

Ms. Maria Teresa Rojas, Board Member

Co-Sponsors: Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair
Dr. Steve Gallon III, Board Member } Added

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING THE SCHOLAS CITIZENSHIP MIAMI PROJECT DURING THE SUMMER OF 2018

COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, EVALUATION, AND TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: RELEVANT, RIGOROUS, AND INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS

Scholas Citizenship is an international educational offering that affords a paradigmatic transformation in the conception of learning, service, and the educational space. The program, developed for young adults, is aimed at drawing them closer to the reality of what surrounds them through a method that enhances the importance of participation in social, civic, and political engagement. The program seeks to generate an environment where each student approaches its own community day-to-day issues from a constructive viewpoint, where the student participates through investigation and the subsequent presentation of proposals and solutions.

Scholas Citizenship has been developed and implemented in Argentina, Israel, Paraguay, Poland, Haiti, Italy, Australia, Mozambique, India, Spain, Mexico, Brazil, United Arab Emirates, connecting close to 500,000 schools and educational networks and has projections to continue expanding to other countries around the world. *Scholas Citizenship* is a program within the *Scholas Occurrentes* (Schools for Encounter) Foundation and as such shares its vision of transforming the world into a more integrated and peaceful society. The *Scholas Occurrentes* Foundation was created in 2013 by Pope Francis in order to promote educational projects around the world. It is an international organization of public good profit, of all religious, nonspiritual, and secular confessions to restore a culture of respect, responsibility, diversity, listening and dialogue, and team work for the creation of a more peaceful society through service and education.

The *Scholas Citizenship Miami Project* aims at working with approximately 350 young students, preferably juniors and seniors in high school, attending various schools in Miami-Dade County. It is essential for the participants of the program to represent a multiplicity of schools. Namely, involving students from schools located in different sections or districts of the county. Selection of student participants should be conducted by the school district and parental/guardian approval must be secured prior to the start of the project. The program is for five days, each day the *Scholas Citizenship* team will work with the participants for approximately five hours, except for the fourth day when a small group of students works three hours more together with the team to elaborate a report that will be presented to the Superintendent and the School Board. Additionally, the participants will select up to six students who will present to Pope Francis in Rome the work of the entire group. All travel expenses for the presentation to Pope Francis will be paid by *Scholas Citizenship*.

The recent events in South Florida have prompted young high school students to be more involved and active in promoting citizenship commitment for the common good of all. The youth of South Florida is engaging adults, school authorities, law enforcement, politicians, and actively

participating in energetic and positive dialogue to improve the lives of students and citizens in our communities. The *Scholas Citizenship Miami Project* could become an excellent venue for our students to engage, work together, develop ideas, possible solutions, and spread a new level of citizenship in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. If this project is realized, Miami-Dade County will be the first *Scholas Citizenship* site in the United States.

Furthermore, a community service project, incorporated by reference in School Board Policy 5410, *Student Progression Plan*, is required for graduation for those students who select a four-year, 24-credit standard program. Likewise, the *Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program* requires community service hours as part of the eligibility requirements. The *Scholas Citizenship Miami Project* could be a wonderful opportunity for our high school students, along with their peers, to identify a social problem of interest to them and the community, develop a plan, and evaluate and reflect upon the experiences they had in researching and implementing the identified solutions to the problem.

The *Scholas Citizenship Miami Project* will provide all the personnel for the implementation of the week long program, transportation, and meals/snacks. Therefore, there will be no cost to Miami-Dade County Public Schools. The District's commitment is only to support and approve the program and provide a high school setting with an auditorium, classrooms, and some technological support for the one-week program, preferably in June, 2018.

This agenda item is seeking authorization for the Superintendent of Schools to explore the feasibility of implementing the *Scholas Citizenship Miami Project* during the summer of 2018 and report back to the Board by May 16, 2018.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney's office as to form and legal sufficiency.

ACTION PROPOSED BY

MS. MARIA TERESA ROJAS:

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, authorize the Superintendent of Schools to explore the feasibility of implementing the *Scholas Citizenship Miami Project* during the summer of 2018 and report back to the Board by May 16, 2018.