

# CONNECTION

A NEWSLETTER FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARENTS

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## M-DCPS GRADUATION RATE INCREASES IN 2020-2021



Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) high school graduation rate for the 2020-2021 school year reached an impressive 90.1 percent, a 0.5 percentage point increase over the previous year. This marks the highest graduation rate M-DCPS has achieved since the Florida Department of Education began tracking graduation statistics with modern methods in the late 1990s. If charter schools are removed from the calculation, the graduation rate for schools managed by the District rose to 94 percent.

While most graduates met the high school graduation test requirements through statewide testing or concordant scores, due to flexibility provided by the state during the global pandemic, some students may have had alternate criteria applied.

The newly released graduation rate increased by 12 percentage points over the 2014-2015 school year, the first year of the more rigorous Florida Standards, and increased by 31.4 percentage points from 58.7 percent in 2006-2007. Below are

some highlights of the District's performance from 2014-2015 to 2020-2021:

- In 2021, M-DCPS met the state's overall graduation rate at 90.1, with each of the following subgroups surpassing their counterparts statewide: Hispanic, White, English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Economically Disadvantaged.
- Hispanic students improved by 11.7 percentage points to 90.9 percent in 2021, surpassing the state rate of 89.4.
- White students improved by 5.3 percentage points to 93.6 percent, surpassing the state rate of 91.8.
- Black students improved by 15.2 percentage points to 85.6 percent, remaining stable from 2020.
- The District's graduation rate for Students with Disabilities improved by 18 percentage points to 83.6 percent, surpassing the state rate of 82.3 percent.
- Economically Disadvantaged students improved by 13.8 percentage points to 89.1 percent,

surpassing the state rate of 87.2.

- English Language Learners improved by 25.3 percentage points to 86.8 percent, surpassing the state rate of 86.1.
- M-DCPS students' rate of improvement from 2020 to 2021 exceeded their counterparts' statewide in the following categories: Overall, White, Hispanic, English Language Learners, and Economically Disadvantaged.

"We take pride in the fact that Miami-Dade County Public Schools continues to achieve historic graduation rates, despite the unprecedented challenges faced as a result of the pandemic," said Schools Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho. "The District is encouraged and energized by these results, as they are a testament to the extraordinary efforts of our resilient students and dedicated workforce."

## IMPORTANT DATES & INFORMATION

**January 21**  
Teacher Planning Day

**February 21**  
Observance of  
President's Day

**February 25**  
VPK Lottery



Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), in partnership with University of Miami Health System, is offering the flu vaccine, school-required vaccines, COVID-19 testing, and the COVID-19 vaccine to eligible students 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.

To make an appointment, call 305-243-6407. Walk-ups are welcome. All individuals under the age of 18 receiving a vaccine must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Vaccination Schedule and Sites		
Friday, January 21 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Campbell Drive K-8 Center	15790 SW 37th Street Miami, FL 33033
Monday, January 24 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Hialeah Gardens Middle	11690 NW 92nd Avenue Hialeah Gardens, FL 33018
Wednesday, January 26 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Southwood Middle	16301 SW 80th Avenue Palmetto Bay, FL 33157
Thursday, January 27 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Kinloch Park Middle	4340 NW 3rd Street Miami, FL 33126
Friday, January 28 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Highland Oaks Middle	2375 NE 203rd Street Miami, FL 33180
Monday, January 31 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Lamar Louise Curry Middle	15750 SW 47th Street Miami, FL 33185

Students receiving the COVID-19 vaccine MUST be at least 5 years old on the day they are receiving the vaccine to be eligible and have a completed COVID-19 vaccine screening and consent form, which will be available at the sites.

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

### SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

February 9  
11:00 a.m.  
Regular Meeting

## M-DCPS IS...WHERE LEARNING BEGINS!



Early Childhood Education and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) programs, such as those offered in more than 200 Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), prepare children to enter kindergarten with the social, emotional, language, cognitive and early reading, and math

skills they need to succeed. M-DCPS is committed to providing high-quality comprehensive services to prepare young children for life-long learning.

**Florida's VPK Education Program (VPK):** VPK is a free program that prepares four-year-old children for kindergarten and beyond. Children must be four years old on or before September 1, 2022, to enroll. A list of the participating schools is available on the website at <http://earlychildhood.dadeschools.net>.

