


## MEMORANDUM

April 22, 2021

**TO:** The Honorable Chair and Members of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

**FROM:** Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools 

**SUBJECT: TRANSMITTAL OF STAKEHOLDER SURVEY RESULTS AND FOCUS GROUP SYNTHESIS FOR STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT DEVELOPMENT**

As part of the development process for the District's new strategic blueprint, stakeholder feedback was captured through a variety of means, including a virtual listening tour, a community-wide survey, and numerous stakeholder focus group meetings. Quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the survey and focus groups were analyzed to identify high-level themes to inform priorities for Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) in the coming years.

The Strategic Planning Survey was deployed from March 10 to April 7, 2021, and was advertised on the District's social media, website, mobile app, as well as through emails and weekly briefings. Respondents were asked to choose what the District has done well, the areas that need improvement, and to identify their level of agreement on a set of statements regarding their attitudes toward the District. They were also asked about their connection to M-DCPS, access to technology, and communication preference, as well as standard demographic questions regarding their race/ethnicity, gender, and zip code. The survey was translated into Spanish and Haitian-Creole and received 29,112 responses from a variety of stakeholders in the community.

When analyzing the survey results, student achievement, post-graduation readiness, technology, and student safety were recurrent topics of interest across stakeholder groups. In addition, mental health and social-emotional learning was a prominent concern, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, open-ended commentary revealed the topics of smaller class sizes for individualized attention as well as spending tax dollars wisely on support services and highly qualified teachers as top priorities.

Between March 8 and April 15, 2021, over 1,100 District stakeholders participated in a total of 54 focus group convenings related to the development of the strategic blueprint. These convenings were held virtually, face-to-face, or a combination of both. Focus groups included current M-DCPS students from elementary to adult education, parents of current students, teachers and support staff, District, region, and school-site administrators, school police, and representatives from local businesses, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, philanthropic groups, and established M-DCPS citizen participation groups. Various school configurations and student groups were represented, including elementary, middle, high, alternative, adult, exceptional student education, English language learners, and migrant.

Similar to questions asked on the Stakeholder Survey, focus group participants were asked a series of 6 questions regarding past and future objectives of the District. These prompts included: (1) what the District is doing well; (2) how the District can improve the student experience; (3) what was learned during the COVID-19 pandemic that can be extended moving forward; (4) what the top priority for the District should be in the next 5 years; (5) what success would look like at the conclusion of the strategic plan; and (6) what advice they would give the District as they make decisions about long-term goals.

The feedback received during each focus group meeting was transcribed and summarized into several overarching themes. Prevalent themes across groups included school safety and security, the mental health of our students and staff, retaining qualified teachers, and the expansion and improvement of technological resources. Stakeholders also noted the shift to enhanced cleaning protocols and virtual meetings were welcomed changes due to the pandemic that should remain a staple in the District. Another theme that emerged among focus groups was the District's need to ensure students receive a well-rounded education that prepares them to enter society, whether it be through the pursuit of a college education or vocation, with the necessary life skills, social and emotional skills, and an understanding of financial management. Additionally, stakeholders felt strongly about prioritizing equity across the District, where all students, regardless of demographic profile, socio-economic status, or school attended, would have the same access to resources and achievement.

Overall, there was strong alignment between themes identified from the focus groups – regardless of audience type – and the findings emanating from the Strategic Planning Survey. A detailed report of the Strategic Planning Survey results and the synthesis of the 54 focus group meetings is attached for your review. This data, along with information from several other sources, will be used to inform the discussion and development of systemwide priorities at our upcoming Planning Retreat.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ms. Marie Izquierdo, Chief Strategy Officer, Office of the Superintendent, at 305 995-7594.

AMC:ym  
M1149

Attachment

cc: School Board Attorney  
Student Advisor  
Superintendent's Cabinet

## Strategic Planning Stakeholder Survey

The Strategic Planning Stakeholder Survey was developed to gather input from various M-DCPS stakeholders on key issues pertaining to developing the District’s next strategic blueprint. The survey (provided in Appendix A) was deployed from March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021, to April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and advertised on the District’s social media, website, mobile app, as well as through emails and weekly briefings. Respondents were asked to choose what the District has done well, the areas that need improvement, and to identify their level of agreement on a set of statements pertaining to the District. They were also asked about their connection to M-DCPS, access to technology, and communication preference, as well as standard demographic questions regarding their race/ethnicity, gender, and zip code. The survey was translated into Spanish and Haitian-Creole and received over 29,000 responses from a variety of stakeholders in the community. The majority of responses (89.2%) were received on the English survey across all stakeholder groups as seen in Table 1. Data on the combined results from all languages are presented below.

Table 1. Frequency of Survey Languages.

Response	All Respondents	
	n	%
English	25,969	89.2
Spanish	3,087	10.6
Creole	56	0.2
Total	29,112	100.0

### Who participated in the survey?

Survey respondents were asked to select how they are connected to M-DCPS. The majority of respondents selected more than one category. Table 2 illustrates the number of respondents for each stakeholder category. Stakeholders identifying as Students may be current or former students at any level. Nearly all respondents identified as a Community Member or Other.

Table 2. Respondent Connection to M-DCPS.

<i>What best describes your connection to Miami-Dade County Public Schools?</i>		
Response	n	%
Student	17,775	61.1
Parent	18,171	62.4
Employee	18,085	62.1
Community Member	27,712	95.2
Other	28,682	98.5
Total	29,112	100.0

*Note: Respondents were able to select “all that apply”, so the sum of n for the respondent groups is greater than the total number of respondents (29,112).*

Survey respondents represented various racial and ethnic groups as listed in Table 3. The majority of respondents identified as Hispanic (58.7%), followed by non-Hispanic White (11.6%) and non-Hispanic Black (11.2%). An additional 10.3% preferred not to respond. This ethnic breakdown is similar to what is seen for the District’s student population. The majority of respondents (69%) were female as seen in Table

4. Respondents resided in all 80 zip codes throughout Miami-Dade County as well as several from Broward County.

Table 3. Frequency of Respondent Race/Ethnicity.

