Office of School Board Members
Board Meeting of October 14, 2026

October 14, 2026

Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member

CO-SPONSORS: **Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Chair**
Ms. Monica Colucci, Vice Chair
Mr. Roberto Alonso } REVISED AT DAIS BY BOARD ACTION
Ms. Mary Blanco
Mr. Danny Espino
Mr. Joseph S. Geller } REVISED AT DAIS BY BOARD ACTION

SUBJECT: **THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ENDORSE NOVEMBER 14 – 22, 2026, AS HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK THROUGHOUT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (M-DCPS)**

COMMITTEE: **ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY**

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

The week of November 14–22, 2026 is designated as National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. Held annually during the week before Thanksgiving, this national observance provides an opportunity for communities to raise awareness, educate the public, advocate for vulnerable individuals and families, and take meaningful action to address hunger and homelessness. (National Coalition for Homelessness)

The face of homelessness continues to evolve, and children and families remain among those affected by housing instability and homelessness. For students, the effects of unstable housing can extend beyond the immediate need for shelter and may affect school attendance, academic achievement, emotional well-being, and a child's ability to fully participate in the educational experience. Miami-Dade County Public Schools recognizes that addressing these challenges requires a collective commitment from schools, families, community organizations, government agencies, businesses, faith-based organizations, and other community partners.

According to Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust information, 3,570 individuals experiencing homelessness were reported in Miami-Dade County in 2025, including 1,068 individuals who were unsheltered. The Homeless Trust conducts periodic countywide census counts and coordinates housing and supportive services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. (Miami-Dade County)

Within Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Project UP-START provides specialized support to students experiencing unstable housing, including students and families living in temporary shelters, hotels or motels, public places, or sharing housing with others because of economic hardship. The program works to help remove barriers to educational access and promote school stability for students experiencing housing insecurity. (Miami-Dade Schools News) This is reinforced by School Board Policy 5111.01.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools prides itself on the work it does and the partnerships it forges to ensure that students have access to the basic resources they need to learn, grow, and succeed. The District's commitment must extend beyond a single week of recognition. By continuing to raise awareness throughout the year, we can foster a culture of compassion, dignity, empathy, and action and ensure that students and families experiencing hunger or homelessness know that they are not forgotten.

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Miami-Dade County Public Schools can make a difference by:

- Raising awareness of hunger and homelessness and their impact on students and families;
- Supporting and strengthening partnerships with community organizations and agencies that provide food, housing, transportation, clothing, and other essential services;
- Increasing awareness of Project UP-START and other resources available to students experiencing housing instability;
- Encouraging schools and community partners to identify and address barriers that may prevent students experiencing homelessness from fully participating in their education;
- Supporting efforts that promote school stability, student engagement, and academic success for students experiencing housing insecurity; and
- Continuing year-round advocacy and community engagement so that vulnerable children and families have access to meaningful assistance and resources.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is committed to ensuring that every student, regardless of housing circumstances or economic challenges, has the opportunity to attend school, feel supported, and pursue a successful educational future. During National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week 2026, we encourage our entire community to recognize the challenges faced by our most vulnerable students and families and to work together to provide resources, compassion, and hope.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools can make a difference. We can advocate for our students and families in need, strengthen our community partnerships, and remind every child that they are seen, valued, supported, and not forgotten.

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

ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. DOROTHY BENDROSS-MINDINGALL: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse the week of November 14 - 22, 2026, as National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.