

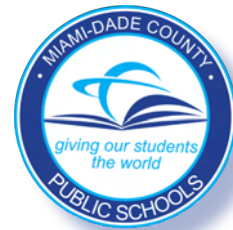
Parent Resource Guide

2010-2011

Connecting you to
Miami-Dade County Public Schools



Miami-Dade County Public Schools
www.dadeschools.net



Dear Parents and Guardians:

Parental involvement is at the heart of student achievement, and you play a pivotal role in the education of your children. We want you to know that we appreciate your involvement and encourage your continued partnership as we enrich the academic experience for our students.

To help you continue on this path, Miami-Dade County Public Schools has created this Parent Resource Guide—a “one-stop” source with helpful tips and information to guide you as you advocate for your child. On the following pages, you will find useful information on helping your child in school, becoming active with parent organizations such as the PTA/PTSA, and understanding standardized tests.

The Parent Resource Guide is meant to be a source for sharing information that will empower you to impact your child’s success in school and after graduation. Refer to a section below for the information you need.

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We hope you find it to be a useful tool as you involve yourself in your child’s education. We wish you and your child the best for a great school year.

Sincerely,

Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent of Schools



I. Introduction *Parent Resource Guide 2010-2011*



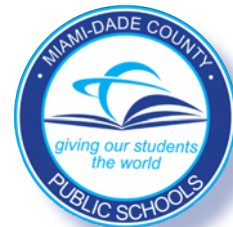
The 2010-2011 school year has begun. All across Miami-Dade County, students have returned to classrooms to meet new challenges that will help them learn and grow. School can be challenging for parents, too! This Parent Resource Guide contains basic information on many topics and tells you how to find out more. The offices listed below are also great places to get started with Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

- **Office of Parental Involvement**
- **Neighborhood Resource Centers**
 - **The Parent Academy**
- **Bilingual Parent Outreach Program**

For more information, see pages 2-5.



Office of Parental Involvement



At each step, from pre-kindergarten through high school graduation, parents should be full partners in learning, decision making and advocating for children. The Office of Parental Involvement (OPI) builds and strengthens partnerships between parents, teachers and school administrators so that all students are successful.

The Office encourages participation in PTAs and is a resource for parents who wish to serve on school and District advisory committees. It also sponsors the Family and Community Involvement Advisory Committee, which makes recommendations on topics important to parents. Through the Parent Leadership Council, the Office also provides a unique opportunity for parents whose children are enrolled in ESOL instruction to make recommendations on that program.

Every good relationship is based on regular, meaningful, two-way communication. Parents are encouraged to call and visit their children's school, to call the **Region** that supervises their school or to contact the Office of Parental Involvement. If you have questions after reading this guide, call OPI at 305-995-1233, logon to <http://parents.dade-schools.net> or visit a Parent Resource Center.

Title I Neighborhood Resource Centers (NRC) and M-DCPS Parent Resource Center (PRC)



The Title I Neighborhood Resource Centers (NRC) support families' community service/referral needs; assists with improving parental academic at-home-learning support for their children; provides information on M-DCPS available resources; and delivers Federal and State updates to families. A home learning and lending library; home-loan computers; and a designated computer lab, are all housed at the Title I NRC's. Additionally, a model Parent Resource Center has been established through a partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Office of Parental Involvement and Title I Administration. The purpose of this center is to encourage parent/family school partnerships and to help strengthen parent-child interaction.

These Centers are models for replication by schools and other community agencies. Staff at the Centers provide a monthly schedule of workshops, and professional development activities, as well as resource materials and support for families' efforts in assisting their children's academic learning. They offer a welcoming atmosphere for families, and as stated above, are available for a variety of purposes, including but not limited to those listed below.