Response	All Respondents	
	n	%
Asian	395	1.4
Hispanic	17,077	58.7
Multi-racial	1,092	3.8
Native American	243	0.8
Non-Hispanic Black	3,254	11.2
Non-Hispanic White	3,387	11.6
Other	676	2.3
Prefer not to respond.	2,988	10.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,112</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4. Frequency of Respondent Gender.

Response	All Respondents	
	n	%
Female	20,089	69.0
Male	6,759	23.2
Non-binary	331	1.1
Prefer not to respond.	1,933	6.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,112</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### How do respondents access District information?

Respondents were asked to identify their technology resources and communication preferences. The majority of respondents indicated that they have access to the internet (84.4%), a laptop or tablet (83.6%), a mobile phone (81.5%), and a desktop computer (63.8%) as seen in Table 5. Half of the respondents (50.4%) indicated that they prefer email communication from M-DCPS, followed by text message (20.4%) as seen in Table 6.

Table 5. Frequency of Respondent Access to Technology Resources.

Response	All Respondents	
	n	%
Desktop computer	18,577	63.8
Laptop/tablet	24,351	83.6
Mobile phone	23,722	81.5
Internet	24,574	84.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,112</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Note: Respondents were able to select “all that apply”, so the sum of n for the respondent groups is greater than the total number of respondents (29,112).*

Table 6. Frequency of Respondent Communication Preference.

Response	All Respondents	
	n	%
District or school websites	882	3.0
Email	14,675	50.4
Face-to-face communication	1,922	6.6
Phone call	3,098	10.6
School Board meetings	130	0.4
Social media	767	2.6
Text message	5,931	20.4
Word of mouth	216	0.7
Written communications from the school or district (i.e., letters, fliers, etc.)	1,491	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,112</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### What is the District doing well?

Next, respondents were asked to identify 3 objectives that the District has done well over the past five years. As seen in Table 7, 43.5% of respondents felt that the District incorporated technology appropriately to support teaching and learning. Approximately a third of respondents felt that the District increased student achievement, provided a variety of educational choice options, and ensured that students and staff were safe and secure. An additional 19.7% of respondents felt that graduated students are ready for college and career opportunities.

Table 7. Respondents' Identification of what the District is doing well.

Response	All Respondents	
	n	%
Incorporated technology appropriately to support teaching and learning	12,673	43.5
Ensured that students and staff were safe and secure	10,653	36.6
Provided a variety of educational choice options	9,719	33.4
Increased student achievement	9,160	31.5
Graduated students ready for college and career opportunities	5,730	19.7
Fostered an environment that promotes diversity	4,481	15.4
Provided additional resources and support to students not making adequate academic progress in an equitable manner	3,962	13.6
Operated/maintained facilities that support learning	3,742	12.9
Responded appropriately to national/state economic conditions	3,634	12.5
Utilized technology effectively to support district operations	3,572	12.3
Provided support services to meet physical, social, and emotional needs	3,434	11.8
Provided professional growth opportunities for employees	3,253	11.2
Engaged families in meaningful ways to support student success	2,989	10.3
Established policies that ensured responsible and effective practices	2,467	8.5
Communicated effectively with stakeholders	2,293	7.9
Collaborated with partner organizations in the community	1,852	6.4
Empowered educators to effect change	1,446	5.0
Attracted and retained highly qualified employees	1,393	4.8
Spent taxpayer money wisely	883	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,112</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## What does the District need to improve?

Respondents were given 19 objectives to rank in order of importance for the District to improve. Table 8 illustrates these objectives, as well as those that were ranked as the top 5 by the respondents. The stakeholders ranked increasing student achievement as the most important objective needing improvement by the District. The second most important objective needing improvement was attracting and retaining highly qualified employees, ensuring that students and staff were safe and secure was third, graduating students ready for college and career opportunities was fourth, and incorporating technology appropriately to support teaching and learning was fifth.

Table 8. Top 5 Objectives Ranked as Needing Improvement.

Response	All Respondents		
	n	%	Rank
Increasing student achievement	2,596	10.63	1
Attracting and retaining highly qualified employees	2,312	8.11	2
Ensuring that students and staff are safe and secure	2,080	7.68	3
Graduating students ready for college and career opportunities	1,970	7.55	4
Incorporating technology appropriately to support teaching and learning	1,936	7.13	5
Providing additional resources and support to students not making adequate academic progress in an equitable manner	2,006	6.97	6
Providing support services to meet physical, social, and emotional needs	2,021	6.93	7
Providing a variety of educational choice options	1,946	6.77	8
Empowering educators to effect change	1,699	5.44	9
Spending taxpayer money wisely	1,628	5.36	10
Engaging families in meaningful ways to support student success	1,608	4.93	11
Operating/maintaining facilities that support learning	1,310	4.30	12
Providing professional growth opportunities for employees	942	3.00	13
Establishing policies that ensure responsible and effective practices	1,064	2.96	14
Fostering an environment that promotes diversity	868	2.80	15
Responding appropriately to national/state economic conditions	884	2.66	16
Utilizing technology effectively to support district operations	850	2.59	17
Communicating effectively with stakeholders	783	2.40	18
Collaborating with partner organizations in the community	609	1.78	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,112</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Note.* In this table, respondents select top three focus area which they consider in need of change. The score is found by weighting the number of respondents according to the importance and taking a weighted sum. Columns labeled "n" give the number of respondents who ranked a given focus area. Columns labeled "%" express the score as a percentage of the maximum possible score. Columns labeled "rank" order those percentages from 1 to 19. Shaded cells are those ranked in the top five.

