

CONNECTION

A NEWSLETTER FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARENTS

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NEW YEAR, SAME COMMITMENT TO HEALTH AND SAFETY AT M-DCPS



As we kick-off the new year and return to work and school, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has not wavered in its commitment to prioritizing the health and wellbeing of students and employees while delivering on the promise of providing a safe and effective education for all children.

The District continues to follow COVID-19 public health guidelines, which include frequent sanitization of school areas, mandatory use of facial coverings, implementation of social distancing measures and the promotion of personal hygiene practices, such as the washing of hands for students and employees. In an abundance of caution, and in light of increased positivity rates both locally and statewide, the District's 14-day quarantine procedures will remain in place until further notice. We will continue to seek guidance from the local health department, the District's medical advisor and our

panel of medical experts before any changes to our COVID-19 protocols are implemented.

We also continue to send communication to our parents and employees about the importance of adhering to all COVID-19 prevention practices. Parents are reminded to complete the daily pre-arrival health screening for their children, which can be accessed by visiting the District's reopening.dadeschools.net page.

On January 25, 2021, M-DCPS will kick off the second semester of learning and welcome additional students back to the Schoolhouse model.

For many students, particularly our youngest learners, the prolonged time away from teachers, in-person learning, and the schoolhouse has forced them to experience unparalleled pressures. Many have fallen behind academically leading

to an increase in achievement and opportunity gaps.

Since the pandemic started, District staff has closely monitored and analyzed student progress data and has revisited and recalibrated many existing strategies to support students and families and improve overall achievement. The importance of monitoring various data elements related to academic accountability has been elevated to ensure every effort is made to help reduce student regression, including the return to the Schoolhouse model where students learn best.

Additionally, student attendance and engagement has been closely analyzed. We know that students who are excessively tardy or absent from school, whether in-person or online, will fall behind in academic achievement.

Studies have shown that there is a direct correlation between school attendance and student achievement. Excessive school absenteeism may lead to grade failure, loss of interest and may result in students withdrawing from school.

Parental participation, particularly for our youngest learners, is especially important for students who are

engaged in My School Online (MSO). Parents are urged to check in frequently with their child throughout the day to ensure they have logged on and are actively engaged. Attendance is taken in each class in MSO, as it is in the Schoolhouse model. Parents are also encouraged to monitor their child's attendance through the Parent Portal or by signing up for attendance email notifications.

As we embark on this new year, we continue to assure parents that our school and district leaders, teachers and other school personnel are making every effort to support students during this difficult time. We remain committed to the very important role we play in every child's educational achievement, health, and wellbeing.

FREE COVID-19 TESTING FOR CHILDREN



Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), in partnership with University of Miami Health System, announces additional dates for free COVID-19 testing for all children, ages 4-18 in Miami-Dade County. Testing will be done through the Health System's Pediatric Mobile Unit, which will be available in various school parking lots throughout the month.

January 22	Homestead Senior High School	2351 S.E. 12th Avenue Homestead, FL 33034
January 25	North Miami Beach Senior High School	1247 N.E. 167th Street N. Miami Beach, FL 33162
January 26	American Senior High School	18350 N.W. 67th Avenue Hialeah, FL 33015
January 27	Miami Sunset Senior High School	13125 S.W. 72nd Street Miami, FL 33183
January 28	iTech@ Thomas A. Edison Educational Center	6101 N.W. 2nd Avenue Miami, FL 33127
January 29	Coral Reef Senior High School	10101 S.W. 152nd Street Miami, FL 33157

The dates and locations for the mobile unit testing, taking place from 3 p.m. – 5 p.m., are as follows.

A parent/guardian must accompany their child for testing; identification is not required. Walk-ups are welcome,

but appointments are encouraged. Appointments may be made by calling 305-243-2059.

February testing dates and locations will also be made available in the near future.

NACAC VIRTUAL COLLEGE FAIR

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) will be hosting a series of virtual college fairs during the spring of 2021. The first virtual college fair will take place on Sunday, January 31, 2021.

Over 500 colleges and universities from around the country will be

offering Zoom sessions to share information about student life, majors, financial aid, scholarships, and much more. College counselors will be available through the text chat to answer individual questions.

