

# CONNECTION

A Newsletter for Miami-Dade County Public Schools Parents

## MYRNA L. BETANCOURT NAMED M-DCPS TEACHER OF THE YEAR, ANGELICA FULCHINI IS ROOKIE TEACHER WINNER

Myrna L. Betancourt, an adult/vocational teacher-chef at South Dade Educational Center, was named the 2015 Francisco R. Walker Miami-Dade County Teacher of the Year.

Five finalists vied for the coveted title this year, which included one nominee from each of the District's three regions, one from the Education Transformation Office and one from Alternative Education.

Betancourt, who spent two decades as a social worker in Chicago, has been leading one of Miami-Dade County Public Schools' most successful vocational programs for the past six years. She has turned her school's kitchen into a transformative classroom where young adult students, many of them homeless and jobless, rebuild their lives. She created "Café Du Jour" to give students hands-on training in world-class culinary arts and hospitality. Her students are engaged in many local competitions and catering events to develop their real-world skills and provide them with opportunities to network with potential employers. The runner up was Nichole Anne Dino from Miami Carol City Senior High.

Also recognized were top rookie teachers. Angelica Fulchini, a teacher at Frederick Douglass Elementary School, was named Rookie Teacher of the Year. Victoria R. Jarrett, a teacher at W. R. Thomas Middle School was the Rookie Teacher of the Year runner up.

## FOR THE THIRD STRAIGHT YEAR, M-DCPS RECEIVES MORE NATIONAL MAGNET SCHOOLS OF MERIT AWARDS THAN ANY OTHER DISTRICT NATIONALLY

Magnet Schools of America, a national organization representing over 4,000 magnet schools and programs, annually recognizes magnet schools for their commitment to high academic standards, curriculum innovation, successful desegregation/diversity efforts, specialized teaching staffs, and parent community involvement. This year, 76 schools across the United States received the coveted Magnet Schools of Excellence Merit Awards, 13 of which were awarded to Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Additionally, Miami-Dade County magnet schools received 12 of 94 Magnet Schools of Distinction Merit Awards. In total, M-DCPS received 25 awards. For the third year in a row, M-DCPS out-performed all other school districts nation-wide.

Magnet school programs offer unique courses of study focusing on students' special interests, talents, and abilities and are available in six themes of study: Careers & Professions; International Education; Liberal Arts; Mathematics, Science, & Technology; VPrep (Virtual Programs); and Visual & Performing Arts. Currently, over 55,000 students are enrolled in over 375 magnet programs offered at more than 100 schools district-wide. For more information, go to: [miamimagnets.org](http://miamimagnets.org)

## MIAMI-DADE'S CARVALHO NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR

The School Superintendent's Association, AASA, announced that Miami-Dade Public Schools' Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho was selected as National Superintendent of the Year. The announcement was made at the organization's national conference in Nashville, TN.

In December, Carvalho was named Florida's Superintendent of the Year by the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS), representing the Sunshine State for consideration as national superintendent of the year. Carvalho was among four finalists vying for the coveted honor. This year marks the 27th anniversary of the program which recognizes school systems leaders throughout the country.

"Being named National Superintendent of the Year is truly a great honor, but I realize it's not simply an honor for me," said Carvalho. "Today's recognition reflects the dedication, sacrifice, and work of every member of our education family, as well as the guidance and direction of our School Board, and I share this award with every teacher, student, employee, and community partner of Miami-Dade County Public Schools."

In just over a year, Miami-Dade County Public Schools has been honored with an unprecedented trifecta of national awards, including The Broad Prize for Education, AP District of the Year, and AASA's National Superintendent of the Year.

