

Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member

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SUBJECT: EXPLORING MARITIME INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS, & INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is committed to partnering with governmental entities, municipalities, groups, and organizations, in the provision of educational and related opportunities for students. Through such partnerships, M-DCPS has been able to leverage internal and external resources and expand educational experiences for students. The academic and learning experiences of students are often not restricted to the school or classroom, but are extended through field trips, community and service-learning projects, and related, appropriate, and approved engagement of community stakeholders and partnerships. Such partnerships which foster and support the enhancement and expansion of educational opportunities for students serve to not only bolster their academics in schools, but their career preparedness as they enter their postsecondary lives.

In Florida, its 16 public seaports play a critical role in the lives of citizens and continue to drive Florida’s economy. From what is worn to what is eaten, from building materials to automobiles, almost everything that is used in daily life flows through the ports.

Currently, Florida seaports generate nearly 900,000 direct and indirect jobs and contribute \$117.6 billion in economic value to the state through cargo and cruise activities. Florida maritime activities account for approximately 13 percent of Florida’s Gross Domestic Product while contributing \$4.2 billion in state and local taxes.

The financial impact of seaports through the maritime industry is even more pronounced in Miami-Dade. A recent study released in 2024 found that the annual economic impact at the Port of Miami had increased significantly to \$61.4 billion, up from \$41.4 billion in 2016. The study also showed that the number of jobs supported by the seaport’s cruise and cargo activity has grown to 340,078 jobs from 334,500. In addition, the Port of Miami is recognized as the Cruise Capital of the World and Cargo Gateway of the Americas. The seaport operates as a landlord port and partners with 23 cruise line companies, including Carnival Corporation, Royal Caribbean Group, MSC Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Line, and Virgin Voyages; and three cargo terminal operators including Port of Miami Terminal Operating Company, Seaboard Marine, and South Florida Container Terminal.

Currently, the maritime industry is grappling with multiple challenges related to talent turnover, prompting a closer examination of the talent shortage. To address these challenges, many in the industry at the local, state, and national levels strive to attract employees who are future-

ready and environmentally conscious, contributing to the sector's dynamic and sustainable success. To address and ameliorate these challenges, many in the industry have begun, with intentionality, to reassess not only their career development policies, but potential partnerships- specifically those that provide access, education, experiences, and opportunities for students.

The maritime industry includes a wide array of different, high paying jobs, ranging from working on the deck of a ship to working on ship engines. While most maritime careers involve working on ships, there are also many land-based jobs. Most of the industry involves the transportation of goods and people over large waterways, such as with cruise liners, cargo ships, and ferries. The most in-demand jobs include naval architecture, marine and ocean engineering, ship and boat building, electricians and pipefitters, welders, and mechanical engineers. Thus, there are many career pathways and opportunities for students in M-DCPS to learn about and explore within the maritime industry.

For example, one high paying, high demand job within the maritime industry is the position of harbor pilot. Florida's harbor pilots are the watchdogs for the numerous cruise and cargo ships coming in and out of our state's ports, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Without harbor pilots, the lives and safety of the people of Florida and the protection of the state's ports and coastal environment would be at risk.

In 2023, the average salary of a harbor pilot in Miami, Florida was \$113,000 with some making well over \$200,000 per year. Among the 100 harbor pilots in Florida, there are currently no Black or Hispanic harbor pilots. In M-DCPS, this gap may be a reflection of student awareness of such a career pathway. The exploration of a partnership with maritime industry partners in Miami-Dade, can begin to provide expanded and enhanced access, education, experiences, and information to students about the maritime industry as a viable, valuable, and sustainable career pathway when they leave school.

This item seeks to direct the Superintendent to review current curriculum programs and offerings regarding the maritime industry in senior high schools, and other grade configurations as appropriate in order to ascertain whether there are opportunities to offer courses related to the maritime industry that would serve as an entryway to a career in this field; engage local maritime industry representatives such as Biscayne Pilots, International Longshoremen's Association, and Southeast Florida Ports Employer's Association to discuss and explore approaches, partnerships, and strategies that expand and enhance access, education, experiences, and information to students about the maritime industry as a viable, valuable, and sustainable career pathway when they leave school; solicit feedback and input from school and student representatives regarding interest and viability of partnering with local maritime industry representatives; and provide an update to the School Board regarding the findings and feasibility as it relates to partnership formulation and implementation for the 2025-2026 school year no later than February 28, 2025.

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

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

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

1. review current curriculum programs and offerings regarding the maritime industry in senior high schools, and other grade configurations as appropriate in order to ascertain whether there are opportunities to offer courses related to the maritime industry that would serve as an entryway to a career in this field;

2. engage local maritime industry representative such as Biscayne Pilots, International Longshoremen's Association, and Southeast Florida Ports Employer's Association to discuss and explore approaches, partnerships, and strategies that expand and enhance access, education, experiences, and information to students about the maritime industry as a viable, valuable, and sustainable career pathway when they leave school;
3. solicit feedback and input from school and student representatives regarding interest and viability of partnering with local maritime industry representatives; and
4. provide an update to the School Board regarding the findings and feasibility as it relates to partnership formulation and implementation for the 2025-2026 school year no later than February 28, 2025.