

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

Co-Sponsors: Ms. Monica Colucci, Vice Chair
Mr. Roberto J. Alonso
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall
Ms. Mary Blanco
Mr. Danny Espino
Mr. Joseph S. Geller } REVISED AT DAIS BY BOARD ACTION

SUBJECT: MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS) HUMANITARIAN RELIEF EFFORTS FOR VICTIMS OF VENEZUELA'S STRONGEST EARTHQUAKE IN MORE THAN 100 YEARS

COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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

Communities across Venezuela continue facing a catastrophic humanitarian crisis following the most powerful earthquakes to strike the country in more than a century. On June 24, 2026, northern Venezuela was devastated by two massive earthquakes occurring just 40 seconds apart, a magnitude 7.2 foreshock followed by a magnitude 7.5 mainshock. The violent tremors were felt across much of the country, including the capital of Caracas, La Guaira, Aragua, Carabobo, and neighboring states. Significant aftershocks continued, compounding the danger for survivors and emergency responders alike.

The destruction is widespread and overwhelming. Entire neighborhoods have been reduced to rubble, hospitals, schools, roads, and other critical infrastructure have sustained severe damage, and essential services have been disrupted. Thousands of families have been forced from their homes, many escaping with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. As search and rescue operations continue, urgent humanitarian needs are mounting by the hour. Survivors require immediate access to shelter, clean water, food, medical care, and protection as communities struggle to recover from this unprecedented disaster.

The immediate priority is saving lives and meeting the basic needs of survivors. Hospitals are overwhelmed by the number of injured, while many healthcare facilities have suffered structural damage or lost access to electricity, clean water, and essential medical supplies. Emergency medical teams, trauma care equipment, surgical supplies, medications, and mobile field hospitals are urgently needed to provide lifesaving treatment.

Schools across the affected regions have been severely impacted by the earthquakes, with many buildings damaged, rendered unsafe, or repurposed as emergency shelters for displaced families. Over 680,000 children are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Classrooms that once served thousands of students now stand cracked, unstable, or entirely inaccessible, leaving education systems in disarray just as communities attempt to recover. As a result, large numbers of students are currently unable to attend school, and uncertainty remains over when, or if, normal instruction can safely resume. With the new school year approaching, families face the additional burden of disrupted learning, lost academic time, and the long-term risk of students falling behind, deepening the social and emotional toll of the disaster.

Safe shelter is another critical concern. Thousands of families have lost their homes and require temporary housing, tents, blankets, sleeping mats, and essential household items. Protection from the elements is especially important for children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities who are particularly vulnerable in disaster settings.

Disruptions to transportation, markets, and supply chains have left many communities without reliable access to food. Emergency food distributions, nutritional support for infants and pregnant women, and community kitchens will help prevent hunger and malnutrition during the response and recovery period.

Children and families need protection beyond their physical needs. Safe spaces for children, family reunification services, psychological first aid, and mental health support can help address the emotional trauma caused by the disaster. Survivors who have experienced significant loss will require ongoing psychosocial care as they begin the recovery process.

For many years, Miami-Dade County Public Schools has demonstrated a strong tradition of responding to humanitarian crises by providing assistance to communities affected by natural disasters. Whether responding to hurricanes, earthquakes, wildfires, or other catastrophic events, the District has mobilized students, employees, families, and community partners to provide meaningful support to those in need. This longstanding commitment to service reflects the District's dedication to compassion, civic responsibility, and global citizenship. In the wake of this devastating earthquake, Miami-Dade County Public Schools stands ready to once again partner with the community to help provide relief and hope to the people of Venezuela during this time of extraordinary need.

Miami-Dade County is home to one of the largest Venezuelan communities outside of Venezuela. Venezuelan families have established strong roots throughout the region, enriching the cultural, economic, and civic fabric of our community. While the City of Doral is widely recognized for its vibrant Venezuelan population, Venezuelan residents also live and work throughout Miami, Coral Gables, Key Biscayne, Aventura, Kendall, South Dade, and communities across the entire county, as well as neighboring Broward County. In times of crisis, the impact of a disaster in Venezuela is felt far beyond its borders, affecting thousands of local families who have loved ones, friends, and colleagues in the affected areas. Supporting humanitarian relief efforts is an opportunity for our community to stand in solidarity with our neighbors and demonstrate our shared commitment to compassion, service, and global responsibility.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR
MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent of Schools, on behalf of the School Board to:

1. provide any assistance, support, or humanitarian aid to schools, as needed and as deemed appropriate, for the educational, social, and psychological needs of affected and displaced students due to the devastation of the recent earthquakes in Venezuela; and
2. request the assistance of the Florida Commissioner of Education in exploring whether the State can provide additional educational support and resources which may help address the needs of affected schools and students ensuring that students have access to the educational resources and services necessary to support their academic continuity and long-term success.