### What are respondents' attitudes toward the District?

Respondents were presented with seven attitude statements regarding the District and asked to rate their level of agreement. As seen in Table 9, the majority of respondents agreed with all statements. In particular, 74.8% of stakeholders would recommend M-DCPS to a friend or relative, and 70% feel that M-DCPS pursues the highest standards in academic achievement and organizational performance. Half of the respondents felt that M-DCPS values them as a stakeholder.

Table 9. Percent Agreement of Attitudes Toward the District.

Response	All Respondents	
	n	%
<i>I would recommend M-DCPS to a friend, relative, etc.</i>	21,770	74.8
<i>M-DCPS pursues the highest standards in academic achievement and organizational performance.</i>	20,384	70.0
<i>M-DCPS accepts responsibility for its successes and challenges, and it seeks to transparently share its work in an ethical manner as it strives towards continuous improvement.</i>	19,111	65.6
<i>M-DCPS encourages creativity and adaptability to new ideas and methods that will support and improve student learning.</i>	18,900	64.9
<i>M-DCPS has a singular focus on meeting students' needs and supporting them in fulfilling their potential.</i>	18,247	62.7
<i>M-DCPS fosters an environment that serves all students and aspires to eliminate the achievement gap.</i>	18,105	62.2
<i>Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) values me as a stakeholder.</i>	14,707	50.5
Total	29,112	100.0

### What advice or information did respondents have for the District?

In addition to the quantitative information provided above, respondents were asked to give information or advice to the District as they make long-term priorities and goals. To analyze the open-ended qualitative responses, text analysis software, WordStat8 by Provalis Research, used information theory to identify keywords and phrases recorded in the survey. It then used two statistical procedures, cluster analysis and factor analysis, to group the comments into factors to identify the primary topics addressed in the comments. While the survey had over 29,000 respondents, not all respondents provided usable comments to this question, and not all usable comments end up being significantly prominent to create a factor. Therefore, as a result of this process, 6 topics emerged for respondents as seen in Table 10. The keywords included *mental health, money wisely, highly qualified, smaller class sizes, social and emotional, and cost of living*. Respondents felt strongly that students should be given a well-rounded education including support services that would bolster mental health as well as social and emotional learning. Respondents thought that a more individualized learning environment can be achieved through smaller class sizes that would similarly support teachers. Respondents also felt that the District needs to attract and retain highly qualified teachers, ensuring an equitable salary commensurate with the cost of living in our community. Examples of the comments submitted are presented verbatim in Table 10.

Table 10. Summary of Respondent Comments by Topic.

Key Words /Topic	Example Comment	Frequency
MENTAL HEALTH	We need to focus more on providing emotional and behavior support to our students and teachers. I think there should be a department for mental health, so we can better serve our children with drug problems, self-esteem, all sorts of abuse. School should not be just academics. We need to help our children be mentally and emotionally strong.	681
	I think that health services in schools should be a priority to ensure safety of both the students and teachers, employees.	
	Incorporate social emotional learning curriculum in K-5 to improve overall student health indicators.	
	Mental health should be a priority for students and teachers. Elementary school counselors have become Gifted or SPED appointment facilitators. As opposed to creating meetings with students helping them with their Mental Health. Compensate teachers according to all the requirements their adhering to, especially during the pandemic.	
	Provide a mental wellness class to integrate social emotional learning. Currently the state is mandating minimum hours per month to listen to mental wellness videos. This is a good start, but more has to be done to address the critical social emotional needs of our students.	
MONEY WISELY	Improve interdisciplinary and inter-professional decision making. Include end users before rolling out initiatives. Spend money wisely.	173
	Put more money in the budget of each school for hiring staff, making changes for COVID-19 safety, upgrading the facilities, put more resources in fixing Miami-Dade schools, school facilities are very outdated. As well each school needs major overhaul of computer systems; all schools should have upgrades in Wi-Fi systems and all classrooms should have computers. At my son’s school his cell network is faster than the Wi-Fi network.	
	Put more time and money into prioritizing students’ activities like clubs and sports. Many students select a high school based on the extracurricular offerings of a school. Universities now look at other ways a student is engaged in school besides grades.	
	M-DCPS must attract and retain highly qualified teachers. Spend tax dollars wisely. Employ additional staff to support students who are performing below grade level.	
	Given the recent events with COVID-19, schools need to direct a lot of time and money to understanding the different levels of performance for each student returning back to school. Students' emotional health in addition to their learning gaps need to be managed on an individual basis. Students should not be lumped into one group of Meeting vs. Failing. Teachers need the support and resources to help facilitate each child's specific development & learning needs. This process also needs to be well-paced & planned out.	

Table 10 (continued). Summary of Respondent Comments by Topic.

