for the review and adjustment of attendance areas through recommendations developed by the Superintendent with the assistance of the Office of School Leadership and Performance, the Office of School Facilities, and the Attendance Boundary Committee (ABC).

The Attendance Boundary Committee serves an important role in evaluating attendance boundary recommendations and related educational considerations. In carrying out its responsibilities, the Committee reviews a variety of factors, including the ability of schools to conduct viable educational programs in light of declining enrollment, compliance with class-size requirements, the efficient utilization of available student stations, transportation implications, feeder pattern integrity, programmatic needs, housing trends, construction of new schools, and the reduction of the number of school transitions students experience during their educational careers.

Like school districts across Florida and the nation, Miami-Dade County Public Schools continue to experience changing enrollment patterns driven by declining birth rates, expanded educational choice options, affordable housing, and demographic shifts, linked to both state and federal policies. These factors have resulted in a number of schools operating significantly below capacity. While enrollment declines present challenges, they also provide opportunities for the District to examine innovative educational models that may better serve students, families, and communities while maximizing the use of existing facilities and resources.

One such model is the Grades 6–12 school configuration. Research and practice indicate that well-designed 6–12 schools can provide significant educational benefits, including stronger academic continuity, reduced student transitions, increased opportunities for acceleration and advanced coursework, improved participation in extracurricular and career pathway programs, stronger student-adult relationships, enhanced school culture, and greater operational efficiency. Additionally, reducing the number of transitions students experience between

elementary, middle, and high school aligns with one of the considerations specifically identified within the District's attendance boundary review process.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has already demonstrated the potential effectiveness of the Grades 6–12 model through Arthur & Polly Mays Conservatory of the Arts, a nationally recognized secondary school serving students in grades 6 through 12. The school's success illustrates how a continuous secondary educational experience can provide academic stability, strengthen school culture, increase student engagement, and support high levels of student achievement. The Arthur & Polly Mays model allows students to benefit from long-term relationships with educators, seamless progression through academic programs, expanded access to advanced coursework, and participation in specialized magnet offerings over a seven-year period.

The success of Arthur & Polly Mays demonstrates that thoughtfully designed Grades 6–12 schools can serve as effective educational models within Miami-Dade County Public Schools. As the District evaluates strategies to address declining enrollment, maximize facility utilization, strengthen feeder patterns, and expand educational opportunities, the experience of Arthur & Polly Mays provides a relevant example worthy of consideration when reviewing alternative grade configurations for underenrolled secondary schools.

Thus, North Dade Middle School represents a particularly compelling opportunity for review. The school currently serves approximately 400 students and possesses facility capacity and infrastructure that may support expanded grade configurations. More importantly, North Dade occupies a unique place in the history of Miami-Dade County Public Schools. It will also serve as a tremendous community benefit and restoration of pride in a return to its historical origins as a “junior/senior high” school model.

Established in 1957 as North Dade Junior/Senior High School, the school served grades 7 through 12 and was one of the first secondary schools established to serve African-American students in northern Miami-Dade County during the era of segregation. The school served generations of students from Bunche Park, Opa-locka, North Dade, and surrounding communities before being reconfigured as a junior high school during desegregation efforts in the late 1960s. The institution later evolved into North Dade Middle School and today is recognized as an International Baccalaureate World School and Magnet School of Excellence.

The historical legacy of North Dade Junior/Senior High School, coupled with current enrollment trends, presents an opportunity to explore whether restoring a Grades 6–12 configuration could strengthen enrollment, expand educational opportunities, improve feeder pattern continuity, and better utilize existing facilities while honoring the school's historic role within the community.

Additionally, North Dade may not be the only school that could benefit from such consideration. A comprehensive review of underenrolled secondary schools may identify other campuses where alternative grade configurations could improve educational offerings, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

Accordingly, this item seeks to initiate a formal review through the District's established Attendance Boundary Committee process to evaluate the feasibility and educational impact of converting North Dade Middle School and other similarly situated schools into Grades 6–12 schools or other innovative grade configurations.

This item has been reviewed by the General Counsel to form and legal sufficiency.

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

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

1. review enrollment trends, facility utilization data, feeder patterns, attendance boundaries, and programmatic offerings at underenrolled middle and secondary schools throughout the District;
2. utilize the established Attendance Boundary Committee (ABC) process to evaluate the feasibility and potential benefits of alternative grade configurations, including Grades 6–12 schools, where appropriate;
3. conduct a comprehensive review of North Dade Middle School to determine the educational, operational, fiscal, transportation, and facility implications associated with restoring the school to a Grades 6–12 configuration and including such a restoration in the 2026-2027 ABC review, planning, and recommendation process;
4. establish and include stakeholders from the North Dade Middle School community to be involved in the process through input, ideas, engagement, and/support;
5. identify and evaluate other underenrolled middle schools and secondary schools that may benefit from similar consideration through the attendance boundary review process;
6. examine the potential impact of Grades 6–12 school configurations on academic achievement, student transitions, feeder pattern continuity, school climate, extracurricular participation, career and technical education opportunities, accelerated academic programs, and overall student success;
7. assess opportunities to expand magnet, International Baccalaureate, career and technical education, dual enrollment, fine arts, athletic, and other specialized programs that may be supported through a Grades 6–12 model;
8. engage students, parents, alumni, employees, municipalities, community stakeholders, and other interested parties through the Attendance Boundary Committee process and related community meetings;
9. consider the historical significance of North Dade Junior/Senior High School and the potential educational and community benefits associated with restoring a modern Grades 6–12 school model at that location, beginning with the 2027-2028 school year;
10. develop recommendations, where appropriate, regarding attendance boundary modifications, grade reconfigurations, implementation timelines, and associated fiscal impacts; and
11. provide a written report and recommendations to the School Board at the Personnel, Student, School, and Community Support Committee meeting of September 2, 2026.