

# CONNECTION

A NEWSLETTER FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARENTS

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February 2021

Volume 13 | Issue #71 |

## PRECAUTIONS AND SAFE PRACTICES TO FOLLOW AS STUDENTS PREPARE FOR SPRING RECESS



Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is a tireless advocate for its students and their families. The overall health and well-being of our students and employees have been of utmost importance to the school district since the onset of the pandemic. M-DCPS has been proactive in providing services and resources in addition to implementing preventive measures to address COVID-19.

With Spring Recess approaching and the COVID-19 pandemic lingering, we continue to partner with you and our greater community to meet the known and unknown challenges of COVID-19. As a preliminary precaution, we strongly urge families to refrain from international travel during the upcoming Spring Recess. Should families need to travel, they must adhere to the new [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's](#)

[\(CDC\) guidelines on air travel.](#)

This past January, the CDC announced an order requiring all air passengers arriving to the United States from a foreign country to get tested no more than three days before departure. Travelers must present a negative result or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 to the airline before boarding their flight. Passengers who are unable to provide negative results will be denied re-entry into the country.

We ask that your family continue to observe the COVID-19 preventative practices of wearing facial coverings, maintaining physical distance and frequently washing your hands. Notify the school principal if your child tests positive for COVID-19 or has been in close contact with someone who has the virus. Let's commit to working together to keep our community safe.

## PARENT E-TIPS

Helping Them "Own" Their Learning

<https://bit.ly/3cS4sXL>

## IMPORTANT DATES & INFORMATION

**February 1**  
Kindergarten  
Registration Begins

**February 26**  
VPK Lottery

**March 26**  
Teacher Planning Day

**March 29 – April 02**  
Spring Recess

# KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FOR 2021-2022

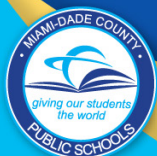
Will your child be five years old by September 1st? If so, it is time to apply for Kindergarten for the 2021-2022 school year! Even if you are not sure where you will be living this fall, or what your plans will be for your child's schooling, secure your seat. There is no downside to applying and it is best to have an option for the fall.

Visit our [Virtual Welcome Center at showupmdcps.dadeschools.net](http://showupmdcps.dadeschools.net) to find your neighborhood school, explore different program options, and learn more about registration requirements.

**Your child deserves a strong academic foundation. Kindergarten enrollment is now open for the 2021-2022 school year!**

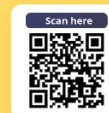


- ★ Miami-Dade County Public Schools is an A-rated school district with a proven track record of academic success.
- ★ Our graduation rate for the 2019-2020 school year was 89.6%.
- ★ Our teachers are certified and receive ongoing professional training.
- ★ Having achieved AdvancED accreditation, our schools are committed to the care, education, learning, growth and development of young children.
- ★ We prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of students and employees.



**Kindergarten**  
2021-2022

Learn more at [showupmdcps.dadeschools.net](http://showupmdcps.dadeschools.net)



## M-DCPS HONORS MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS VICTIMS WITH DAY OF LOVE AND KINDNESS



To commemorate the third anniversary of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School tragedy, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) joined its neighbors in Broward, as well as school districts across the country, in honoring the 17 victims who lost their lives on that fateful day. The entire district observed a moment of silence at 10:17 a.m. on Friday, February 12. M-DCPS'

Values Matter Miami Initiative will focus on kindness during this month and all schools were asked to promote "Love and Kindness Day". Activities included a Kindness Corner, a Be Kind Scavenger Hunt, a Kindness Chain, and a Kindness Tree. In addition, the District's Department of Mental Health Services provided each school with resources and services that support mental wellness efforts.

## VIRTUAL FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA) COMPLETION EVENTS

VIRTUAL  
**Workshops**  
**DATES**

March 24, 2021

April 04, 2021

April 21, 2021

May 05, 2021

May 19, 2021

June 02, 2021

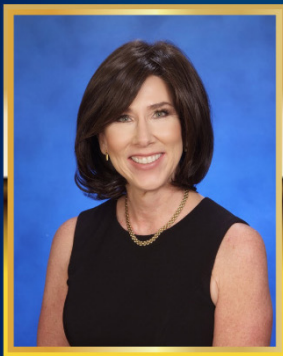


Dade College to provide county-wide FAFSA completion assistance through a series of virtual FAFSA events. These virtual workshops will provide students the opportunity to complete the application, receive hands-on support from financial aid experts, ask questions, and resolve any application challenges. These virtual workshops will be taking place on various Wednesdays through June, beginning at 5:30 p.m. To register, families should visit <http://your.mdc.edu/mdcmdcpsfafsacompetitionseries2021.DATES>.