Key Words /Topic	Example Comment	Frequency
HIGHLY QUALIFIED	Higher teacher pay will ensure the retention of high-quality professionals. Teachers want to teach; it is our passion. M-DCPS' inability to attract and retain high quality educators is that we can no longer support ourselves in dynamic, shifting economy with what we make. There is an entire culture built around young teachers leaving the classroom in their early 30's and using their classroom experience to apply for higher paying jobs in the private sector. It is demoralizing and upsetting to see so many professionals feel like they simply cannot afford to live in our city due to financial difficulty.	148
	Ensure that you have highly trained, qualified teachers. Support these highly trained, qualified teachers and increase their salaries in order to keep them. Unqualified teachers should be remediated and not allowed to teach until they demonstrate capability.	
	The district needs to attract and retain quality educators, in addition to taking care of those at the twilight of their career.	
	Place qualified individuals with the specific academic discipline background in charge with their respective areas. Example: Qualified physics individual in charge of physics, chemistry individual in charge of chemistry, etc.	
	Make sure teachers are qualified and have studied what they teach to ensure they can actually give good information rather than read off PowerPoints provided by textbooks as their form of teaching.	
SMALLER CLASS SIZES	Invest in smaller class sizes to promote a better learning environment.	146
	To have a smaller number of children per classroom so the kids can learn better. To make sure that the children have actually learned the material given to them. Not to keep going to the next chapter if the children had not mastered an area.	
	Schools need to provide more support to their teachers, which include but not limited to smaller class sizes, additional classroom resources, increasing support to counselors which directly impact students, and increasing teacher population to both support the lower class size and to provide more opportunities for increased class selections.	
	Classroom size in core classes should be a priority for next year. Maintaining optimal class size of 22-25 will go a long way in teachers being able to address learning losses effectively. Additionally, our struggling students need social emotional support services for them and their families starting in the summer. Also, perhaps implementing a Wednesday elementary-like early dismissal every week in secondary schools will help provide an opportunity for schools to have a consistent opportunity to carve out time for data-driven planning departmentally as well as school wide to address the loss of learning during the past year. The students who have had a loss of learning and are most vulnerable need to be reconnected to their learning; small group settings such as tutoring can also be provided on these days. Giving schools an opportunity to dedicate time to plan for the particular needs of their population can greatly support the academic and social emotional growth of students.	
	Please find ways to decrease the number of students per class. It benefits the students and teachers immensely. Please find creative ways to make that happen if the physical classrooms are limited.	

Table 10 (continued). Summary of Respondent Comments by Topic.

Key Words /Topic	Example Comment	Frequency
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL	Increase support services to social and emotional needs of our students. It doesn't matter how much academics you give them, if they are not emotionally and socially sound they cannot be productive citizens.	121
	Emotional health, including but not limited to mindfulness practice is extremely important for both students and teachers! Increased attention to wellbeing and stress reduction education and assistance would benefit Miami-Dade.	
	In order for students to thrive, Miami-Dade needs to focus on providing a well-rounded education. This means public schools need to provide physical education for ALL levels, music class with real instruments, allow students to develop their social skills by increasing recess time. A good education is not only academic driven.	
	To take more care to students' learning skills and emotional needs to assure a clear and safe environmental protection and safety for all.	
COST OF LIVING	That inner city/urban schools need more support in not just educating students, but in their social and emotional growth. Teachers in these schools are overwhelmed with many issues that stem from the family and community. More counselors at these schools would be greatly appreciated for our students and staff.	39
	Consider increasing teacher salaries equitably and to meet current cost of living within South Florida, teachers are unable to afford rent or buy a home on the current salary scale, increase supplements for clubs based on deliverables submitted quarterly, and changing school start times to begin instruction after 8am.	
	I would like MDCPS to consider the cost of living in Miami-Dade/Broward County. There needs to be an increase in salary that will allow teachers to afford living in either county.	
	Accommodate your employees with salaries that will sustain them as the cost-of-living increases. Reevaluate each position pay scale by adding more steps so that the individuals that are at the last step will see increases when the district decides to give .50 cent raises. This method will possibly give employees an opportunity to not live from paycheck to paycheck.	
In order to retain and attract highly effective teachers, you MUST provide an honorable salary. Starting pay has improved but stays stagnant. We have the most diverse population, living in an expensive city. Teachers are not able to even get mortgage loans due to the little pay.	There needs to be a plan to attract and retain good teachers in the system through pay increases. As the cost of living in Miami-Dade rises, I would first see more of us leave the profession in order to make ends meet.	

## Conclusions

Results of the Strategic Planning Stakeholder Survey detail several strengths and areas of improvement for the District from the perspective of its students, parents, and employees in a large sample of over 29,000 respondents. Student achievement, post-graduation readiness, technology, and student safety were recurrent topics of interest across stakeholder groups. In addition, mental health and social emotional learning was a prominent concern, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, open-ended commentary revealed the topics of smaller class sizes for individualized attention as well as spending tax dollars wisely on support services and highly qualified teachers as top priorities. These results can be used to guide future strategic planning for the District.

## Stakeholder Focus Groups

In addition to the online Strategic Plan Stakeholder Survey, over 50 in-person and virtual focus group meetings were held with various stakeholder groups. Over 1,100 individuals participated in the focus groups from March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, to April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. A vast array of stakeholder groups was represented, including current M-DCPS students from elementary to high school grades, parents of current students, teachers and support staff, District, region, and school-site administrators, school police, local business representatives, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, philanthropic groups, and established M-DCPS citizen participation groups. Citizen participation groups included the Family and Community Involvement Advisory Committee (FCIAC), the Student Services Advisory Committee, the Diversity, Equity, and Excellence Advisory Committee (DEEAC), the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Bond Advisory Committee (SBAC), and the Small, Micro, and Minority Women-Owned Business Enterprise Advisory Committee, amongst others. Additionally, various school configurations and student groups were represented, including elementary, middle, and high schools, alternative, adult, exceptional student education, English language learners, and migrant. A full list of focus groups is provided in Table 11.

