

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Board Member
Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member

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**SUBJECT: PARTNERSHIPS WITH MUNICIPALITIES TO EXPLORE THE
DEPLOYMENT OF POLICE OFFICERS TO SUPPORT STUDENT
SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE WITH MARJORY STONEMAN
DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL PUBLIC SAFETY ACT, SB 7026**

COMMITTEE: FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
BLUEPRINT: SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT**

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is committed to ensuring the safety and security of its schools, employees, community members, and most important, its students. This has been and must always remain a priority of the School Board, Superintendent, and school and district staff. This commitment has been shared by the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and its members employed through the Miami-Dade County Public School Police Department and municipalities throughout the county.

The issue of school safety and security has been elevated because of the tragedy that took place at Marjory Stoneman Douglas Senior High School on February 14, 2018. Consequently, the district, state, and nation have increased proactivity in the provision of attention, resource, and strategy to improve school security and student safety.

On March 9, 2018, Governor Rick Scott signed into law the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act (MSDHPSA), SB 7026. This law, among other initiatives, requirements, and strategies, provides a \$400 million investment to keep students safe in school and enhance the provision of supports to address mental health. One critical component is the provision of \$162 million for safe-school officers and the requirement that a safe-school officer is present at each school in the state. All safe-school officers must be sworn law enforcement officers. Provisions outlined in Section 42 further state beginning the 2018-2019 school year, *"the sum of \$97,500,000 in recurring funds is appropriated to the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education in the Aid to Local Governments Grants and Aids---Florida Education Finance Program category for the safe schools allocation. These funds are in addition to the safe schools allocation funds appropriated in the Florida Education Finance Program in the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 General Appropriations Act."* Section 42 further states that *"the balance of the funds appropriated in this section shall be distributed to school districts based on each district's proportionate share of the state's total unweighted full-time equivalent student enrollment,"* and more specifically, it stipulates that *"each school district must use these funds exclusively for hiring or contracting for school resource officers, pursuant to s. 1006.12, Florida Statutes."*

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The provision of these additional resources represents a tremendous enhancement to improving school safety and security at schools in Miami-Dade County and around the state. However, the School Board and Superintendent have recognized that meeting the requirement that a safe-school officer is present at each school will pose a significant human resource challenge. Presently, there is a dearth of sworn law enforcement officers available to fill these positions throughout Florida and from a limited pool being competitively drawn from 67 school districts. Even Miami-Dade County Public Schools, with its own established school police force of dedicated and committed sworn law enforcement officers, will face the daunting task of providing safe-school officers from this limited pool. Exploring partnerships with municipalities as a means to provide for safe schools officers, in consultation with FOP, and as allowable through the "contracting" provision of SB 7026 for resource officers would serve as a prudent, pragmatic approach to addressing this issue. With the exception of the few large school districts that employ an in-house police force, most school districts across the state presently contract with their local municipalities and/or local law enforcement agencies to provide for student safety, security, and officer presence.

} Revised

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Additionally, at the School Board Meeting of March 21, 2018, School Board Chair Perla Tabares Hantman proffered Board Agenda Item H-1, which addressed partnerships with municipalities to support school safety. The item which passed unanimously, was co-sponsored by Vice-Chair, Dr. Martin Karp, and School Board members Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Dr. Lawrence Feldman, Dr. Steve Gallon III, Dr. Marta Perez, and Ms. Mari Tere Rojas.

The provision of safe-school officers to meet the requirement of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act for providing sworn law enforcement officers requires the exploration of new, innovative partnerships with municipalities that may be willing to establish cooperative agreements for the deployment of sworn law enforcement officers and Miami-Dade County, as some schools, such as many in School Board District 7, are located in areas devoid of an individual municipality. Such partnerships will not only address the dearth of available sworn police officers in support of school security and student safety, and compliance with MSDHSPSA/SB 7026, but may also provide for cost efficiencies to be realized by the District in the hiring of employees from partnering municipalities or Miami-Dade County without incurring long-term employment and financial liabilities, health/insurance, and FRS/retirement obligations---liabilities and obligations that come with the District hiring new full-time employees on its own.

} Revised

This item seeks to direct the Superintendent to initiate this exploration and examine the operational and financial feasibility and efficiencies that may be afforded through such agreements with Miami-Dade County and local municipalities, and provide an update of the plan to establish partnerships with Miami-Dade County and local municipalities to ensure that each school has a safe-school officer pursuant to both the State funding allocation and requirements of MSDHS/SB 7026, inclusive of a cost benefit analysis at the School Board meeting of August 15, 2018.

} Revised

This item has been reviewed by the School Board Attorney for legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. STEVE GALLON III:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida
directs the Superintendent to:

1. meet with the FOP and local municipalities to review
and discuss the requirements of MSDHSPSA/SB
7026 and receive feedback and recommendations
regarding potential partnerships; and } Revised
2. } Deleted
3. }
4. provide an update of the plan to establish
partnerships with Miami-Dade County and local
municipalities to ensure that each school has a safe-
school officer pursuant to both the State funding
allocation and requirements of MSDHS/SB 7026,
inclusive of a cost benefit analysis at the School
Board meeting of August 15, 2018. } Revised

