

CONNECTION

A Newsletter for Miami-Dade County Public Schools Parents



M-DCPS SLASHES HUNDREDS OF END-OF-COURSE EXAMS

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has eliminated nearly all of the 300 District-Developed End-of-Course (DDEOC) assessments that were originally scheduled for Spring 2015. The move follows the passage of HB7069, a law that provides flexibility for districts to determine how to measure student progress, eliminating the state mandate for district-designated, end-of-course exams to be given in all courses not measured by existing statewide, standardized assessments.

The following actions have been taken:

- No elementary-level DDEOCs will be administered.
- Only 10 middle/senior high school subjects have been identified to be included in a small-scale field test.
- The results from the field test will not be used in 2014-15.
- All field tests will be administered as computer-based tests using the Thinkgate platform.
- It is unlikely that more than 4 or 5 classes would be selected from any school.
- Principals will be advised if classes within their school have been selected to participate in the field test.

The purpose of the field test is to determine the psychometric properties of the assessments, for administration in subsequent years. Such assessments would ensure that state-established course content was being delivered consistently across the District, and potentially as a measure of content-specific student achievement to inform teacher evaluation.

The following courses have been identified to be included in the field test: M/J Comprehensive Science 1; M/J Comprehensive Science 2; Physical Science; Chemistry 1; Physics 1; M/J U.S. History; M/J World History; World History; Spanish 1; Spanish 2

Looking forward, plans call for several new exams to be field tested each year.

MIAMI RANKS #1 FOR RETURN ON EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENT, BEST IN THE NATION

A recent study has shown that Miami, Florida has the highest rate of return on educational investment among the 90 largest cities in the United States. The study was conducted by WalletHub, a national financial website for consumers and small business owners. M-DCPS' education spending showed higher efficiency than large cities across the United States, including New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, as well as major Florida cities including Tampa, St. Petersburg, Orlando, Jacksonville, and Fort Lauderdale.

Through a series of reorganizations, the District's downtown staff was cut by more than 57 percent, with many educators returning to teach in classrooms. Despite the cuts, the District continued to improve academically, and was awarded the 2012 Broad Prize for

Urban Education, the nation's highest K-12 education award, which is nicknamed the Nobel Prize of Education and honors the school district that best closes the achievement gap for minority students.

"It is WalletHub's distinct pleasure to congratulate Miami on being named the U.S. City with the Most Efficient Education Spending. Miami rose to the top of this list of the country's 90 most populated cities due to its combination of high average test scores and low education expenditures per capita," the network said in a statement. "The Miami-Dade County Public School district has clearly discovered a winning recipe for addressing student needs in an economical fashion, and that certainly deserves to be recognized and emulated around the country."

M-DCPS has received certificates of excellence from the Government Finance Officers Association for 29 years and from the Association of School Business Officials for 30 years. In 2012, the school district was also presented with the coveted Award for Excellence in Financial Management by the Council of the Great City Schools.

SOCIAL MEDIA IS HERE TO STAY...FOLLOW US!

Millennials have grown up with technology at their fingertips. The way we communicate has greatly evolved in the past decade, and social media has become one of the easiest, quickest and most common ways to share information. Students can now reach a very small or extremely large group of people instantaneously on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and other platforms. Educating our students, parents, educators and community members on the rights and wrongs of social media is crucial as we consider the rapidly expanding rate of connectivity offered by faster, less-expensive technology. M-DCPS leads the nation in technology, having provided wireless Internet access at all schools four years ahead of the national average, and we must keep the same pace at informing our community of the benefits and drawbacks involved with this type of access.

We have created a Social Media Student Advisory Committee to establish a dialogue with student leaders from various schools, in order to obtain valuable insight and feedback about student's social media habits. This spring, M-DCPS hosted a Social Media Journalism Forum, with a panel of experts from television, education and government. Through the Parent Academy, parents have the opportunity to attend workshops to learn more about Technology & the Modern Family.

At M-DCPS, we have always been proactive in our approach, understanding the true meaning of 21st Century Learning. We embrace technology and encourage students to bring their own devices, but we also have policies and expectations to ensure our students are using technology, including social media networks, to enhance their learning experience

FOR FOURTH STRAIGHT YEAR, M-DCPS OUTPACES OTHER DISTRICTS FOR NATIONAL MAGNET SCHOOLS OF MERIT AWARDS

Thirty-four Magnet Schools in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) have been recognized by Magnet Schools of America (MSA) for their commitment to high academic standards, curriculum innovation, successful desegregation/diversity efforts, specialized teaching staffs, and parent community involvement. For the fourth year in a row, M-DCPS outperformed all other school districts.

This year, six Miami-Dade public schools were among 74 schools across the U.S. to receive the coveted Magnet Schools of Excellence merit award. In the category for Magnet Schools of Distinction, the District had 28 schools among the 134 national winners.

For a complete list of all the magnet programs offered by M-DCPS, please visit: yourchoicemiami.org/magnet-schools/

M-DCPS HONORS PRINCIPAL, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) honored its finest principals and assistant principals at an awards ceremony sponsored by Dade Association of School Administrators (DASA), on April 2 at Jungle Island. Guillermo Muñoz, who serves as principal of Homestead Senior High School, won top honors as the District's Principal of the Year.

Muñoz has served as principal at Homestead Senior High since 2013. He brings more than 20 years of experience in administration and curricular expertise. He began his career as a Mathematics teacher at Kinloch Park Middle in 1992. Nicole Berge-MacInnes of Coral Reef Senior High was recognized as Assistant Principal of the Year. Berge-MacInnes has served as an Assistant Principal at Coral Reef since 2011. She previously served as Assistant Principal at Glades Middle School.

The Principal of the Year received \$3,000 and the Assistant Principal received \$2,000. The event's top sponsors for the cash awards were AXA-Equitable and Wells Fargo. Winners also received gift baskets from event sponsors which include gifts from: EdGenuity, Herff Jones, Teacher Created Materials, Valic, Bencor, Pearson, United Way, Jungle Island, South Florida Educational Federal Credit Union, Nova Southeastern University and Miami Seaquarium.

Also recognized at the ceremony were James V. Parker of Miami Lakes Educational Center & Technical College, named Principal of the Year runner-up and Milagro Arango of South Miami Senior High School, named Assistant Principal of the Year runner-up.

DATES TO REMEMBER

May 25 -	Observance of Memorial Day
June 4 -	Last Day of School
June 5-	Teacher Planning Day

VIRTUAL LEARNING THROUGH MIAMI-DADE ONLINE ACADEMY

Miami-Dade Online (MDO) Academy is a Miami-Dade County public school offering students a comprehensive K-12 full-time virtual educational program providing, anytime, anywhere learning. This virtual and interactive learning environment is student-centered and academically individualized to build educational capacity.

MDO Academy services a diverse population of learners. This approach encourages students to be self-directed and take charge of their education. MDO Academy uses technology to maximize learning and ultimately empowers students to positively impact their world and become responsible citizens.

Parents are trained to educate the students in partnership with the student's teacher and trained to monitor their progress. Students are educated by the most influential person in their lives: their parents.

To view eligibility criteria for the MDO Academy or to apply for enrollment, please visit <http://mdo.dadeschools.net>.

UPCOMING SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

May 13	11:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting (Final Reading - Attendance Zones for 2015-2016)
June 17	11:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting
July 15	11:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting
July 29	6:00 p.m.	First Budget Public Hearing and Tentative Adoption of the 2015-2016 Millage Levy & Annual Budget
Aug. 5	11:00 a.m.	Regular Meeting

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