Table 11. Full List of Strategic Planning Focus Groups

1	21st Century Schools Bond Advisory Committee
2	Administrators (Adult Education)
3	Administrators (Elementary)
4	Administrators (Secondary and Alternative)
5	Chambers of Commerce
6	Community Organizations (Advocacy Groups)
7	Community Organizations (Mentoring Groups)
8	District Administrators
9	District Advisory Panel for Exceptional Student Education
10	District Athletic Advisory Council
11	District Wellness Advisory Committee
12	Diversity, Equity, and Excellence Advisory Committee
13	ELL Parents
14	Faith-Based Organizations
15	Family and Community Involvement Advisory Committee (FCIAC)
16	Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Committee
17	Labor Union Presidents
18	Large Businesses
19	M-DCPS Parents Group
20	Miami-Dade City and County Management Association
21	Miami-Dade Council of PTSAs
22	Parents (Central Region - Elementary)
23	Parents (Central Region - Secondary)
24	Parents (North Region - Elementary)
25	Parents (North Region - Secondary)

Table 11 (continued). Full List of Strategic Planning Focus Groups

26	Parents (South Region - Elementary)
27	Parents (South Region - Secondary)
28	Parents (Spanish)
29	Philanthropic Organizations
30	Safety and Security Committee
31	School Health Advisory Committee
32	School Police
33	Small Businesses
34	Small, Micro, Minority Women Owned Business Enterprise Advisory Committee
35	Student Government Association
36	Student Services Advisory Group
37	Students (Adult Education)
38	Students (Alternative Education)
39	Students (Elementary School)
40	Students (High School)
41	Students (Middle School)
42	Support Personnel
43	Teachers
44	Teachers (Adult Education)
45	Teachers (Elementary)
46	Teachers (Secondary)
47	Title I District Advisory Council
48	Title I Migrant Education Parent Advisory Council
49	Together for Children #1
50	Together for Children #2
51	Together for Children #3
52	Together for Children #4
53	We Rise
54	WLRN Community Advisory Board

Similar to the questions asked on the Stakeholder Survey, focus group participants were asked a series of 6 questions regarding past and future objectives of the District. These prompts included: (1) what the District is doing well; (2) how the District can improve the student experience; (3) what was learned during the COVID-19 pandemic that can be used moving forward; (4) what the top priority for the District should be in the next 5 years; (5) what success would look like at the conclusion of the strategic plan; and (6) what advice they would give the District as they make decisions about long-term goals. The feedback received during each focus group was transcribed and summarized into several overarching themes.

## Conclusions

As seen in Appendix B, there is significant overlap in focus group themes regardless of audience type, as well as with the findings from the Strategic Plan Stakeholder Survey. School safety and security, the mental health of our students and staff, retaining qualified teachers, and the expansion and improvement of technological resources were echoed throughout both data collection methods. Stakeholders felt the shift to enhanced cleaning protocols and virtual meetings were welcomed changes due to the pandemic that should remain a staple in the District.

Choice schools/programming in the District was consistently referenced as a positive, with many focus group participants indicating that expanded choice offerings would help make schools more desirable and dynamic. An important theme that took the forefront across all groups was to ensure students received more than a traditional education to become well-rounded individuals that are well prepared to enter society, whether it be through the pursuit of a college education or vocation, with the necessary life skills, social and emotional skills, and an understanding of financial management. Additionally, stakeholders felt strongly about the need to ensure equity across the District, where all students, regardless of demographic profile, socio-economic status, or school attended, would have the same access to resources and achievement.

The most echoed advice given by stakeholders to aid in strategic planning was for the District to continue maintaining open lines of communication via focus groups, surveys, town halls, and the like. Stakeholders felt the District must ensure a focus on student feedback above all others. The level of agreement found between the Strategic Plan Stakeholder Survey and stakeholder focus groups provide a solid ground for implementing steps toward a representative and cohesive Strategic Plan moving forward.

## Appendix A: Miami-Dade County Public Schools - Strategic Planning Survey

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this survey is to gather input from Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) stakeholders as we embark on the development of our next strategic blueprint. This blueprint will guide critical decision-making over the next several years as our system works to provide the students residing in our diverse community with the high-quality education they deserve. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to the questions in this survey, and the information captured is completely anonymous.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read each statement carefully and respond based on your individual experience/perspective as a stakeholder of M-DCPS.

### SECTION 1

#### *1. What best describes your connection to Miami-Dade County Public Schools?*

**(Select all that apply)**

- Student
- Parent
- Employee
- Community Member
- Other

#### *2. Over the past five years, which of the following has Miami-Dade County Public Schools done well? (Select three of the following options.)*

**(Select three)**

- Increased student achievement
- Graduated students ready for college and career opportunities
- Incorporated technology appropriately to support teaching and learning
- Provided a variety of educational choice options
- Ensured that students and staff are safe and secure
- Provided additional resources and support to students not making adequate academic progress in an equitable manner
- Operated/maintained facilities that support learning
- Provided support services to meet physical, social and emotional needs
- Fostered an environment that promotes diversity
- Provided professional growth opportunities for employees
- Attracted and retained highly qualified employees
- Empowered educators to effect change
- Communicated effectively with stakeholders
- Collaborated with partner organizations in the community
- Engaged families in meaningful ways to support student success
- Spent taxpayer money wisely
- Utilized technology effectively to support district operations
- Responded appropriately to national/state economic conditions
- Established policies that ensured responsible and effective practices

3. Rank the top three areas within Miami-Dade County Public Schools that need improvement.

**(Rank responses)**

- Increasing student achievement
- Graduating students ready for college and career opportunities
- Incorporating technology appropriately to support teaching and learning
- Providing a variety of educational choice options
- Ensuring that students and staff are safe and secure
- Providing additional resources and support to students not making adequate academic progress in an equitable manner
- Operating/maintaining facilities that support learning
- Providing support services to meet physical, social and emotional needs
- Fostering an environment that promotes diversity
- Providing professional growth opportunities for employees
- Attracting and retaining highly qualified employees
- Empowering educators to effect change
- Communicating effectively with stakeholders
- Collaborating with partner organizations in the community
- Engaging families in meaningful ways to support student success
- Spending taxpayer money wisely
- Utilizing technology effectively to support district operations
- Responding appropriately to national/state economic conditions
- Establishing policies that ensure responsible and effective practices

4. Which of the following technology resources do you have access to? (Select all that apply.)

**(Select all that apply)**

- Desktop computer
- Laptop/tablet
- Mobile phone
- Internet

5. What is your preferred way of receiving communications from Miami-Dade County Public Schools? (Select one of the following options.)

