

# CONNECTION

A NEWSLETTER FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARENTS

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August 2021

Volume 14 | Issue #77 |

## WELCOME TO THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR



We hope you had an enjoyable, safe and restful summer recess. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) begins classes on Monday, August 23rd and we are eager to welcome our students back to school.

The past year changed the way we educate our children and perform our duties. Still, it has not stifled our tenacity or determination to provide young minds the knowledge and opportunities they deserve. M-DCPS is fully invested in fostering a diverse and inclusive culture that is representative of the rich fabric of our community. This year alone, the District is launching more than 80 new programs and initiatives that provide students with innovative

and state-of-the-art learning experiences.

We remain committed to nurturing our students and employees' mental and physical health through various programs and resources. Following recommendations from public health and medical experts, rigorous COVID-19 protocols, including mandatory facial coverings, will continue to be in place to ensure the safety of those who enter our schools and District facilities.

These protocols will be continually reviewed and adjusted as needed, based on changing local health conditions. For the latest information and useful resources, visit [backtoschool.dadeschools.net](https://backtoschool.dadeschools.net).

## IMPORTANT DATES & INFORMATION

**August 23**  
First Day of School

**September 6**  
Labor Day – No School

**September 7**  
Teacher Planning Day – No School

**September 16**  
Teacher Planning Day – No School



Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) prioritizes the health and safety of its students and employees above all. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 18 months ago, M-DCPS has made decisions regarding protocols according to science-based guidance from leading health and safety organizations as well as public health and medical experts. As the information available on COVID-19 evolves, the District continues to adjust its policies for the 2021- 2022 school year.

After meeting with the District's Public Health and Medical Experts Task Force on Monday, August 16, 2021, M-DCPS received guidance regarding several key topics. As such, M-DCPS is implementing a multi-layered approach to address COVID-19 with the following protocols for the upcoming school year:

- Facial coverings are mandatory for all students, employees, volunteers, and visitors while in M-DCPS facilities and on school buses. Students and employees may receive an accommodation

for a medically documented need in accordance with federal law.

- Maximum physical distancing will be observed in classrooms, school buses, and cafeterias. Alternate seating areas for mealtimes will be utilized when possible.
- Heightened cleaning and sanitization protocols will continue to be implemented on school buses, campuses, and District offices.
- Personal hygiene behavior, including frequent handwashing and the use of hand sanitizing stations, will continue to be encouraged.
- Improved environmental technology will be implemented in school sites, including enhanced air filtration purifiers, ionization systems, and upgraded A/C units.
- Circulation of outdoor fresh air into our school buildings will be maximized.
- HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems will

run at maximum outside airflow for two hours before and after school buildings are occupied.

- All schools will have a health screening area.
- The quarantine process will focus on individuals directly impacted by a potential exposure through the consistent maintenance and monitoring of seating charts. This will avoid having to quarantine entire classes or departments, to the extent possible.
- Current quarantine protocols require isolation for 10 days, regardless of COVID-19 test results.
- Visitor access to school sites will be limited.
- M-DCPS will continue to encourage eligible students and employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and work with community partners to provide vaccination opportunities.

The District will monitor local conditions on an ongoing basis to reevaluate, and possibly adjust, its current COVID-19 protocols. Working together, with the support of families and the community, we can ensure a successful 2021-2022 school year. We look forward to seeing you on the first day of school, Monday, August 23rd.

## RELEVANT, RIGOROUS & INNOVATIVE ACADEMICS DRIVE M-DCPS' BOLD 2021-2022 PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES



Students and employees of Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) will begin the 2021-2022 school year with a multitude of bold, cutting-edge programs that build on the District's goals of providing classroom innovation, academic rigor, innovative choice programs, mental health guidance, access

and equity, as well as increased efficiencies in operations. Schools Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho unveiled the District's new programs on Wednesday, August 11, 2021 during a School Board Committee meeting. A number of these initiatives address the priorities of School Board members, and most are being undertaken with the use of supplemental funding, existing resources or leveraged community partnerships.

"Miami-Dade County Public Schools is one of the highest-performing school systems in the nation due to our ability to reinvent ourselves with a host of innovative programs to help each student reach their

full academic potential," said Schools Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho. "This unwavering commitment is partnered with our pledge to provide students and employees with safe, healthy and supportive learning and working environments."

The District's 2021-2026 Strategic Blueprint, also known as Infinite Possibilities, is comprised of five sections or pillars. These pillars are aligned with our [Means to Accelerate Performance \(MAPs\)](#) which are launch pads for innovation and improvement. Learn more by visiting <https://bit.ly/2Uq0LJ3>.