The AASA National Superintendent of the Year program is open to all U.S. superintendents who plan to continue in the profession. The applicants and finalists were measured against the following criteria:

- Leadership for learning – creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in the school system.
- Communication – strength in both personal and organizational communication.
- Professionalism – constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills, while providing professional development opportunities and motivation to others on the education team.
- Community involvement – active participation in local community activities and an understanding of regional, national and international issues.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

May 26 – Observance of Memorial Day

June 5 – Last Day of School

June 6 – Teacher Planning Day

## PRESIDENT OBAMA VISITS M-DCPS HIGH SCHOOL, TOUTS DISTRICT'S GREAT WORK

President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama visited one of the nation's top-rated high schools, Miami-Dade County's Coral Reef Senior High, using the occasion as an opportunity to reinforce the importance of supporting education initiatives and expanding opportunities for low-income students to attend college. President Obama remarked on the outstanding work of Miami-Dade County Public Schools in lifting student academic performance and making it possible for higher rates of low-income students to graduate and attend institutions of higher learning. The President also recognized National Superintendent of the Year Alberto Carvalho for the remarkable successes in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

President Obama's visit and remarks also were an opportunity to encourage college-bound high school students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). President Obama announced a new FAFSA Completion Initiative to give more Americans the opportunity to afford, attend and graduate from college. Completing the FAFSA is the first step in helping students to fund their college dreams.

## G.W. CARVER MIDDLE SCHOOL NAMED A GRAND PRIZE WINNER IN THE SAMSUNG SOLVE FOR TOMORROW CONTEST

G.W. Carver Middle School has been named one of five grand prize winners in the 2014 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest. The competition was created in 2010 to raise awareness and interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) among U.S. public school students. The winners were chosen from more than 2,300 schools across the nation.

Participants were challenged to apply their classroom learning to solve issues in their communities and create videos to showcase their solutions to the challenges. Carver Middle's video submission titled, Old Smokey's Dirty Secret, detailed how students aspired to gather scientific evidence to bring attention to a community environmental challenge, the city's former garbage incinerator, in order to compel public action.

Carver Middle won the Community Choice Award with close to 11,000 public online votes. The other four grand prize winning schools are located in Montana, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington. The five national winners will each receive more than \$140,000 in technology products such as smart boards and laptops. Since 2004, Samsung's education programs have provided more than \$13 million in technology to more than 500 public schools in the U.S.

## UPCOMING SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

June 18	11:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting
July 16	11:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting
July 24	6:00 p.m.	First Budget Public Hearing and Tentative Adoption of 2014-2015 Millage Levy and Annual Budget

## M-DCPS HONORS PRINCIPAL, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Miami-Dade County Public Schools honored its finest principals and assistant principals at an awards ceremony sponsored by Dade Association of School Administrators (D.A.S.A.), on March 20 at Jungle Island. Jose Bueno, who serves as principal of Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High School, won top honors as the District's Principal of the Year.

Bueno, a product of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, has served as a school administrator in different schools since 1997. He has led Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior from a "D" to a "B." He was a Social Studies teacher for four years prior to becoming an Assistant Principal at Citrus Grove Middle School.

Lisset Vazquez-Rios of Southwest Miami Senior High School was recognized as Assistant Principal of the Year. Vazquez-Rios has served as an Assistant Principal for 5 years. She was recently named principal at Bowman Ashe/ Howard Doolin K-8 Academy.

The Principal of the Year received \$3,000 and the Assistant Principal received \$2,000. The event's top sponsors for the cash awards were AXA-Equitable and Wells Fargo. Winners also received gift baskets from event sponsors which include gifts from: 94th Aero Squadron, Britto Central Inc., Compass Learning, EdGenuity, Herff Jones, Marco Island Marriott, Marco Polo Beach Resort, Miami Children's Museum, Miami Marlins, Miami Seaquarium, Nova Southeastern University, Voyager Sopris, Seasons 52, Smith & Wollensky, Newport Beachside Hotel and Coco Key – Orlando.

Also recognized at the ceremony were Kelly Hunter-Sheppard of Leisure City K-8 Center, named Principal of the Year runner-up and Lenere J. Dawkins of Miami Central Senior High School, named Assistant Principal of the Year runner-up.

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