**(Select only one)**

- Written communications from the school or district (i.e., letters, fliers, etc.)
- Face-to-face communication
- Text message
- Phone call
- Email
- District or school websites
- School Board meetings
- Social media
- Word of mouth

6. What information or advice would you give Miami-Dade County Public Schools as we make decisions about long-term priorities and goals?

**(Provide only one response)**

SECTION 2 - Indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements below.

7. *Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) values me as a stakeholder.*

**(Select only one)**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

8. *I would recommend M-DCPS to a friend, relative, etc.*

**(Select only one)**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. *M-DCPS pursues the highest standards in academic achievement and organizational performance.*

**(Select only one)**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. *M-DCPS fosters an environment that serves all students and aspires to eliminate the achievement gap.*

**(Select only one)**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11. *M-DCPS has a singular focus on meeting students' needs and supporting them in fulfilling their potential.*

**(Select only one)**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12. *M-DCPS encourages creativity and adaptability to new ideas and methods that will support and improve student learning.*

**(Select only one)**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

13. *M-DCPS accepts responsibility for its successes and challenges, and it seeks to transparently share its work in an ethical manner as it strives towards continuous improvement.*

**(Select only one)**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

### SECTION 3

14. *Please select the race/ethnicity with which you most identify.*

**(Select only one)**

- Non-Hispanic White
- Non-Hispanic Black
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Native American
- Multi-racial
- Other
- Prefer not to respond.

15. *Please select the gender with which you most identify.*

**(Select only one)**

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to respond.

16. *In which zip code do you reside?*

**(Provide only one response)**

## Appendix B: Summary of Overarching Themes for Questions 1-3 by Focus Group Audience

Primary Audience	Q1. What are 3 things the District is doing well?	Q2. What are 3 things the District could change/add that would improve the student experience?	Q3. What have we learned this past year during COVID-19 that we should extend moving forward?
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Early intervention</li> <li>-Family engagement/community support</li> <li>-Openness to doing things that are innovative</li> <li>-Significant amount of transparency</li> <li>-Meeting the unmet needs of needy students and families</li> <li>-Technology</li> <li>-COVID-19 response</li> <li>-Returning students to classrooms</li> <li>-Access to magnet and choice programs to advance academics</li> <li>-Graduation rate increase</li> <li>-Branding</li> <li>-Including community-based organizations in the conversation</li> <li>-Efforts to provide health services and mentoring to children</li> <li>-Meal distribution</li> <li>-Upgrading facilities</li> <li>-Principal empowerment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Amount of resources available to students (i.e., # of CAP Counselors in public vs. private schools)</li> <li>-More information about post-secondary resources (i.e. resource centers)</li> <li>-Closer collaboration with service providers</li> <li>-Student attrition/retention strategies</li> <li>-Lack of connectivity in some communities</li> <li>-Addressing students who have fallen behind</li> <li>-Prepare teachers to better fulfill customized education to students; post-pandemic support</li> <li>-Balance academics/standardized testing</li> <li>-Increased financial literacy and STEM experiences</li> <li>-Build bridges of understanding so students can learn about diverse cultures</li> <li>-Vocational schools</li> <li>-More options for students that do not wish to attend college</li> <li>-Improved customer service (for parents to better navigate the system and work with their child's teachers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Personal hygiene protocols</li> <li>-Zoom and Microsoft Teams to host meetings and collaborate with others</li> <li>-Virtual trainings</li> <li>-Hybrid modality for academic and parent activities</li> <li>-Resources for connectivity</li> <li>-Providing opportunities for socio-emotional learning</li> <li>-Nurses in every school</li> <li>-Continue to reach out to community-based organizations</li> </ul>

Primary Audience	Q1. What are 3 things the District is doing well?	Q2. What are 3 things the District could change/add that would improve the student experience?	Q3. What have we learned this past year during COVID-19 that we should extend moving forward?
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Safety and security measures for students and schools</li> <li>-Strong program offerings (ESOL, bilingual, gifted) that are personalized for each child</li> <li>-Communication</li> <li>-Integrating technology and offering an online option; providing laptops and hotspots for students</li> <li>-Good teachers who can instruct well both online and face-to-face</li> <li>-Food distributions during COVID-19</li> <li>-The district has been able to pivot and meet the needs of our families during these difficult times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Building/maintenance improvements</li> <li>-Less of an emphasis on standardized testing</li> <li>-More parental engagement (schools should welcome parent engagement)</li> <li>-More experiential education</li> <li>-More awareness and support for students' mental health (more counselors and social workers)</li> <li>-Provide full-time nurses, interventionists, and librarians for all schools</li> <li>-More support for teachers and students' technology needs (connectivity has been an issue)</li> <li>-Find ways for parents to continue to be engaged/involved at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Continue implementing health and safety protocols</li> <li>-Provide options for both in-person and distance learning</li> <li>-Allow students who are sick to stay home and engage in learning remotely</li> <li>-Virtual parent meetings</li> <li>-Eliminating perfect attendance</li> <li>-Accessibility to food</li> <li>-Checking on mental health of students</li> <li>-Train teachers earlier on new procedures or teaching tools</li> <li>-Keep teachers and parents working together</li> </ul>