Services

- Parent/Family Education, No Child Left Behind Information
- Home-Loan Computer and Technology Assistance, Lending Library
- Guidance for building home libraries
- State Elections Voter Registration (NRC)
- Title I Program Updates (NRC)
- Citizenship Preparation Assistance (NRC)
- SES Service Center (NRC)
- Ethel Pruitt Computer Lab (NRC)
- Test Preparation (NRC)
- Dissemination of information about higher education opportunities
- Community Resources and Services
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Updates
- Meeting space for parent organizations, conferences and seminars
- Dissemination of Parent Academy information including class offering and of the purpose and existence of both parent Information and Resource Center(s) (PIRC) in the state

Locations

- Title I Neighborhood Resource Center – North
7900 N.W. 27th Avenue, Space F-9
Miami, Florida 33147
(Northside Shopping Centre, 130 South Ct.)
Phone: 305 995-1712
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Office of Parental Involvement
Parent Resource Center
1450 N.E. 2nd Avenue, Suite 216
Miami, Florida 33132
- Title I Neighborhood Resource Center – South
5555 S.W. 93rd Avenue, Portable #3
Miami, Florida 33165
(FDLRS Southside)
Phone: 305 271-9391 ext 278

- School Sites

The Parent Academy



As a parent, you are your child’s first teacher. That’s why Miami-Dade County Public Schools created The Parent Academy, a free, year-round, parent engagement initiative helping parents become full partners in their children’s education. The Parent Academy helps educate parents about the importance of their roles, unites families with schools, and gives parents a fuller sense of their rights, responsibilities and the educational opportunities available to their children and to them. The “campus” is spread throughout every corner of this community. The curriculum helps bring parents more skills, knowledge and confidence to champion their children’s education. Parents are teachers, role models, mentors and providers – and have great power to make their children’s lives better.

The Parent Academy offers free workshops and family learning events throughout the year. Visit the Website at www.theparentacademy.net to view the course directory, upcoming events, and links to helpful information. For more information call 305-995-2680.

The Bilingual Parent Outreach Program



The Division of Bilingual Education and World Languages, through the Bilingual Parent Outreach Program (BPOP), provides a series of monthly informational parent workshops on various topics. These parent seminars are provided to the parents of English Language Learners (ELLs) and immigrant parents and families in an effort to educate and equip these parents and families to be better prepared, in order to be active participants in their children's education. These workshops that promote parental involvement and family literacy are provided in Spanish and in Haitian-Creole. The seminars also promote parental involvement and family literacy. A workshop calendar is provided online each month at <http://bilingual.dadeschools.net/BEWL/parent.asp>.

For additional information, please call 305-995-1920.



II. Pre-Kindergarten & Elementary School



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Pre-Kindergarten Programs



The Voluntary Pre-K program helps Florida children develop the skills they need to become good readers and successful students. Every Florida child who is four years old by September 1, 2009 is eligible to attend the program in the fall of 2009. Registration takes place in the spring, and admission is by lottery. For more information about Voluntary Pre-K, call the Early Learning Coalition, which administers the program, at 305-644-4046 or visit www.vpkhelp.org or www.elcmdm.org. For information about other pre-kindergarten programs, contact your neighborhood elementary school.

WLRN Ready to Learn



WLRN's Ready to Learn service is a fun, informative outreach initiative that prepares children for success in school through the reach of public television's award-winning children's programming. The service develops community-based programs designed to promote early learning, with accompanying Web and print content for children, parents, grandparents, educators and childcare providers. Ready to Learn offers parent/caregiver workshops and professional development for educators to address school readiness. Emphasis is placed on the "Learning Triangle" (View, Read, Do), promoting parental time spent reading with their children, and increasing children's developing literacy skills. For more information, visit www.wlrn.org/readytolearn or call 305-995-2195.

What Your Child Should Learn in Elementary School



Every student in Florida is exposed to the same benchmarks within a grade level. The Florida Department of Education has created the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, a list of learning goals for students in every grade. Schools must make sure that their teachers teach these skills in their classrooms.

If Your Child is Ready for More Challenging School Work



If you believe that your child is ready for more challenging academic work or would enjoy before or after-school academic activities, ask your school's principal about the Advanced Academic Programs available at your school. These might include the Gifted or Teaching Enrichment Activities to Minorities (TEAM) programs. Students with high academic potential are eligible for these programs, both of which require referral.

If You Would Like Your Child to Learn a Second Language



If you believe that your child will benefit from learning a second language, ask your school's principal about the world language programs available at your school. These might include Spanish for Spanish Speakers, Haitian-Creole for Haitian-Creole Speakers, or Spanish as a second language. Some schools offer dual-language programs in which students participate in literacy and content instruction in both English and the second language. These programs are offered in Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Haitian-Creole, or Chinese. All students are eligible for participation in these programs when entering kindergarten. At higher grades students with linguistic ability are eligible to participate.