College fairs are an excellent way to expose students to the varying post-

secondary opportunities available to them. In an effort to promote early college planning, middle and high school students are encouraged to attend a college fair. Students can sign up to attend one or more of the NACAC Virtual College Fairs for free at virtualcollegefairs.org.



While the student experience has changed significantly since we pivoted to distance learning in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our children's education remains our number one priority. These unprecedented times have changed the way our schools look and the way we deliver instruction, but we still want students to succeed academically. This requires student commitment to showing up every day, whether in-person or online, and remaining engaged.

Our #IGetMySelfietoSchool initiative invites students to share a selfie of

themselves engaged in learning, while encouraging their peers to do the same, highlighting the importance of showing up.

To participate, students should:

1. Snap a selfie of themselves learning, whether in-person or online
2. Post on social media using the hashtags **#IGetMySelfietoSchool** and **#ShowUpMDCPS**
3. Tag their school's social media accounts and @miamischools on Facebook and Instagram and @MDCPS on Twitter

M-DCPS IS...WHERE LEARNING BEGINS!



Did you know that children who participate in high-quality early learning experiences benefit from improved social skills, higher academic achievement, and enhanced attention spans? There is overwhelming evidence that suggests that children who participate in preschool programs develop stronger math and reading skills and a full range of competencies necessary for school success. Offered in more than 200 schools county-wide, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Early Childhood Education and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) programs are committed to providing high-quality comprehensive services to prepare young children for life-long learning.

Florida's VPK Education Program:

VPK, a free program that prepares four-year-olds for kindergarten and beyond, is available in over 200 schools countywide. Children must be four years old on or before September 1, 2021 to enroll. A list of the participating schools is available online at <http://earlychildhood.dadeschools.net>.

M-DCPS' VPK Program uses a lottery to select students. After submitting proof of birth and address to their home/neighborhood school before the February 25, 2021 deadline, families will be entered into the VPK lottery. The lottery will be held on Friday, February 26, 2021.

IMPORTANT DATES & INFORMATION

January 11 – May 10
Head Start/
Early Head Start Open
Enrollment Period

February 15
Observance of
President's Day

February 26
VPK Lottery



Children whose names are drawn in the lottery will be selected to attend the program. Open seats will be available at select schools after the lottery date, so parents whose children were not selected in the lottery should contact the Department of Early Childhood Programs at 305-995-7632 for assistance in finding an opening. Parents may obtain their required stated VPK Program Certificate of Eligibility online at the Office of Early Learning website: <http://www.vpkhelp.org>.

Head Start Program:

Provided in partnership with Miami-Dade County Community Action and Human Services, the M-DCPS Head Start program is a federally-funded, comprehensive, child development

program serving children from low-income families beginning on their third (3) birthday. Children with disabilities are included in the program and receive a full range of developmental services.

Eligibility for Head Start is based on family income at or below the federal poverty level. The recruitment period for the 2021-2022 school year began January 11th. Families can apply by visiting any of the 34 M-DCPS Head Start sites across the county and completing an application. Families may also apply online. To complete an application or to see a list of participating schools, please visit the Head Start website at <http://headstart.dadeschools.net>.

Reverse Mainstream Program:

General education role model students are needed for a limited number of slots in Pre-K special education reverse mainstream programs across the district. This program offers a free, full-day or half-day opportunity for qualifying students. Students are eligible beginning on their third (3) birthday and must have age-appropriate language and social skills because they will serve as models for children with disabilities. This curriculum is robust

and offers students an opportunity to learn pre-reading, math, science and social studies, as well as develop their social skills in a school setting. Parents should inquire at their home/neighborhood school or call the Pre-K Special Education office at 305-271-5701 to identify programs near their homes.

For more information, please visit <http://earlychildhood.dadeschools.net> or call 305-995-7632.

PARENT E-TIPS

Checking in Each Day

<https://bit.ly/35yx2ji>

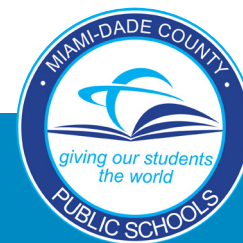
SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

January 25

11:00 a.m.
Special Board Meeting

February 10

11:00 a.m.
Regular Meeting



www.dadeschools.net

SOCIAL MEDIA

 @MDCPS
 @EscuelasMDCPS
 @MiamiSup

 @MiamiSchools
 @AlbertoMCarvalho1

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