

# CONNECTION

A Newsletter for Miami-Dade County Public Schools Parents

## SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT ALBERTO CARVALHO, SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS DISCUSS VISION FOR SCHOOL YEAR AHEAD

School Board members engaged in a visioning session and discussed priorities with Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho in preparation for the school year ahead at a recent meeting. Carvalho unveiled new programs and improved procedures specifically designed to better serve the needs of Miami-Dade County Public Schools students and stakeholders, and laid the groundwork for a five-year District Strategic Plan for 2014-2019.

Carvalho presented School Board members with 52 new choice and magnet programs including AP/Capstone, Cambridge, Science, Mathematics, Information Technology and the Arts. Eighteen new Cambridge schools and 10 new Capstone Programs are included. Magnet programs focus on STEM-related fields, including Geospatial Information Systems, iCode, Engineering, Conservation Biology, Environmental Science, Agriscience, and Enterprise Resource Planning. Some programs are provided in partnership with local colleges and universities, as well as science agencies. An improved magnet application and random selection system will help administrators manage the rapid growth in magnet programs and increase student access with clarity and transparency.

New education partnerships for specific groups and schools within the District include:

- Collaboration with local technology industries to provide training, internships, and job opportunities for students with autism;
- Creation of a specialized teaching institute to provide training opportunities in the tourism industry for individuals with disabilities, in collaboration with the FIU School of Hospitality and Tourism Management;
- Increased access to diagnostic, screening and education services for children aged birth to four, and expansion of the FIU Center for Children and Families collaborative program for parent education and classroom management strategies for disruptive behaviors;
- Partnering with FIU and Lennar Companies to strengthen Booker T. Washington Senior High's Engineering Academy and create an Astronomy Academy at the school.

Superintendent Carvalho also presented specific measures designed to help students and their families with academic endeavors, including:

- A Transition-to-Kindergarten Ambassadors Project to help children moving from privately-owned learning centers to M-DCPS classrooms;
- Providing each child with a school advocate, a "Success Coach" to identify student strengths and weaknesses;
- Student internships through the National Academy Foundation to assist students in preparing for college and career in the new global economy;
- A One-Stop Educational and Community Service Center to provide multi-agency assistance to at-risk youth needing emotional, social, health, personal, and career development;

- A Million Dollar Community Literacy Challenge, supporting positive family environment and literacy, to foster student development;
- A program that equips parents with the knowledge and skills to take advantage of grant opportunities.

The meeting also included a review of the school district's budget and projects funded by the General Obligation Bond approved by Miami-Dade voters, including 201 projects in the first three years, and another 76 projects from years 3, 4, and 5, that have been accelerated for the coming year.

The district's digital transformation is well underway, with a record number of 10,000 Promethean interactive boards being installed for the coming year, and Wi-Fi installation completed four years in advance of the national average. More than 100,000 electronic devices, including laptop computers and tablets, will be available to students, providing them access to online textbooks and digital content.

Among other improvements, Carvalho announced:

- Preparing teachers for the transition from FCAT to the Florida standards through a streamlined professional development program, as well as a public information campaign to help parents understand the new standards;
- Hiring the most effective new teachers;
- Aligning District functions to serve students better and "make everything about the child";
- A mobile "app" to help keep parents, students, employees and the community informed of vital information, including class schedules and bus information, emergencies, school closures and events;
- Easier payment systems that allow parents to use credit cards to pay for necessary student services;
- A paper reduction initiative, designed to reduce use of paper by 75 percent;
- Streamlined tracking of maintenance projects through a digital dashboard;
- A carpool program for District employees facilitated by a mobile application;
- A streamlined, user-friendly procurement system with improved E-bidding;
- A fraud prevention task force to help curb abuse of employee health care benefits;
- Wellness Coaches at every school to promote wellness activities among employees;
- UHealth Medical Center at Miami Jackson Senior High – a holistic wellness facility that will offer preventive health care for M-DCPS employees;
- Worksite safety committees to provide an improved work environment for employees

The new programs and procedures will offer expanded choices and better service to M-DCPS students and stakeholders during the upcoming school year.

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL PARENT RESOURCES AVAILABLE ONLINE

To assist parents in preparing for school, the District has posted the Back-to-School Tool Kit online at <http://news.dadeschools.net/toolkit1415.htm>. The tool kit has pertinent information on subjects ranging from choice schools, dual enrollment, graduation requirements, parent involvement and school safety. Students can benefit from information found in the tool kit, and parents may also use it to find out about important dates and policies regarding their child's education.

## M-DCPS LAUNCHES MOBILE APP FOR PARENTS, STUDENTS, EMPLOYEES

M-DCPS recently launched a new mobile application to provide parents, students, and employees faster access to up-to-date school information. The official Dadeschools Mobile App is now available to download for FREE for iPhone and Android devices.

The mobile app features:

- Student class schedules and bus route info.
- List of all Miami-Dade public schools by school type
- School info. including school website, photos, school address, phone number, enrollment, school colors, and school hours
- Functionality to contact school via phone or email
- Ability to view school location on a map
- Ability to send text, email or Twitter post of the school's info.
- Ability to receive notifications from M-DCPS
- Info. about The Foundation for New Education Initiatives, Inc (FNEI)
- Log in using Dadeschools Portal username and password to receive personalized information tailored to parents, students, and employees

Parents, students and employees can also find information about the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program including which devices qualify and how to connect from your school.

Additional features will be added throughout the school year. Please visit [www.dadeschools.net](http://www.dadeschools.net) on your mobile device to download the application.

## FREQUENTLY CALLED TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Attendance Services	305-883-5323
General Information	305-995-1000
Citizens Information Center	305-995-1128
Parent Academy	305-995-2680
School Volunteers	305-995-2995
Transportation	305-234-3365

## UPCOMING SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

September 3	11:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting
	6:00 p.m.	Second Budget Public Hearing and Adoption of Final 2014-2015 Millage Levy and Annual Budget, Approval of 2013-2014 Annual Financial Report and Approval of 2013-2014 Final Budget Resolutions

## MORE M-DCPS SCHOOLS RECEIVE A PERFORMANCE GRADE OF 'A' COMPARED TO STATE, OTHER LARGE DISTRICTS

Schools Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho announced that 43 percent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools elementary, K-8 and middle schools received a School Performance Grade of "A," while only five percent received an "F," according to information released by the Florida Department of Education.

The report also showed higher percentages of M-DCPS schools received School Performance Grades of "A" in comparison to the state and other large districts.

The percentage of schools receiving School Performance Grades of "A" increased in the M-DCPS by eight percentage points in M-DCPS, outpacing the state and large districts, including Broward, Duval and Palm Beach.

These improvements were achieved despite the disproportionately high number of English Language Learners and concentration of disadvantaged students in M-DCPS.

The 2013-2014 School Performance Grades are computed using student results from the FCAT 2.0 Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Writing; and end-of-course exams. The grades released include the points earned by each school on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) components.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

August 18 – First Day of School

September 1 – Labor Day

September 25 – Teacher Planning Day

October 24 – Teacher Planning Day

## The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

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Alberto M. Carvalho  
Superintendent of Schools

Julian Lafaurie  
Student Advisor to the School Board

*Produced by the Office of Public Relations*  
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