If Your Child is Retained in Grade 3



If you learn that your child will be retained, it is important that you meet with his/her teacher to find out exactly what reading skills your child did not master and what the school will do to help your child catch up. According to state law, schools may no longer automatically promote grade 3 students to grade 4 if they score at Level 1 on the FCAT reading assessments. This law is not meant as a punishment of your child or you. It is aimed at giving your child the reading skills he/she needs to make adequate progress in school.

In some cases, a child who receives a score of Level 1 on the FCAT Next Generation Sunshine State Standards Reading portion is allowed to go into grade 4. These cases include students who:

- Are English Language Learners and have had fewer than two years of instruction in an ESOL program.
- Have disabilities and whose IEP (Individual Educational Plan) indicates the student meets exemption criteria for State Assessments.
- Have disabilities and meet all of these criteria: 1) they participated in the FCAT; 2) they have an IEP or a Section 504 plan that reflects that they have received intensive remediation in reading for more than two years; 3) they still demonstrate a deficiency in reading; and 4) they were previously retained in kindergarten or grades 1, 2, or 3.

(Continued on the next page)

If Your Child is Retained in Grade 3, continued



- Have received intensive remediation in reading for two or more years but still have a deficiency in reading and were previously retained in kindergarten or grades 1, 2, or 3 for a total of two years.
- Demonstrate, through a student portfolio, that they are reading on grade level as shown by demonstrating mastery of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in Reading equal to at least a Level 2 performance on the FCAT.
- Demonstrate an acceptable level of performance on an alternative standardized reading assessment approved by the State Board of Education. Additionally, eligible retained grade 3 students have an opportunity to demonstrate reading proficiency before the end of the first semester.

Be sure to discuss your child's specific situation in detail with your child's teacher and, if appropriate, with the reading leader at your school.

In Grades K-5, Your Child Should Learn to:



- Read independently for a sustained period of time.
- Write stories, poems, letters and simple reports using correct grammar.
- Edit his/her own writing – correcting spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Read books, magazines, and stories and be able to explain what has been read.
- Make effective oral presentations.
- Use graphic organizers and other note-taking strategies.
- Read a map, graph, and table.
- Do hands-on projects in school such as creating simple models, charts, books, and science experiments.
- Apply mathematics to the real world.
- Study about other countries.
- Study the history of Florida and the United States, including major ethnic/cultural groups.
- Understand the basic structure of the U.S. government.
- Understand the importance of civic and character education.
- Use a word processor for simple writing assignments.

Standardized Tests Your Child Will Take in Elementary School in 2010-2011



	GRADES TESTED	PURPOSE OF TEST
Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) Administered within the first 30 school days	K	Assesses all new kindergarteners for school readiness with two instruments. The Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS) monitors the skills, knowledge and behaviors a student demonstrates or needs to develop. The Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) measure Letter Naming and Phonemic Awareness, which are included in the VPK Education Standards. These data are used to calculate a student's Probability of Success in Reading score to measure the growth and development of early literacy skills.
Alternative Assessment for Grade 3 Promotion, Reading July	All retained students in grade 3	Retained grade 3 students who receive at least the minimum state-required score are eligible for promotion to grade 4.
Interim Assessment in Reading, Mathematics and Science Baseline, Fall, Winter	3-5 (Reading and mathematics) 4-5 (Science)	Assists teachers in determining students' areas of strength and weakness. Schools that must submit progress reports to the State are required to administer the assessments in all three administrations; other schools may choose to administer the assessment.
Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) Fall/Winter/Spring	K-3 4-5 Selected students	Monitors students' progress in reading to determine the need for remedial instruction.
Mid-Year Promotion Test, Reading November	Eligible retained grade 3 students	Eligible retained grade 3 students who receive at least the required minimum raw score are eligible for promotion to grade 4.
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) January-March	4 Selected grades and schools	Timed tests in selected subjects (English, mathematics, reading, science, writing, U.S. history, geography, civics, and the arts) that measure and compare student progress across the nation. Individual student reports are not provided.
Grade 3 Reading Student Portfolio January-May	3	A classroom assessment tool consisting of passages and questions designed to gather information on students' proficiency on the eight reading benchmarks assessed on the FCAT.
FCAT Writing March	4	Students are asked to write in order to explain or to tell a story. Students have 45 minutes to plan and produce a written response to an assigned topic or prompt. The writing prompt is scored holistically based on a rubric with scores ranging from a low of one (1) to a high of six (6).
Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) • Sunshine State Standards, Reading, Mathematics and Science (SSS) April	3-5 5 (science only)	The FCAT tests in Reading, Mathematics, and science (grade 5 only) are standardized, criterion-referenced tests. The tests assess student achievement on selected benchmarks, as defined by the Sunshine State Standards.
Stanford Achievement Test - Tenth Edition, Reading and Mathematics (SAT-10) April	1-2	The SAT-10 is a standardized, norm-referenced achievement test that utilizes a multiple choice format. Students take a Reading Comprehension and Mathematics Problem Solving subtest. The SAT provides achievement data that can be used to compare local students' performance with the performance of students in the nation.
Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA) March-April	Eligible grade 3 students	The CELLA is a criterion-referenced test administered to measure the growth of students classified as English Language Learners (ELLs) in mastering skills in English in four domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
Alternatives Standardized Reading Assessment (ASRA) May-June	3	Eligible grade 3 students who receive at least the required minimum raw score are eligible for promotion to grade 4.