Each year, the federal government provides more than \$150 billion in financial aid for college or career schools. Students must complete the

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to apply for this aid. The M-DCPS Division of Student Services is collaborating with Miami

## TERESA MURPHY NAMED M-DCPS TEACHER OF THE YEAR, NERISSA MANELA IS ROOKIE TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Teresa Ellen Murphy



Nerissa Manela

Teresa Ellen Murphy's inspiration for teaching is simple – it is her students at Spanish Lake Elementary School. The 27-year veteran 3rd-grade teacher was named the 2022 Francisco R. Walker Miami-Dade County Teacher of the Year in a virtual ceremony that was live streamed on February 4, 2021.

Teaching is a lifelong passion for Murphy, who believes that students must take ownership of their learning to reach their full potential. She created a daily “Home Learning Organizational Chart” for students and parents to monitor and reflect on their work. She wants to impact

students' lives in such a way that 20 years later, they return grateful for the kindness, understanding and special attention they received. Such was the case with a recent invitation to the law school graduation of a former kindergartener.

Murphy is always the first to share new practices and technology with her colleagues and utilizes her data analysis and grant writing skills to innovate and enhance the learning experience.

She involves students in community service projects like collecting toys for homeless youth, and creating

awareness about stroke prevention, as she suffered a stroke in 2012. This year, as she battles other health challenges, she demonstrates to her students the power of determination, positivity, and perseverance. Developing compassion, citizenship and a sense of community is her goal – as “good humans” are just as important as “good students.”

The runner-up is Yolette Mezadiou from Miami Edison Senior High School.

Nerissa Manela, a music teacher from Morningside K-8 Academy, was named the 2021 Rookie Teacher of the Year. Describing herself as determined, when she was six years old, Manela recalls asking her parents for violin lessons. That musical instrument has led to her career. While cultivating an appreciation for the arts and uncovering hidden talents, she also introduces students to multiple musical genres and cultures.

Erica Echeverri of TERRA Environmental Research Institute is the runner-up.

## FLORIDA PREPAID COLLEGE PLANS



As uncertain as the past year has been, what is for sure is that a consistent college savings strategy now will help your future college graduate avoid burdensome student loan debt. 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 tuitions 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, 2021 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 [myfloridaprepaid.com](https://myfloridaprepaid.com). Use code MIAMI21 for free enrollment until February 28th, or \$25 off from March 1st through April 30th.



school students in the U.S. are enrolled in CTE.

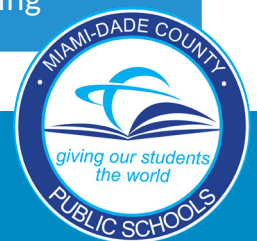
During CTE Month, M-DCPS promotes career academies, industry certification, internship participation, dual enrollment and other opportunities for college and career readiness. Currently, there are 104,073 students enrolled in CTE courses in Miami-Dade's K-12 schools. Some 2,072 students completed the 2020 Summer Youth Internship Program with 57 senior high schools and 594 internship providers participating.

For more information on CTE programs available at M-DCPS, visit: <http://dcte.dadeschools.net>.

## SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

**March 10**  
10:00 a.m.  
Instructional Materials  
Public Hearing

**March 17**  
10:00 a.m.  
Regular Meeting



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

A career and technology-based education will propel a child forward beyond the average student by giving them the academic, technical and employability skills needed to succeed in life.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is at the forefront of preparing students to be "College and Career Ready." The programs and courses offered in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) are integrated with academics to create a rigorous and relevant curriculum. CTE programs are more academically rigorous than those of a previous generation and many focus on areas ranging from STEM, Engineering, Law, Hospitality and Finance and lead to future study after high school, educating students in more than 70 career options based on 16 subjects or Career Clusters®.

M-DCPS offers CTE programs and courses to students in sixth through eighth grade, as well as in high schools, post-secondary technical colleges, and adult education centers. Students are introduced to CTE programs in the middle school grades through exploratory and introductory courses, which are designed to pique their interest in learning about career clusters and pathways. High school students may also study CTE as dually-enrolled students in M-DCPS' Technical Colleges or in university courses.

Throughout February, M-DCPS celebrates CTE month with the end goal of increasing parent-student awareness of CTE programs and academies as aligned to high-skill, high-wage and high-growth careers. More than 92 percent of all high

## SOCIAL MEDIA



@MDCPS  
@EscuelasMDCPS  
@MiamiSup



@MiamiSchools  
@AlbertoMCarvalho1



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Produced by the Office of Communications and Community Engagement

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