

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair

**SUBJECT: MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS)
HUMANITARIAN RELIEF EFFORTS FOR VICTIMS OF THE RECENT
EATHQUAKE IN COLOMBIA**

COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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

A major 7.4-magnitude earthquake struck Colombia on Monday, August 10, 2026, at approximately 7:34 a.m. Colombia time. The epicenter was located about three miles east of San José del Palmar, Colombia, roughly 150 miles west of Bogotá, the nation's capital. The devastating earthquake has resulted in at least 111 fatalities, caused extensive damage to hundreds of buildings, and left numerous individuals trapped beneath debris as family members, emergency responders, and search-and-rescue teams continue efforts to locate and assist survivors.

Significant damage has been reported in Cali, Colombia's third-largest city, which is home to approximately two million residents. The cities of Pereira and Manizales, major population centers in Colombia's coffee-growing region, each with approximately 500,000 residents, have also sustained substantial damage. The earthquake was felt as far away as Bogotá and portions of neighboring Venezuela, although no significant damage or injuries have been reported in those areas. Additional earthquakes and aftershocks have subsequently been reported in the affected region.

The scope of the destruction is extensive and overwhelming. Entire neighborhoods have been reduced to rubble, while hospitals, schools, roads, and other critical infrastructure have sustained severe damage. Essential public services have also been disrupted. As search-and-rescue operations continue, urgent humanitarian needs are increasing by the hour.

The immediate priority is to save lives and provide survivors with essential assistance. Hospitals and emergency medical facilities are overwhelmed by the number of injured individuals, while numerous healthcare facilities have themselves sustained structural damage or experienced disruptions to electricity, clean water, and critical medical supplies.

Children and schools have been particularly affected by the powerful earthquake. More than 50 educational facilities have reportedly sustained structural damage or collapsed, resulting in the suspension of classes in heavily impacted communities, including Manizales. Tragically, children are among those reported injured and killed, including children who lost their lives following the collapse of walls in the Valle del Cauca region. There are also ongoing concerns regarding children who may remain trapped beneath debris in severely the needs of children and families extend beyond immediate physical assistance. Safe spaces for children, family-reunification services, psychological first aid, and mental-health support are essential components of the humanitarian response. Survivors who have experienced significant loss, displacement, or trauma will require sustained psychosocial support as they begin the long-term process of recovery and rebuilding their lives.

For many years, Miami-Dade County Public Schools has maintained a strong tradition of responding to humanitarian crises and 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 individuals and communities in need. This longstanding commitment to service reflects the District's dedication to compassion, civic responsibility, community engagement, and global citizenship.

In response to the devastating earthquake in Colombia, Miami-Dade County Public Schools stands ready to once again partner with the community to provide relief, assistance, and hope to the people of Colombia during this critical time. Miami-Dade County is home to an estimated 140,000 to nearly 200,000 residents of Colombian birth or descent, representing one of the largest concentrations of Colombian Americans in the United States. When combined with neighboring Broward County, the broader South Florida region is home to nearly 240,000 Colombian residents.

In times of crisis, the effects of a disaster in Colombia extend well beyond the country's borders, directly affecting South Florida families who have loved ones, relatives, friends, and colleagues in the impacted communities. Supporting humanitarian relief efforts provides an opportunity for the Miami-Dade community to stand in solidarity with those affected and to demonstrate a shared commitment to compassion, service, civic engagement, and global responsibility.

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

This item does not appear on the published Agenda. There exists good cause to vary from the published Agenda because time is of the essence in providing humanitarian assistance to schools, children, families, and communities affected by the devastating earthquakes that struck Colombia on August 10, 2026.

**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 earthquake in Colombia: 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.
3. affected cities such as Cali.