III. Middle School



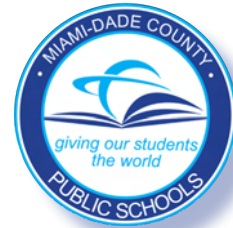
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What Your Child Should Learn in Middle School



Every student in Florida is exposed to the same benchmarks within a grade level. The Florida Department of Education has created the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, a list of learning goals for students in every grade. Schools must make sure that their teachers teach these skills in their classrooms.

If Your Child is Ready for More Advanced Classes



Advanced classes are available to students in grades 6, 7, and 8. These classes, offered in the areas of foreign languages, language arts, mathematics, science, and social sciences, provide students with a more rigorous and detailed curriculum. While there are no bonus points for advanced classes, students enrolled in these courses are prepared for honors classes at the middle and senior high school level. Entrance into these classes is based on teacher/counselor recommendation or at the request of the parent and approval of the school.

Honors classes are senior high school-level courses available to middle school students. These classes provide students with a more rigorous and detailed curriculum. Entrance into these classes is based on teacher/counselor recommendation or at the request of the parent and approval of the school.

Online Classes Through the Florida Virtual School (FLVS) or Miami-Dade Virtual School (M-DVS)



Online Classes Through the Florida Virtual School (FLVS) or Miami-Dade Virtual School (M-DVS)

Students who are home-schooled, unable to attend school, or wish to earn additional middle or high school credits outside of their regular school setting can take courses online through FLVS. This free, accredited, online program delivers courses over the Internet and provides communication with certified teachers on a regular basis via telephone, e-mail, online chats, instant messaging, and discussion forums. A student's full-time school may not deny access to courses offered by FLVS assuming that the selected course is appropriate for the student in terms of academic history, grade level and age. For more information, call 407-317-3326 or visit www.flvs.net.

Limited online courses are also available through M-DVS. Students may take these courses in addition to their normal course load or as part of their school day. These courses are franchised from the Florida Virtual School and taught by M-DCPS teachers. For more information, call the M-DVS office at 305-995-1915 or visit mdvs.dadeschools.net.

Middle School Course Requirements for 2010-2011



Course requirements for students in grades 6-8 are as follows:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social studies
- A semester in physical education
- Electives

In addition, one course in career education planning must be completed in grade 7 or 8. It may be a stand-alone course or instruction integrated into an existing course or courses. This course will result in an electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP) that must be signed by the student, the student's counselor, and the student's parent. Students who are English Language Learners (ELL) may substitute one ESOL class for one of the three required Language Arts classes. They must also take a second period of ESOL Development Language Arts, which counts as an elective.

For each year in which the student scores at Level 1 or 2 on FCAT Reading, the student must complete an intensive reading course the following year. For each year in which a student scores at Level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Mathematics, the student must receive remediation the following year, which may be integrated into the student's required mathematics course.

In order to be promoted to grade 9, students must successfully complete a minimum of 15 of the 18 courses which include: three each in language arts and mathematics, three sciences, three social sciences, one integrated course in career education planning and four other courses.

