RESOLUTION NO: 20-02
RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE REFERENDUM

WHEREAS, pursuant to F.S. 1001.32, Article IX, Section 4(b) of the Florida Constitution, and F.S. 1001.42(12), the District School Board of Collier County (“the District”) is responsible for operating, controlling, and supervising the Collier County School System and its financial well-being;

WHEREAS, Collier County has seen substantial academic growth and success for students;

WHEREAS, Collier County Public Schools has received a grade of “A” for the third year in a row, one of only 11 districts to earn an “A” for the last three years;

WHEREAS, Collier County Public Schools graduation rate has increased 19.4% since 2011, and currently stands at 91.9%;

WHEREAS, Collier County Public Schools wishes to maintain the high quality programs and recruit and maintain high quality employees in the District;

WHEREAS, to maintain its high level of student, staff, and programmatic performance and achievement, the School Board will need sufficient revenue to maintain and improve its high quality schools;

WHEREAS, operating funding is inadequate to meet the District’s current needs under the existing ad valorem taxation structure;

WHEREAS, the state funding formula does not allow for Collier County Public Schools to have flexibility between operation funds and capital funds;

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus has caused a major disruption and impact to the Collier County Public Schools educational programs and instructional delivery and technology which has led to unforeseen costs to the District;

WHEREAS, given the scope of District expenditures to maintain its high quality instructional and non-instructional support staff and educational programs, and the uncertainty of tax receipts as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis, the District is faced with a deficit in operational funding and the risk of reduction in staff and essential programs;

WHEREAS, this economic situation is evidence that it is projected that the Collier County Public Schools will have an operating budget shortfall starting in fiscal year 2021-2022 unless additional public funding support is provided;
WHEREAS, funding through a referendum will be necessary to assist the District in paying for and recruiting high quality instructional and non-instructional support staff and the program initiatives in the areas of curriculum and instruction, students with special needs, career academies and the technologies needed to support them;

WHEREAS, the Collier County Public Schools believes it is important to properly compensate its high quality instructional and non-instructional support staff to remain competitive in its efforts to retain and recruit high quality personnel.

WHEREAS, pursuant to F.S. 1011.71(9) and F.S. 1011.73(2), the School District is authorized, through resolution, to direct the Collier County Board of Commissioners to call an election at which the electors within the School District may approve an ad valorem tax millage in which ad valorem taxes assessed for capital funding would be reduced in the amount equal to a referendum approved increase in ad valorem taxes assessed for operating expenses, in an amount up to .35 mills, in order to create a tax neutral millage shift;

WHEREAS, the Collier County School District will make significant and financially responsible reductions and adjustments in its budgets;

WHEREAS, this tax neutral shift in funding, which is a voluntary decision by the District, will not burden taxpayers nor result in any additional expenses to them and will be in place over a four (4) year period. This means, with respect to this referendum, the District is not seeking any tax increase.

WHEREAS, in accordance with HB 7123, charter schools as public schools, should receive their proportional share of the district’s total unweighted full-time equivalent student enrollment and used consistent with the purpose of the noted .35 mills; and

WHEREAS, the cost of the proportionate share for charter schools will be borne by the District so as not to increase taxes.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, in accordance with the Governor’s Executive Orders and the Commissioner on Education’s directives with respect to the COVID-19 health emergency, by and through the District School Board of Collier County, Florida, at a Special School Board Meeting, duly called and assembled, that:

1. In accordance with the provisions set forth in F.S. 1011.71(9) and F.S. 1011.73(2), the Board of County Commissioner is hereby directed to call an election as part of the August 18,
2020, Primary Election for the qualified electors of the District School Board of Collier County, Florida to vote on an ad valorem millage increase for operating expenses by the School District.

2. The language on the ballot for the millage referendum, and its title, shall read as follows:

**Allow Tax-Neutral Flexible Funding for Collier County Public Schools**

For a period of up to four years beginning July 2021, shall the Collier County Public Schools enact tax-neutral flexible funding to (a) reduce ad valorem taxes up to .35 mills for capital funding; (b) add ad valorem taxes up to .35 mills for operating expenses; (c) provide charter schools with their proportionate share, as required by law; and (d) maintain high quality staff and programs; all without increasing taxes.

Yes_______  No_______

APPROVED and ADOPTED at a meeting of the District School Board of Collier County, Florida on April 21, 2020.

The District School Board of Collier County

By: ________________________________
    Stephanie Lucarelli, Chair

Attest: ______________________________
        Kamela Patton, Ph.D., Superintendent

Legal Approval: __________________________
                District General Counsel