

# CONNECTION

A Newsletter for Miami-Dade County Public Schools Parents

## SUPERINTENDENT CARVALHO ANNOUNCES EXCITING NEW OFFERINGS

Superintendent of Schools Alberto M. Carvalho shared the new product roll-out for Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) at the August School Board meeting. The new offerings represent a comprehensive line of products to enrich and enhance the education of the school district's students, families, employees and the community.

The offerings include:

**New Choice/Magnet Programs:** Forty-two new choice/magnet program offerings will be created in 38 schools with strands that include: Cambridge, Science, Mathematics, Legal Studies, Information Technology, and the Arts.

**iPrep Math:** This program will fuse technology with personalized student learning to create a true 21st Century educational experience in this critical content area in 49 middle schools.

**Teen and Police Service Academy:** School Police will be launching clubs in up to five schools, pairing officers as club sponsors with at-risk teens. Participants will engage in public service projects, peer-to-peer counseling and other activities designed to reduce youth crime and truancy and increase positive relationships and successful school outcomes.

**GrandChampions Program:** This program will provide outreach activities and support designed specifically designed to engage grandparents as active members of the school community through volunteer recruitment, Parent Academy Workshops, special events, and other support services.

**Computer Refresh and Mobile Device Initiative:** The District will be investing in new computers and mobile digital devices for student use. As part of the District's Digital Conversion, this endeavor will broaden technology access, leveraging the new wireless infrastructure provided through last year's E-Rate funded wireless initiative.

**WiFi Zones:** Students will be able to access the web and educational content anywhere they carry their digital devices, and schools will be transformed into "virtual" neighborhood hubs with the capacity to provide free internet access, particularly in underserved communities.

**STEM Mobile:** A self-contained high end science lab will be added to the District's fleet of rolling classrooms. Serving students in 5th and 8th grades and high school Biology students, this mobile lab will bring hands-on Biology focused activities to schools across the District.

**Technology-based, indoor, fitness trail for elementary school recess:** This innovative program will motivate students and teachers to embrace physical activity as a lifelong habit.

**Districtwide Accreditation:** This rigorous process involves a comprehensive external review of the district's schools, performance, practices, and policies. The accreditation process culminates with the granting of Accreditation by AdvancED and certifies to the community that M-DCPS is a High Quality School System committed to continuous improvement.

**M-DCPS – FIU Transition Center:** This program will provide support to students with disabilities as they transition from high school to college with the goal of increasing the number of students with disabilities who enroll in college and successfully graduate.

**Adult Education Student Portal:** The portal will offer a unified web presence where individuals can easily access information, curriculum, records, schedule appointments, and even take care of any financial obligations.

**International Student Academy – China Partnership:** This program will broaden the District's cultural landscape and create real-world connections for our students by providing opportunities for first-hand exchanges of information and ideas among peers from vastly different backgrounds.

**Leading Edge Certification - Digital Educator:** Miami-Dade teachers will have the opportunity to receive training aligned to national benchmarks, indicators, and competencies associated with the effective use of educational technology

**iHeat Peer Assistance and Review Program:** Designed as a complement to the District's teacher evaluation system, iHeat will allow teachers in selected schools to participate in peer observations, receive job-embedded support and professional development, and get feedback that will lead to performance improvement.

**Data DashBoard:** The DashBoard, an at-a-glance tool that will inform the decision-making process by helping to easily identify strengths and weaknesses within the organization, will provide real time access to information on a variety of Key-Performance Indicators related to both academic and business performance

**Owners Control Insurance Program:** This program will provide better coverage to protect the District, while saving money and providing expensive and often difficult to procure coverage for micro/small/minority sub-contractors as a component of District's initiatives.

**Schools 21st Century Banking Transformation Initiative:** The District will use SAP technology to automate and reduce school site tasks related to cash collection, payment processing, recording and reconciliation of financial transactions.

**Food Acquisition and Distribution program:** By leveraging economies of scale, it is anticipated that the District will save at least \$1 million in food costs annually while still providing outstanding quality and nutrition.

**Wellness Education and Awareness Program:** The District will continue to engage employees in conversations and activities intended to improve the overall well-being of our workforce.

**e-VALUE Custodial Training Program and Evaluation Guide:** The guide will ensure that high standards are uniformly applied district-wide, and that the District's custodial staff receive training and access to educational opportunities that will enhance their professional skills.

#### DATES TO REMEMBER

September 2 – Labor Day

September 5 – Teacher Planning Day

October 25 – Teacher Planning Day

November 8 – Teacher Planning Day

#### SUPERINTENDENT CARVALHO RECOMMENDS TAX RATE DECREASE

Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho recently recommended that the Miami-Dade School Board decrease the total millage property owners would pay for the 2013-2014 fiscal school year.

The recommendation came after the school district was notified by the Miami-Dade Tax Appraiser that county tax rolls would be about four percent higher this year. This information was confirmed by Florida's Commissioner of Education, who reviewed tax rolls for all school districts in the process of establishing Required Local Effort.

Previous estimates by state economists had estimated only a 1.9 percent increase in tax rolls. The difference allows the School Board to reduce the Required Local Effort millage from 5.295 to 5.183, producing a substantial savings for taxpayers.

The 2013-14 budget protects the classroom, school spending and bilingual programs; protects teachers and provides raises; and expands Exceptional Student Education support and parental choice options. The budget protects the economic viability of the school district and honors the promise to voters of \$5 of General Obligation Bond millage for every \$100,000 in taxable value.

The budget will not harm elective programs, nor reduce school safety spending, athletics or after-school activities. The size of the District's central office will not increase. The budget does not compromise the District's goal of complying with class-size mandates, and teachers will not face layoffs for economic reasons. It will not allow the impact of federal sequestration to harm direct school services. The budget does not reduce the district's reserves or increase operating millage.

#### UPCOMING SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

September 3	11:45 a.m.	Regular Meeting
	6:00 p.m.	Second Budget Public Hearing and Adoption of Final 2013-2014 Millage Levy and Annual Budget, Approval of 2012-2013 Annual Financial Report and Approval of 2012-2013 Final Budget Resolutions
October 16	11:45 a.m.	Regular Meeting

#### 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 [www.dadeschools.net](http://www.dadeschools.net). 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.

#### 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	305-995-1215
Transportation	305-234-3365

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

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