## ENROLLMENT NOW OPEN FOR 2021-2022 VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS AT M-DCPS



Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) – a free program that prepares four-year-old children for kindergarten and beyond – will be available in more than 200 schools countywide for the 2021-2022 school year. Children can register for VPK programs if they turn 4 years old on or before September 1st of the current school year.

This year, M-DCPS has expanded VPK program offerings by adding numerous new classrooms across the District to increase the number of high-quality early learning options available for 4-year old children in the community. Additionally, pre-kindergarten programs at M-DCPS will be included in the current STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) School Designation Process. This will promote STEAM integration programs for young learners and ensure they are prepared for the challenges of tomorrow through high-quality teaching and learning experiences that promote higher-order thinking.

M-DCPS provides several comprehensive, developmentally appropriate educational programs for young children. Each program's

mission focuses on enhancing the child's self-concept while providing a solid foundation for school interactions. It is believed that when these elements occur consistently and conscientiously, children will develop a life-long love for learning and achievement. All programs have been designed to meet the needs of the total child so that his/her maximum potential is reached.

For more information about our programs, parents should contact their home/neighborhood school, call the Early Childhood Department at 305-995-7632, or visit <https://earlychildhood.dadeschools.net>.

A list of required school registration documents for the 2021-2022 school year may be accessed at <http://attendanceservices.dadeschools.net/>.



## Back-to-School Checklist



### REGISTRATION

Families are urged to register their children early to avoid processing delays. The **FIRST** day of school at Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is August 23, 2021. For more information, visit <http://attendanceservices.dadeschools.net/>.



### DADESCHOOLS MOBILE APP

The recently updated Dadeschools Mobile app is a one-stop shop for parents. Access important information including class schedules, school grades, District news and much more. Download the free app to your iPhone or Android device.



### SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Students will need essential school supplies. Parents should check their child's school website or contact the school for supply lists.



### MEALS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it would extend the meals flexibility waiver, allowing M-DCPS to serve free breakfast and lunch to enrolled children throughout the entire 2021-2022 school year.



### SCHOOL ZONES

Slow down, stay alert and stop for buses. Observe the 15-mph school speed limit.



### FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Get to know your child's teachers at the beginning of the school year. Request an in-person or virtual meeting with them to share important information about your child and to ask how to best support their learning at home. Consider joining a parent organization like the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or volunteering at your child's school. Speak to your child's principal for more information on PTA or email [info@mdccpta.net](mailto:info@mdccpta.net). To find out how you can become a school volunteer, visit <https://www.engagemiamidade.net/volunteers>.



### HOTLINES

Adult and Career/Technical Education: 305-558-8000  
Mental Health Services for students/parents: 305-995-7100  
Project UP-START for students experiencing unstable housing: 305-995-7558



### FACIAL COVERINGS

Facial coverings will be mandatory at all school sites and District offices. Masks do not need to be worn during outdoor activities so long as appropriate physical distancing is maintained.



### CONTACT INFORMATION

M-DCPS has the ability to communicate accurately and efficiently with parents through voice, text, and email messages. It's important that your child's school has the most current contact information. Parents can update their details by contacting their child's principal. They may also opt in for emergency text messages by texting "Y" to 67587 on their mobile device.



### IMMUNIZATIONS

Parents are urged to check their children's immunization records to see if they are due for any mandated school entry vaccines. All M-DCPS students are required to have the mandatory school age vaccines for the 2021-2022 school year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends everyone 12 years and older receive the COVID-19 vaccine to help protect against this virus.



### UNIFORMS

The uniform policy will be enforced. Contact your child's school to find out more.



### BUS ASSIGNMENTS

Find out bus route information ahead of time. If you live two miles away from your assigned school, your child may be eligible for bus services.



### AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

M-DCPS offers many after-school care programs. Contact your child's school to find out more.



### SAFETY FIRST

Prevention! Prevention! Prevention! Urge your child to say something if they see something suspicious. Anonymous tips can be reported to 305-995-COPS (2677) or on the FortifyFL app, available at [getfortifyfl.com](http://getfortifyfl.com).

Updated as of August 19, 2021

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



## PARENT E-TIPS

### Establishing a Routine

<https://bit.ly/3jZl0oC>

## SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

September 9

11:00 a.m.  
Regular Meeting

5:00 p.m.  
Budget Workshop



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

## SOCIAL MEDIA



@MDCPS  
@EscuelasMDCPS  
@MiamiSup



@MiamiSchools  
@AlbertoMCarvalho1



@MiamiSchools  
@MiamiSup



@MiamiSchools

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