

CONNECTION

A Newsletter for Miami-Dade County Public Schools Parents

WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE? NATIONAL COLLEGE FAIR COMES TO MIAMI, FEB. 9

Representatives from nearly 200 colleges and universities will be at the 2014 National College Fair in Miami, noon-4 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 9, at the Doubletree Miami Airport Hotel & Convention Center, 777 N.W. 72 Ave.

The free fair allows students, parents and other members of the public to meet with college representatives and get their questions answered. Free information sessions on financial aid, college planning and admission, testing requirements will also be offered. Select sessions will be presented in Spanish and Haitian-Creole. Counseling and computer centers will allow students to access career interest surveys and information about college preparation, admissions and scholarships.

Requesting information from multiple colleges or universities at the College Fair is easier for students again this year. By pre-registering now, students can print a bar-coded confirmation as an electronic ID and will not have to fill out information cards. Students and their families may pre-register at www.gotomyncf.com.

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and Miami-Dade County Public Schools are sponsors of the event. School Board Chair Perla Tabares Hantman is co-chair of the local committee of the National College Fair.

Every year NACAC sponsors fairs in more than 50 cities across the country that attract 650,000 students and parents. For more information, contact the College Fair hotline at 305-995-1739 or visit www.nacacnet.org.

SUPERINTENDENT CARVALHO FINALIST FOR NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR

Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho was named one of four finalists for the prestigious national Superintendent of the Year by The School Superintendents Association (AASA).

Carvalho was recognized for remarkable gains in student achievement. Miami-Dade placed among the highest-achieving school districts nationally in 4th and 8th grade reading and mathematics on the National Assessment for Educational Progress. Graduation rates increased to 77.2 percent; surpassing the state both in rate of growth and total graduation rate. The school district was placed on the 4th Annual AP[®] District Honor Roll for increasing access to AP[®] course work while simultaneously maintaining or increasing the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher on AP Exams.

The 2014 National Superintendent of the Year will be announced during AASA's National Conference on Education, which is being held on Feb. 13-15, 2014, in Nashville, Tenn.

MIAMI-DADE STUDENTS OUTPERFORM STUDENTS IN LARGER SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN READING, MATH

Once again, despite reduced economic resources available to the District and to students and their families, M-DCPS students continued to outscore their counterparts in many of the largest school districts in the U.S., including New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston, Washington, and Dallas.

Student achievement placed Miami-Dade among the highest-achieving school districts nationally in 4th and 8th grade reading and mathematics on the National Assessment for Educational Progress, administered to students who attend schools in 21 large urban districts. This is M-DCPS' third year of participation in the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) program, which compares the achievement of students in large urban districts that face similar challenges with regard to poverty and high-risk populations.

Highlights of the results include:

- For the third consecutive administration, M-DCPS continued to rank high in relation to other participating TUDA districts in both Reading and Mathematics, outscoring many of the nation's largest school districts.
- M-DCPS' 4th grade students excelled on the 2012 NAEP assessment, exceeding the performance of their counterparts in large city schools nationwide in both Reading and Mathematics.
- Both Hispanic and Black M-DCPS students performed remarkably well in comparison to their counterparts nationwide.
- Fourth grade students eligible for the Free/Reduced Price Lunch program in M-DCPS scored significantly higher than their counterparts in public schools nationwide and large cities in both Reading and Mathematics.

UPCOMING SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

February 12	11:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting
March 12	11:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting
April 9	9:00 a.m.	Conference Session: Attendance Zones for 2014-2015
	11:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting

DATES TO REMEMBER

February 7 – Teacher Planning Day
February 17 – All Presidents Day
March 21 – Teacher Planning Day
March 24-28 – Spring Recess

MIAMI-DADE'S SENIOR HIGHS EARN OUTSTANDING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADES

Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho announced recently that M-DCPS has surpassed the state in the percentage of senior high schools earning a school performance grade of "A." Carvalho made the announcement at Miami Northwestern Senior High, which received its first ever performance grade of "A."

