

# CONNECTION

A Newsletter for Miami-Dade County Public Schools Parents

## M-DCPS WRAPS UP IMPRESSIVE YEAR OF NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) students, teachers, schools and programs wrapped up the year with an impressive array of honors and achievements. Among the accomplishments:

**Broad Prize Winner:** M-DCPS was named the winner of The Broad Prize for Urban Education, an annual award that honors urban school districts across the country that are making the greatest progress in raising student achievement. This is the fifth time that M-DCPS had been recognized as a finalist.

**General Obligation Bond Referendum:** A \$1.2 billion General Obligation (GO) Bond referendum was approved by voters on the November ballot. Proceeds from the bond issue will be used to modernize and construct schools throughout the District, including technology upgrades at all schools. Approval of the GO Bond was essential to the District as it sought a sustainable long-term solution to providing 21st Century Schools for all Miami-Dade students.

**Veteran Educator Named Top Principal:** Dr. Rosann P. Sidener, principal of Miami Beach Senior High School was selected as the 2012 Florida Association of School Administrators' (FASA) Principal of the Year. Sidener is a 34-year veteran educator and administrator with M-DCPS.

**M-DCPS Educator Named Florida Teacher of the Year:** Alexandre Lopes, a Pre-K, Special Education teacher at Carol City Elementary School was named the 2013 Florida Department of Education/ Macy's Teacher of the Year Award. Lopes was selected from more than 20,000 teachers from around Miami-Dade and from among 180,000 around the state of Florida for the honor.

**Superintendent Named District Data Leader of the Year:** The Florida Department of Education named Superintendent of Schools Alberto M. Carvalho the winner of the District Data Leader of the Year Award. Carvalho was recognized for his innovative and effective use of data to drive student performance.

**Graduation Rates at All-time High:** M-DCPS' graduation rate jumped nearly five points for the 2011-2012 academic year, as calculated by following U.S. Department of Education guidelines. The federally calculated graduation rate for 2010-2011 was 71.3 percent; this year it rose to 76.0 percent, surpassing the state both in rate of growth and total percentage points.

**Principal Receives "Oscar of Teaching":** Dr. Kevin Williams, principal at Norwood Elementary School, was honored with the \$25,000 Milken Educator Award from the Milken Foundation. The Milken Educator Awards were created in 1985 by education reform leader Lowell Milken to celebrate, elevate and activate excellence in the profession.

**Leader in AP:** M-DCPS leads the country in Advanced Placement (AP) exam scores among Hispanic students. The school district ranks first in the nation in three categories including, the number of Hispanic AP exam scores of three or above, the number of individual Hispanic students scoring three or above, as well as the total number of AP exams taken by Hispanic students. Miami-Dade is also seventh in the country in African American/Black AP exam scores of 3 or above.

**M-DCPS Students Continue to Exhibit High Levels of Achievement:** M-DCPS students outperformed students in many major U.S. cities in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) in science, mathematics and reading.

**Ten Schools Named Best High Schools:** Miami-Dade County public schools were included in U.S. News & World Report Best High Schools rankings. In the Best High Schools Rankings by State category, five Miami-Dade County public schools made the Top 20 schools in Florida. Five schools made the grade as America's 2012 Best High Schools. In the Best Magnet Schools category, three Miami-Dade schools made the top 20.

## M-DCPS RANKS IN TOP 10 IN NATION IN SCHOOL CHOICE

Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) Department of School Choice and Parental Options was recently ranked number 10 by The Brookings Institution. The school district was recognized for providing a significant number of its own options through its magnet programs and career academies.

The Institution used its "Education Choice and Competition Index" to score more than 100 school districts across the country. The formula for scoring was based on 13 categories. It took into consideration whether alternatives were available such as magnet schools, virtual courses, tax credit scholarships, affordable private schools, vouchers and charter schools.