M-DCPS' VPK Program uses a lottery to select students that will be held on Friday, February 25, 2022. Families will be entered into the VPK lottery

after submitting proof of birth and address to their home/neighborhood school before the February 24, 2022, deadline. 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 free, 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 2022-2023 school year began January 18, 2022. Families can apply

by visiting any of the 31 M-DCPS Head Start sites across the county and completing an application or applying online at [headstart.dadeschools.net](http://headstart.dadeschools.net). A list of the participating schools is also available by visiting 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.

## MIAMI-DADE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES 2022-23 SCHOOL CALENDAR



The Miami-Dade County School Board approved the 2022-2023 school calendars at its monthly meeting with a start date of August 17 for students. The approved Elementary and Secondary as well as the Adult/Vocational calendars include a Fall Recess for students and 10-month employees the week of November 21 - 25, 2022, during the Thanksgiving holiday.

The school calendars were jointly developed by the School Calendar Ad Hoc Committee comprised of representatives from Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the United Teachers of Dade.

For more information, visit <http://www.dadeschools.net/calendars/>.

## SAVE THE DATE! NATIONAL COLLEGE FAIR COMES TO MIAMI, MARCH 13, 2022



The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) returns to Miami for an In-Person National College Fair on Sunday, March 13, 2022. Representatives from different colleges and universities will be available to meet with students and

parents on subjects such as financial aid, college planning, admission and testing requirements. The Fair, which has free admission, will be held from 12 - 4 p.m., at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Miami Airport & Convention Center, 777 N.W. 72nd Ave., Miami, FL 33126. Registration is now open at <https://www.nacacattend.org/22miami/begin>.

This year, the NACAC is introducing a matchmaking technology that takes the attributes of colleges/universities (geographic region, campus size, campus setting, etc.) and matches

them to student interests and preferences.

Seven virtual fairs will also be offered this spring. For more information, visit [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org). Follow the event on social media at #collegefairmiami.

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. This is her 25th consecutive year as co-chair.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has been bold and innovative in its quest to narrow achievement and opportunity gaps for all students. Through an all-hands-on-deck approach, M-DCPS ensures that students from all zip codes are granted equal access to additional learning opportunities, including remediation, enrichment, acceleration and robust systems of support.

M-DCPS is doing everything it can to accelerate learning and address the regression experienced by many students. One of these opportunities is the Saturday Academy, which has been offered for more than a decade and is a successful strategy to improve student learning.

The Saturday Academy is a beyond-the-bell learning opportunity for all students, in which they can engage in meaningful and purposeful instruction with their teachers for approximately four hours. Throughout the years, Saturday Academy has evolved from printed packets to hands-on science labs and blended learning, a combination of technology and conventional teaching strategies and practices. Thanks to our Digital Convergence Initiative, which was

launched in 2012 and funded by taxpayers, we have invested in technology to make learning more engaging and personalized for students.

What else makes Saturday School a success? It's 12:1 student-teacher ratio, which is considerably smaller than the typical class size during the regular week. There are approximately 1,700 students enrolled at the 36 schools currently offering Saturday Academy. Enrollment is still open and available. The program incentivizes participating students with field trips and gift cards to various restaurants and stores. Breakfast, lunch and snacks are served, and transportation is provided for Saturday Academy attendees.

Without question, Saturday Academy is a staple within our district and one of the contributing factors that has led to M-DCPS' "A" rating, as assigned by the Florida Department of Education. Since the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely impacted student learning and disrupted education on a scale never seen before, extended learning opportunities such as Saturday Academy are absolutely critical for mitigating learning loss

and addressing unfinished student learning. Therefore, active student participation in Saturday Academy is crucial for accelerating academic achievement.

The past eighteen months have been challenging. School closures and the disruptions associated with the pandemic have taken a toll on children's learning, safety, and wellbeing. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has also reminded us that we are a resilient academic community that is stronger together; and that our resolve and reimagined strength allow us to dream big and give our students the world.

For more specific school site information regarding Saturday Academy, contact your child's school.

## PARENT E-TIPS

### Setting Goals

<https://bit.ly/3r79FY2>



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

## SOCIAL MEDIA

 @MDCPS  
@EscuelasMDCPS  
@MiamiSup

 @MiamiSchools  
@AlbertoMCarvalho1

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