Among the District's accomplishments:

- 60 percent of M-DCPS' senior high schools (34 schools) received an "A." Florida averaged 48 percent.
- M-DCPS outperformed the state in the percent of "A" and "B" senior high schools.
- 86 percent of M-DCPS' senior high schools (49 schools) received either an "A" or "B."
- 95 percent of M-DCPS' high schools received a school performance grade of "C" or better.
- For the third consecutive school year, M-DCPS has no "F" senior high schools.

During the 2008 legislative session, Senate Bill 1908 significantly changed the way senior high schools were to be graded beginning with the 2009-2010 school year. The bill required high school grades to include alternate measures of student achievement in addition to the vital foundation of Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) results in Grades 9, 10, and 11. The additional measures provide an equal focus on college readiness, access to and performance on accelerated coursework, and graduation rates for all students and for those who are academically at-risk.

FIVE M-DCPS SCHOOL LEADERS AMONG FLORIDA'S ELITE PRINCIPALS

The Florida TaxWatch Center for Educational Performance & Accountability and the Learning Systems Institute (LSI) at Florida State University announced recently that five M-DCPS principals are among the top six principals in Florida's high-risk schools. The principals are being honored as recipients of the inaugural Florida TaxWatch Elite Principals Award. The principals were selected based on analysis of student achievement gains in reading and mathematics at high-risk schools.

The five M-DCPS school leaders who served as principals during the analysis period include: Tangela Goa, Van E. Blanton Elementary School; Dr. Linda Amica-Roberts, Coconut Palm K-8 Academy; Anna Hernandez, M.A. Milam K-8 Center; Guillermo Muñoz, Westland Hialeah Senior High School, and Dr. Verena Cabrera, Hialeah Senior High School. Three of the schools have new principals this year: Dr. Carmen Jones-Carey, Coconut Palm K-8 Academy; Giovanna M. Blanco, Westland Hialeah Senior High School, and Heriberto Sanchez, Hialeah Senior High School.

To be eligible for the Elite Principals Award, candidates must have been at their schools for a minimum of three years to ensure their policies were impactful. Department of Education data was analyzed to determine the winning principals. The principals will be incorporated into a five-year longitudinal study performed by LSI to identify a principal's role in recruiting, retaining and developing outstanding teachers. The Elite Principals Award is the only Florida honor given to those who exceed expectations in learning gains for at-risk students in high-risk schools.

SCHOOL DISTRICT PROVIDES GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS BUYING ELECTRONICS

In an effort to help parents maneuver their way through the thousands of electronic devices available for their children, M-DCPS has launched a new website--<http://wifi.dadeschools.net/>--that identifies devices students can use in class as the school district undergoes a digital transformation.

One of the most critical pieces of M-DCPS' \$1.2 billion General Obligation (GO) Bond was the building out of schools' technology infrastructure to support an effective Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program. To support the District's BYOD initiative, the District installed campus-wide wireless technology in 245 schools and made 70 of those schools BYOD ready. Based on this effort, all schools will be wired for BYOD by the end of March 2014 and all schools will be BYOD capable by September 2014.

An important component of the BYOD initiative is to communicate effectively to students, parents, instructional staff and guests their responsibilities when using the District's wireless network. To ensure all affected groups are aware of these responsibilities and to provide answers to other BYOD questions, the District has created a web page on the District's website called Bring Your Own Device--Wi-Fi Access. This website provides:

- Information related to the types of devices supported
- The recommended minimum specifications that personal devices should have in order to access common programs and applications necessary for their instructional needs
- A list of the current participating schools with their wireless status that will continually be updated as schools are completed
- Answers to general questions for students, parents, and teachers on how the BYOD program will function and what is expected
- General guidelines that students and guests must know to access and to follow when using the District's wireless network

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