

CONNECTION

A NEWSLETTER FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARENTS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- NEW M-DCPS SUPERINTENDENT
- FLORIDA PREPAID COLLEGE PLANS
- FREE INTERNET FOR STUDENTS

February 2022

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A MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT DR. JOSE L. DOTRES



I am honored and humbled to serve as the new Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). This school system is not only one of the finest, highest-performing districts in the nation; it is also my home. It is where I enrolled in school as an English Language Learner at the age of 5 after

immigrating to this country, graduated from high school, and began a long and rewarding career.

In my 30-year career with M-DCPS, I have learned that the commitment to excellence resides in the wonderful people of our community and the efforts of our students, parents, and employees.

Today, I return home to continue the collective work of the District with renewed commitment and resolve. M-DCPS has undoubtedly reached great heights and experienced many successes. Although there is much to celebrate, we are also navigating unprecedented challenges that demand our patience, understanding, fortitude and resilience. There is still

much work to be done to address the unfinished learning, mental health and social-emotional needs, and safety and security of the students we serve. Yes, we have great challenges before us; but together, we shall overcome.

As we strive to keep the momentum going, I am excited about what the future holds. I look forward to working alongside you, our dedicated School Board, and our many other stakeholders in continuing to bolster student achievement; prepare students to succeed in college, career, and life; and innovate and expand learning opportunities.

Thank you for your partnership in ensuring M-DCPS enables all students to thrive.

UNETHIA FOX NAMED M-DCPS TEACHER OF THE YEAR, GABRIELA GOITIA VAZQUEZ IS ROOKIE TEACHER



Unethia Fox



Gabriela Goitia Vazquez

Unethia Fox, a Special Education mathematics teacher at South Miami Senior High School, has been named the 2023 Francisco R. Walker Miami-Dade County Teacher of the Year.

Fox has been teaching at her alma mater, South Miami Senior High, for 19 years. Her inspiration for teaching is guiding her students academically and emotionally on their journey to adulthood. Their success is the

driving force that keeps her engaged, evolving and growing to make lifetime connections with them and the community.

She is currently a Black History coordinator/African American History Advocate and Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC) Committee member. Technology plays a pivotal role in her teaching approach. She uses her position as the school's Digital Innovator to conduct trainings to instruct her colleagues on the best practices of integrating technology in their lesson plans.

Fox is also the head coach of the girls' basketball, volleyball, flag football and track teams. She led the girls' basketball team to a District Championship in 2014. In addition, she was named Florida's 2009 National Federation High School Basketball Coach of the Year.

Fox was instrumental in reviving the Watu Wazuri Club. A fond memory from her student days at South Miami High, the club provides a safe space for African-American and minority students to participate in community service projects.

The runner-up is Derek Bostick of

South Dade Technical College-Skills Center.

The 2022 Rookie Teacher of the Year is Gabriela Goitia Vazquez, a second-year educator at Alonzo and Tracy Mourning Senior High. She teaches 9th grade English I, AP English Language and Composition and 9th grade English I through ESOL. Her classroom is a haven where students feel secure, respected and valued as they explore and learn English.

Ms. Vazquez's mission is clear – to develop students as writers and critical thinkers. She thoughtfully curates a space that includes a class-selected

playlist, student artwork and a social-emotional corner to refresh, reflect and journal. She is also active in her school community as an English tutor and is the Hispanic/Latinx Student Union Club sponsor.

Mary Martinez from Pinecrest Elementary is the runner-up.

PARENT E-TIPS

Checking in Each Day
<https://bit.ly/3LoBi8i>

M-DCPS, T-MOBILE TO PROVIDE 35,000 STUDENTS WITH FREE INTERNET



Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is continuing its efforts to close the digital divide and provide connectivity to those students without reliable internet at home through a partnership with T-Mobile's Project 10Million.

The hotspots are available for immediate distribution to students, on a first come, first served basis. Participation in this program is strongly encouraged for those students and families in need. There is no fee or cost to students. Parents are urged to contact an administrator at their child's school to request a free hotspot with internet connectivity.

To learn more about Project 10Million, visit <http://www.t-mobile.com/p10m>.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

March 9

11:00 a.m.
Regular Meeting

March 30

10:00 a.m.
Instructional Materials
Public Hearing

FLORIDA PREPAID COLLEGE PLANS



When it comes to college savings, the earlier a family begins saving, the lower the cost per month. Florida Prepaid College Savings Plan has started its annual open enrollment period with plans offering prepaid

tutions for a variety of budgets. With Florida Prepaid, families can lock in the future cost of college. The open enrollment period runs through April 30, 2022, with plans starting at \$45 a month. Families are encouraged to use the online Prepaid Plan pricing tool to explore the various plan costs and payment options. Start planning for a brighter tomorrow by saving for college today!

Enroll today by visiting <https://bit.ly/3phTsjh>.

IMPORTANT DATES & INFORMATION

February 25

VPK Lottery

March 21 - 25

Spring Recess

SEVEN ESTEEMED M-DCPS GRADUATES INDUCTED INTO THE ALUMNI HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2022



Seven esteemed and distinguished graduates of Miami-Dade's public schools have been inducted into Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) Alumni Hall of Fame for their post-secondary and professional achievements.

Joining the ranks of illustrious alumni who reflect the rich history of Miami-Dade's schools and representing the Class of 2022 are the following:

- **Rodney Adkins** – Miami Jackson Senior High, Class of 1976 Valedictorian. Chairman of Avnet, Inc. and President of 3RAM Group. First African American corporate officer and senior vice president of development and manufacturing at IBM. Launched the IBM ThinkPad.
- **Michelle Bernstein** – North Miami Senior High, Class of 1986. Award-

winning James Beard Foundation chef, Host of television shows, "Check, Please! South Florida" and the Emmy-award winning production, "SoFlo Taste."

- **Dr. Vivek Murthy** – Miami Palmetto Senior High, Class of 1994 Valedictorian. Graduate of Harvard University and Yale School of Medicine. 19th and 21st U.S. Surgeon General of the United States, Founder of Doctors for America.
- **George Christian Pedersen** – South Dade Senior High, Class of 1958. CEO and President of Kimre Clean Air Technology. Earned Chemical Engineering degrees from Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- **Armando Christian Perez** – Miami Coral Park Senior High, Class of

1999. American rapper better known as "Pitbull" or Mr. Worldwide. Singer, songwriter and record producer; Grammy-award winner with over 100 million records sold worldwide.

- **Maribel Perez Wadsworth** – Coral Gables Senior High, Class of 1990. Gannett's U.S. Community Publishing company's first-ever Chief Strategy Officer. President of USA Today Network & Publisher of USA Today and the 2019 News Leader Association winner of Robert G. McGruder Award for Leadership Diversity.
- **Dr. Robert Sackstein** – Southwest Miami Senior High, Class of 1973. World-renowned bone marrow transplant physician and biomedical researcher; graduate and professor of Harvard Medical School. Serves as Senior Vice President for Global Medical Affairs and Professor of Translational Medicine at FIU.

If you attended M-DCPS, stay connected with the latest news, events and ways to get involved by visiting <https://www.engagemiamidade.net/alumni-connect>.

SOCIAL MEDIA



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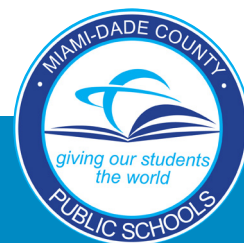
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