Primary Audience	Q1. What are 3 things the District is doing well?	Q2. What are 3 things the District could change/add that would improve the student experience?	Q3. What have we learned this past year during COVID-19 that we should extend moving forward?
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Student achievement (graduation rate, closing the achievement gap)</li> <li>-Technology usage</li> <li>-Communication (social media, email)</li> <li>-Professional Development</li> <li>-Support provided to schools</li> <li>-Safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Promote Adult Education/Technical Colleges as a viable option for students not on a traditional college-going track</li> <li>-Reduce testing</li> <li>-Provide additional resources/student services allocations for mental health services</li> <li>-Better communication/collaboration between Adult Education and K-12</li> <li>-Teacher retention</li> <li>-Financial support for the arts</li> <li>-Equity in programming in neighborhood schools</li> <li>-Treating students like individuals with unique needs</li> <li>-Wraparound services and tutoring opportunities, more enrichment programs</li> <li>-Investment in providing employees with tools/supplies needed to perform job</li> <li>-More access to professional growth opportunities</li> <li>-Wi-Fi connectivity, technology, and upgrading student devices</li> <li>-More parental engagement</li> <li>-More monitoring of student attendance; more outreach to students</li> <li>-More cultural sensitivity for all groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Virtual schooling/online courses are a viable option for students</li> <li>-Zoom technology can be used to provide PD, conduct meetings, and engage with parents</li> <li>-Telework opportunities</li> <li>-Safety protocols (keep up with HVAC maintenance)</li> <li>-Use of technology to allow students to remain engaged in the learning process even if they are physically absent from school due to illness or injury</li> <li>-Cleaning protocols</li> <li>-Health protocols when employees/students are sick</li> </ul>

Primary Audience	Q1. What are 3 things the District is doing well?	Q2. What are 3 things the District could change/add that would improve the student experience?	Q3. What have we learned this past year during COVID-19 that we should extend moving forward?
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-COVID-19 response and communication</li> <li>-Supporting low-income students and families</li> <li>-Providing access to technology and resources for students to excel</li> <li>-Providing students with options to attend school in-person or via distance learning</li> <li>-More efforts regarding inclusion; involving students in decision-making</li> <li>-Security in schools</li> <li>-Free lunch</li> <li>-Good teachers who explain the material well and provide help when needed</li> <li>-Providing support to students and families who need it (students in ESE, low-income students); student services teams (counselors, CAP Advisors) have been very helpful during the pandemic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Providing more resources for mental health</li> <li>-More focus/promotion of equity in schools</li> <li>-More testing resources, college prep, and tutoring for ACT/SAT</li> <li>-Updating technology in schools</li> <li>-Educating students about finances/life skills; providing help with financial aid, scholarships, grants, college applications</li> <li>-Improve user experience of Adult Ed students</li> <li>-Include more online teacher instruction and provide more training on technology</li> <li>-Enhance program offerings for at-night students</li> <li>-Better food (more options/more flavorful)</li> <li>-Different activities</li> <li>-More electives, extracurriculars, field trips</li> <li>-Less homework</li> <li>-More classes to prepare students for life</li> <li>-Better technology (more tech support/maintenance)</li> <li>-More certifications</li> <li>-Permission to wear different clothes sometimes</li> <li>-More activities/sports/STEAM</li> <li>-Increase teacher salaries</li> <li>-More financial literacy and life skills preparation (taxes, interviews, applying to college)</li> <li>-Extra funding for schools that need it, regardless of zip code</li> <li>-School counselor accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reaching out to families and social media outreach</li> <li>-Use of Microsoft Teams and other applications to communicate with teachers and keep track of assignments</li> <li>-Maintaining health and safety protocols (social distance, cleanliness, hand sanitizer)</li> <li>-Allowing students who are unable to attend class physically to participate virtually</li> <li>-More support for others and openness to talk about what we are struggling with</li> <li>-Digitize everything and continue providing technology to students</li> <li>-Continue providing support for low-income students and their families</li> </ul>

## Summary of Overarching Themes for Questions 4-6 by Focus Group Audience

Primary Audience	Q4. What do you think is the single most important priority for M-DCPS over the next 5 years?	Q5. What would success look like at the conclusion of the strategic plan? (How would you know the District was successful? What does success look like to you?)	Q6. What information or advice would you give M-DCPS as we make decisions about long-term priorities and goals?
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Retain qualified teachers</li> <li>-Making sure that students and families are aware of all resources</li> <li>-Take care of our teachers (salaries and benefits) for retention due to economics of Miami-Dade</li> <li>-Exposing students to more careers and business leaders from all aspects and seeing the steps to get there</li> <li>-Closing the achievement gap</li> <li>-Safety and security</li> <li>-Addressing student learning loss</li> <li>-Maintaining student enrollment (FTE)</li> <li>-Expanding virtual learning; increasing student access to technology</li> <li>-Increasing teacher salaries</li> <li>-Creating sustainable schools</li> <li>-Supporting student success and addressing effects of the pandemic</li> <li>-Providing more educational choice options</li> <li>-Strengthening cybersecurity</li> <li>-Lower class size</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Improved test scores</li> <li>-High numbers of graduates and college ready students, students having skills that help them succeed in life</li> <li>-Increased post-secondary enrollment rates</li> <li>-More schools implementing a comprehensive school counseling program</li> <li>-Inclusive school system</li> <li>-All students proficient in basic skills</li> <li>-More engaged parents</li> <li>-Increased number of activities/sports attendance by students and fans</li> <li>-Better preparation for college (SAT prep; support to gain admission to college)</li> <li>-Stronger safety and support networks for students</li> <li>-Promote different career paths for students (some academic/some vocational)</li> <li>-Offer more vocational programs in traditional schools</li> <li>-All students should have the same opportunity to take part in all programs offered across our school district</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Get input from families to inform decisions</li> <li>-Support families in how to find additional resources</li> <li>-Address social justice issues with students; better understanding of each other to improve relationships, not just racial but LGBTQ, Jewish, etc.</li> <li>-Focus on all students, not just some</li> <li>-Keep feedback continuous throughout the process</li> <li>-Establish goals that are inclusive and do not seem to benefit one demographic more than others</li> <li>-Identify quantifiable key intended outcomes, and frequently assess outcomes to achieve target</li> <li>-Focus on addressing the stressors that inhibit student success (food insecurity, health/family issues, mental health, homelessness, etc.)</li> <li>-Listen to students' feedback</li> </ul>