For more than 50 years, M-DCPS has been at the forefront of the choice movement in education, having established Henry S. West Laboratory School in 1954, as an experimental school of choice associated with the School of Education at the University of Miami. Magnet programs began in Miami-Dade County Public Schools in 1973 with the opening of a center for the Expressive Arts in the heart of the inner city. Since then, M-DCPS has implemented a broad variety of choice programs including the first corporate-based Satellite Learning Center in 1987; the first controlled open-enrollment schools in 1995; the State's first charter school in 1996; and, most recently, the federally funded Voluntary Public School Choice Program in 2002.

As of this school year, approximately 41 percent of Pre-K through 12 students in M-DCPS have made an active choice in school or program in which they are enrolled.

## MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS' FEDERAL GRADUATION RATE JUMPS FIVE PERCENTAGE POINTS TO HISTORIC HIGH, OUTPERFORMING STATE

Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) graduation rate jumped nearly five points for the 2011-2012 academic year, as calculated by following U.S. Department of Education guidelines. The federally calculated graduation rate for 2010-11 was 71.3 percent; this year it rose to 76.0 percent, surpassing the state both in rate of growth and total percentage points.

"Under tougher criteria and more stringent federal guidelines, our system continues to soar," said Miami-Dade Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho. "This is one more measure of success of which our community can be rightfully proud. The continued focus and determination of our teachers and leaders toward increasing the graduation rate is deeply appreciated."

In October 2008, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, to include new directives for graduation rates. These new regulations require each state to calculate a four-year adjusted cohort rate, which includes standard diplomas but excludes GEDs, both regular and adult, and special diplomas. USED is adopting this calculation method in an effort to streamline graduation rate calculations to acquire uniform, accurate, and comparable rates across all states. States must begin calculating the new graduation rate by 2010-11 and use in the accountability system in 2011-12. When calculated retroactively MDCPS' federal high school graduation rate has consistently increased during the past four years. The rate has improved from 62.0 in 2008-09 to 76.0 in 2011-12.

The improvement in the district's graduation rate was made possible by a detailed plan to address new high school accountability standards. Online credit recovery courses were made available to students to help ensure they could make up needed coursework.

Additional periods in the school day provided students with course acceleration and credit recovery opportunities. High school counselors were given professional development in how to help students recover needed credits. Also, to provide those students with a smoother transition to high school academics, the District began focusing early attention on the importance of graduation, starting with middle school. Additionally, a comprehensive summer school program offered students opportunities to make up coursework.

### UPCOMING SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

February 13	11:45 a.m.	Regular Meeting
March 13	10:00 a.m.	Conference Session: Attendance Zones for 2013-2014
	11:45 a.m.	Regular Meeting (Initial Reading - Attendance Zones for 2013-2014)

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Friday, February 1 – Teacher Planning Day

Monday, February 18 – All Presidents Day

Friday, March 22 – Teacher Planning Day

Monday, March 25 through Friday, March 29 – Spring Recess

### M-DCPS RECEIVES \$30 MILLION IN "RACE TO THE TOP" FUNDING

M-DCPS has been selected by the U. S. Department of Education to receive a Race to the Top (RTTT) District grant to personalize student learning, improve student achievement and educator effectiveness, close achievement gaps, and prepare every student to succeed in college and careers. M-DCPS is the only Florida school district to receive RTTT funding this year and is the recipient of the highest single-district award in the country. As a result, M-DCPS' students will be the recipients of more than \$30 million in funding to enhance and improve classroom learning.

"We are delighted that M-DCPS has been selected to receive this funding," said Superintendent of Schools Alberto M. Carvalho. "This initiative will help us to continue towards our goal to make sure that every child in the district, no matter their zip code, can receive a world-class education. It leverages federal funding in advancing local innovation in 21st century learning environments."

The monies will be used to offer all middle schools a blended learning initiative in mathematics. This will include a special iPREP style classroom for mathematics in every middle school. iPREP schools were created by Superintendent Carvalho three years ago and they offer students the latest in technology in a true 21st century learning environment.

### The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

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