

Mr. Roberto J. Alonso, Board Member

SUBJECT: EXPLORING A DISTRICT MICRO ACADEMY PILOT PROGRAM

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has consistently demonstrated that innovation and high expectations can coexist. As the needs of students continue to evolve, the District should continue exploring innovative educational models that strengthen academic achievement, increase student engagement, improve reading and mathematics proficiency, expand college and career readiness, and provide personalized learning opportunities while maintaining the accountability, resources, and opportunities expected of one of the nation's premier public school systems.

Families increasingly seek educational experiences that provide personalized instruction, career-connected learning, flexible instructional approaches, and individualized pathways to success. The District has an opportunity to evaluate whether these successful characteristics, many of which have been incorporated into innovative educational models across the country, can be adapted within a District-operated Micro Academy while continuing to uphold the rigorous academic standards and public accountability that define M-DCPS.

As one of the nation's largest and most innovative school districts, M-DCPS is uniquely positioned to thoughtfully evaluate emerging educational models while maintaining rigorous academic standards, fiscal responsibility, and public accountability. One such option is a “micro-academy” or “micro-school,” a space where a small number of students (typically 20 or fewer) or mixed age groups receive innovative instruction and personalized experiences. A District-operated Micro Academy could advance many of the Board's existing priorities by supporting personalized learning, accelerating reading and mathematics achievement, strengthening college and career readiness, expanding workforce development opportunities, and preparing students for success in high-demand fields such as Artificial Intelligence and related emerging technologies. Through innovative instructional models and specialized pathways, the pilot could help the District explore new strategies to improve student outcomes while remaining aligned with its long-term strategic goals.

Rather than constructing new facilities, the District has an opportunity to reimagine how existing facilities are utilized. Repurposing underutilized District-owned property to support a Micro Academy pilot could maximize existing assets, avoid unnecessary capital construction costs, maximize the return on existing taxpayer investments, and better align District facilities with the evolving needs of students and families. As part of this exploration, the Superintendent should evaluate the feasibility of launching an initial Micro Academy pilot within an existing District-owned facility.

The proposed Micro Academy pilot would also serve as an innovation laboratory where instructional practices, scheduling models, technology integration, and student support strategies can be evaluated for potential implementation across other District schools. The purpose of the pilot is to determine whether successful practices can be expanded to benefit students throughout the District.

Accordingly, it would be beneficial for the Superintendent to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study and provide recommendations to the School Board regarding the educational model, legal requirements, financial viability, operational considerations, potential pilot locations, implementation of an M-DCPS Micro Academy pilot, and potential specialized pathways, including but not limited to STEM, Artificial Intelligence and related emerging technologies, Entrepreneurship, and other workforce-aligned themes that leverage existing District assets and community partnerships.

This item requests that the Superintendent conduct the feasibility study and present findings and recommendations to the School Board.

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

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MR. ROBERTO J. ALONSO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, request that the Superintendent of Schools to explore the feasibility of piloting an M-DCPS Micro-Academy and, if the pilot is deemed feasible:

1. Propose an instructional and operational plan for an M-DCPS Micro Academy that contemplates different tiers of enrollment, including enrollment criteria, staffing, scheduling, governance, accountability, extracurricular activities, seat time requirements, student support services, potential pilot themes aligned with regional workforce needs, and an instructional model that incorporates personalized learning plans, project-based learning, flexible instructional scheduling where appropriate, strong parent engagement and partnerships, and the responsible use of instructional technology to enhance student learning.
2. Evaluate applicable Florida Statutes, State Board of Education rules, School Board policies, funding requirements, accountability measures, staffing considerations, and any legislative or regulatory requirements necessary to establish and operate a district Micro Academy.
3. Analyze enrollment trends and available classroom capacity at district high schools to identify the most suitable locations for pilot Micro Academies, maximizing the use of existing facilities and resources while considering the factors influencing site selection.
4. Develop and propose a budget plan that analyzes projected startup costs, annual operating expenses, potential funding sources, long-term sustainability, and any revenue opportunities permissible under Florida law and School Board policy.
5. Explore partnerships with colleges, universities, business and industry, nonprofit organizations, and community partners to support career-connected learning, dual enrollment opportunities, internships, mentorships, and workforce development within a Micro-Academy.
6. Develop measures to evaluate the success of the pilot, including academic achievement, attendance, student engagement, graduation outcomes, college and career readiness, parent satisfaction, enrollment demand, and financial sustainability.
7. Provide recommended implementation timeline and any additional recommendations deemed appropriate for the successful development of an M-DCPS Micro Academy pilot by the October 7, 2026, Personnel, Student, School & Community Support Committee Meeting.