Primary Audience	Q4. What do you think is the single most important priority for M-DCPS over the next 5 years?	Q5. What would success look like at the conclusion of the strategic plan? (How would you know the District was successful? What does success look like to you?)	Q6. What information or advice would you give M-DCPS as we make decisions about long-term priorities and goals?
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Happy, healthy children</li> <li>-Safety</li> <li>-Support for students' academic skills and social well-being</li> <li>-More resources for teachers</li> <li>-Reducing systemic inequities</li> <li>-More parental involvement</li> <li>-Free lunch for all students (healthy meals)</li> <li>-Increased technology access for all</li> <li>-Addressing student learning loss as a result of COVID</li> <li>-Continue hiring good teachers and holding them accountable</li> <li>-Making life skills a priority over continuous testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Every school is a school of choice (every school is one where a parent would want to send their child)</li> <li>-Fewer police officers and more counselors, providing support for younger students and appropriate resources in all grades</li> <li>-Quality teacher hiring and retention</li> <li>-Increased graduation rate</li> <li>-Increased college acceptance rate</li> <li>-Culturally inclusive</li> <li>-Dual enrollment reflecting more than finance and STEM, vocations, trade and emphasis on math and science at younger ages</li> <li>-More tutoring and supplemental programming available to all students</li> <li>-More tech support, more computers at schools</li> <li>-Students' capacity to transition from school to society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Keep students at the forefront of decision-making and listen to them</li> <li>-Social interaction/skills are important; recess, music, foreign language, sports, art, and activities are needed</li> <li>-Maintain communication with parents</li> <li>-Disparities should be minimized</li> <li>-Increase support for teachers and give them a louder voice</li> <li>-Find ways to make more community-based partnerships available to MDCPS</li> <li>-Going forward we need to continue helping students to be successful in all aspects of life</li> <li>-We need to continue the mental health conversation</li> <li>-More security personnel at school site</li> </ul>

Primary Audience	Q4. What do you think is the single most important priority for M-DCPS over the next 5 years?	Q5. What would success look like at the conclusion of the strategic plan? (How would you know the District was successful? What does success look like to you?)	Q6. What information or advice would you give M-DCPS as we make decisions about long-term priorities and goals?
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Student enrollment and re-engagement in learning</li> <li>-Ensuring equal opportunities for all students</li> <li>-Students' academic recovery after COVID</li> <li>-Promoting career options (not just college)</li> <li>-Expand technology for all</li> <li>-Teacher retention</li> <li>-Student mental health</li> <li>-Increasing membership/FTE for M-DCPS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increased graduation rates</li> <li>-Closing the achievement gap</li> <li>-Changed mindset about adult education/technical colleges</li> <li>-Increase in FTE</li> <li>-Increased teacher retention</li> <li>-Increase in student mental health programming</li> <li>-Maintaining our level of excellence, no matter how we may have to adapt based on external conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-There need to be more collaborative efforts between K-12 and Adult Ed/Tech Colleges, so students/families understand what options are available.</li> <li>-Work on improving the community perception</li> <li>-Expand online option for students</li> <li>-Keep students the top priority</li> <li>-Continue to engage with all stakeholders (staff, parents, students) in decision-making and keep students at the forefront of all decision-making</li> <li>-Realign focus on our customer base (students and parents)</li> <li>-Provide support services to meet emotional needs of students</li> </ul>

Primary Audience	Q4. What do you think is the single most important priority for M-DCPS over the next 5 years?	Q5. What would success look like at the conclusion of the strategic plan? (How would you know the District was successful? What does success look like to you?)	Q6. What information or advice would you give M-DCPS as we make decisions about long-term priorities and goals?
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mental health</li> <li>-Financial literacy</li> <li>-College preparation/post-graduation resources</li> <li>-Academic recovery after the pandemic</li> <li>-Equity across schools in the district</li> <li>-Recruitment of quality, caring teachers</li> <li>-Overall student health and support; mental health/emotional support</li> <li>-Students graduating with certification</li> <li>-Increased access to technology for all students</li> <li>-Safety and security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Having students who are happy and genuinely look forward to and enjoy going to school</li> <li>-Having more resources to help students with college prep, financial literacy, and skills to prepare for life</li> <li>-More student inclusion and education/training for teachers and counselors on how to promote this</li> <li>-Higher graduation rates</li> <li>-Increase in attendance and academic performance/engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Make decisions based on student inclusion and what would benefit all students</li> <li>-Be more inclusive and promote social justice</li> <li>-Focus on students who are struggling academically</li> <li>-Focus on students' well-being and mental health; improve mental health programs</li> <li>-Prepare students for the future (not just tests)</li> <li>-Focus on creating equitable educational experiences for all students</li> </ul>