

Mr. Daniel Espino, Board Member

**SUBJECT: FEASIBILITY OF EXPANDING PRINCIPAL AUTONOMY AND
SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL-LEVEL MARKETING**

COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
PLAN: EFFECTIVE & SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONAL PRACTICES**

Miami-Dade County Public Schools offers students an extraordinary range of high-quality academic programs, innovative learning opportunities, student supports, extracurricular activities, and pathways to college and careers. As the District begins implementing its 2026–2031 strategic plan, it has an opportunity to ensure that families understand the full value of these offerings and the distinctive strengths of their neighborhood schools. The School Board should therefore examine whether principals have sufficient autonomy, tools, information, and support to market their schools, communicate what makes them unique, and respond to the interests and needs of the families they serve.

Some past practices enacted by schools have included marketing and recruitment activities tailored to their theme or purpose, such as brochures, automated communications, open houses, school tours, feeder-school presentations, and social and digital media outreach. Policies 7540.02 and 7540.04 provide additional guidance on digital communications and social media. Policy 7540.04 specifically encourages the use of social media platforms to promote District schools and programs and permits schools, in accordance with District guidelines, to create accounts to share their accomplishments with families, businesses, and the community. These policies provide a foundation for examining whether comparable marketing flexibility, resources, and support should be made more consistently available to principals of neighborhood and other District-managed schools.

This examination is particularly important because M-DCPS neighborhood schools fulfill a responsibility that distinguishes them from other educational providers. They serve as the universal-access foundation of public education in Miami-Dade County, welcoming and educating students across the full range of abilities, backgrounds, circumstances, and educational needs. Although charter schools are public schools and generally must admit eligible applicants within their approved programs and available capacity, neither charter nor private schools carry the same responsibility to serve as the guaranteed neighborhood school for every child residing within a geographic attendance area.

Recent Board action underscores the importance of clear, accessible, and school-specific communication with families. At its June 17, 2026, meeting, the Board approved Board Member Luisa Santos's Item H-4, "21st Century Social Media Account Policy," co-sponsored by Chair Maria Teresa Rojas, Vice Chair Monica Colucci, and Board Members Roberto Alonso, Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Mary Blanco, Danny Espino, and Joseph S. Geller. The item directed the Superintendent to review the policies and procedures governing District-affiliated social media accounts and, as necessary, to establish standards for account naming, ownership, credential management, continuity planning, and administrative oversight. Similarly, the Board unanimously approved Board Member Santos's Item H-10, "21st Century School Planning: Strengthening Attendance Boundaries, School Choice, and Student Assignment Policies & Processes," which advanced a broader examination of how families understand, access, and navigate educational opportunities across M-DCPS. Together, these items strengthened the foundation for how the District and its schools communicate with families and how families evaluate the options available to them.

The present item builds on that work by examining whether principals should have greater flexibility, resources, and support to communicate their schools' distinctive strengths through social media and other appropriate marketing and community-engagement channels.

Every M-DCPS school has a story worth telling, but it may not always be fully visible to families. A school's distinctive value may lie in its academic programs, career pathways, extracurricular activities, student support systems, community partnerships, and school culture. Districtwide communication remains essential, but they may not fully capture the qualities that make an individual school a strong choice for the children and families it serves.

Principals are uniquely positioned to understand their schools and communities. They know which programs distinguish their campuses and which accomplishments merit greater visibility. As the District moves from strategic planning to implementation, principals can help translate districtwide priorities into locally relevant messages for families. However, support for principals may vary, and some schools may need additional assistance to communicate their strengths effectively.

Greater school-level autonomy could enable principals to develop and implement cohesive strategies tailored to their schools' unique circumstances and community needs. This could include greater flexibility to craft school-specific messaging, respond promptly to enrollment trends and family interests, and coordinate communications across appropriate platforms and audiences. The central question is whether principals have the authority, capacity, and sustained support to integrate those efforts into an intentional strategy to strengthen family awareness, enrollment, retention, and community confidence.

Any proposed approach should preserve accuracy, accessibility, student privacy, appropriate use of public resources, and consistency with District policy. It should also recognize that autonomy alone will not produce equitable results if some schools have greater staffing, funding, technological capacity, or access to community partnerships than others. A meaningful framework should therefore consider both the authority principals need and the District support necessary for every school to communicate effectively.

The purpose of this item is to determine whether greater principal autonomy could support implementation of the 2026–2031 strategic plan, strengthen family awareness of M-DCPS schools, reinforce community confidence, and assist schools in maintaining or increasing enrollment. A feasibility review would allow the District to evaluate existing practices, identify unnecessary barriers or approval requirements, determine what additional authority and support may be appropriate, and consider whether a structured pilot or phased approach would be beneficial.

This item directs the Superintendent to review the authority, flexibility, tools, data, training, staffing, funding, communications support, and other resources currently available to principals to market and promote their schools; review applicable School Board policies, administrative procedures, approval processes, legal requirements, and operational practices governing school-level marketing, recruitment, websites, social media, community outreach, student privacy, branding, and the use of District resources; incorporate, as appropriate, the findings and recommendations developed pursuant to Item H-4, "21st Century Social Media Account Policy," to ensure consistency and avoid duplication; evaluate the feasibility of providing principals with greater autonomy to develop school-specific marketing, community engagement, and enrollment strategies aligned with the District's 2026–2031 Strategic Plan; consider how the marketing and recruitment framework currently enacted by magnet schools could inform a broader framework for neighborhood and other District-managed schools; identify the resources, professional development, templates, enrollment and community data, technical assistance, and District-level support principals would need to exercise such autonomy effectively and responsibly; consider how any proposed framework could ensure equitable access to resources and support so that schools are not disadvantaged by differences in staffing, funding, enrollment, technological capacity, or community partnerships; identify appropriate measures of effectiveness, including family awareness, community engagement, school inquiries, applications, enrollment and retention trends, and schools' ability to communicate their distinctive programs, accomplishments, and strengths; and provide the School Board, within 90 days, a report containing findings and recommendations, including whether a pilot program, phased implementation, policy revision, or other school-level marketing framework should be considered.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MR. DANIEL A. ESPINO:**

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

1. Review the authority, flexibility, tools, data, training, staffing, funding, and communications support currently available to principals to market and promote their schools;
2. Review applicable School Board policies, administrative procedures, approval processes, legal requirements, and operational practices governing school-level marketing, recruitment, websites, social media, community outreach, student privacy, branding, and use of District resources;
3. Incorporate, as appropriate, the findings and recommendations developed pursuant to Item H-4, "21st Century Social Media Account Policy," to avoid duplication and ensure consistency with the District's standards for District-affiliated social-media accounts;
4. Evaluate the feasibility of providing principals with greater autonomy to develop school-specific marketing, community-engagement, and enrollment strategies aligned with the District's 2026–2031 strategic plan;
5. Consider how the marketing and recruitment framework currently available to magnet programs could inform a broader framework for neighborhood and other District-managed schools;
6. Identify the resources, professional development, templates, enrollment and community data, technical assistance, and District-level support principals would need to exercise additional autonomy effectively and responsibly;
7. Consider how any proposed approach could provide equitable access to resources and support so that schools are not disadvantaged by differences in staffing, funding, enrollment, technological capacity, or community partnerships;
8. Identify appropriate measures of effectiveness, which may include family awareness, community engagement, school inquiries, applications, enrollment and retention trends, and schools' ability to communicate their distinctive programs, accomplishments, and strengths; and
9. Provide a report to the Board within 90 days on feasibility, findings, and recommendations, including whether a pilot program, phased implementation, policy revision, or another school-level marketing framework should be considered.