In Grades 6-8, Your Child Should Learn to:



- Read independently for a sustained period of time.
- Read and understand different types of books and stories, including novels, nonfiction, plays, and poetry.
- Write reports and other documents using correct grammar and punctuation.
- Conduct research on assigned topics.
- Make effective oral presentations.
- Use graphic organizers and other note-taking strategies.
- Organize school papers and assignments; keep records of assignments.
- Study for tests.
- Understand the rules of the English language and apply them in writing.
- Use integers, fractions, decimals, percentages, and other types of numeric expressions in mathematics.
- Use measurements to solve mathematics problems that are related to real-world situations.
- Understand basic algebraic and geometric concepts.
- Do mathematics problems involving two- and three-dimensional shapes.
- Understand the basics of physical and biological science.
- Conduct scientific experiments in class.
- Solve scientific problems using scientific processes.
- Study the history of Florida, the nation, and the world, including major ethnic/cultural groups.
- Understand the structure of the U.S. government and the principles of American democracy.
- Understand the role of the citizen in American democracy.
- Develop basic knowledge of economic systems.
- Use maps and write reports about the geography of the world.
- Use a computer to write a report, create a graph, and make a chart.

Standardized Tests Your Child Will Take in Middle School in 2010-2011



NAME OF TEST AND MONTH GIVEN	GRADES TESTED	PURPOSE OF TEST
Interim Assessment in Reading, Mathematics and Science Baseline/Fall/Winter	6-8 (Reading and mathematics) 7-8 (Science)	Assists teachers in determining students' areas of strength and weakness. Schools that must submit progress reports to the State are required to administer the assessments in all three administrations; other schools may choose to administer the assessments.
Florida Assessments for Instruction in English (FAIR) Fall, Winter, Spring	6-8 Selected students	Monitors students' progress in reading to determine the need for remedial instruction.
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) January-March	8 Selected grades and schools	Timed tests in selected subjects (English, mathematics, reading, science, writing, U.S. history, geography, civics, and the arts) that measure and compare student progress across the nation. Individual student reports are not provided.
FCAT Writing March	8	Students are asked to write in order to explain or to persuade. Students have 45 minutes to plan and produce a written response (an essay) to an assigned topic or prompt. The writing prompt is scored holistically based on a rubric with scores ranging from a low of one (1) to a high of six (6).
Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) • Sunshine State Standards, Reading, Mathematics and Science (SSS) April	6-8 8 (Science only)	The FCAT tests in Reading, Mathematics, and Science (grade 8 only) are standardized, criterion-referenced tests. The tests assess student achievement on selected benchmarks, as defined by the Sunshine State Standards.
Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA) March-April	6-8	The CELLA is a criterion-referenced test administered to measure the growth of students classified as English Language Learners (ELLs) in mastering skills in English in four domains: reading writing, listening, and speaking.
Statewide End of Course Test Algebra I May	6-8 enrolled students	Statewide End of Course Assessments are computer-based, criterion-referenced assessments that measure the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for specific high-school level courses. The Algebra I EOC will be administered in May 2011 to all students enrolled in Algebra in grades 6 through 12. Field tests for EOC Assessments in Geometry and Biology will be given in a sample of high schools in May 2011, but these tests will not count for students; the results will be used in developing tests to be used beginning in the 2011-12 school year.



IV. Senior High School



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Secondary School Reform Will Create Better Prepared Graduates



Today's high school graduates need new skills and experiences in order to be college and workforce ready and to compete effectively in the global workplace. In order to facilitate these objectives, the M-DCPS School Board approved the implementation of Secondary School Reform. The following six core principles of Secondary School Reform provide high schools with a framework for increasing student achievement, increasing student attendance, and increasing graduation rates: (1) personalize the learning environment; (2) increase academic engagement of all students; (3) empower educators; (4) develop accountable leaders; (5) engage community and youth; and (6) integrate a system of high standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. A ninth grade academy helps students transition into high school and better prepares them to choose their theme-based career academies. Students are encouraged to participate in the following by the end of their senior year: take more Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment, and Career Pathway courses that can earn them college credit; successfully pass industry certification tests; and participate in an internship program.

All high schools participate in Secondary School Reform regardless of whether they offer a six- or eight-period schedule. See page 27 for a list of high schools with an eight-period schedule, thereby giving students expanded opportunities to take additional academic and academy classes in their schedules.

Secondary School Reform Will Create Better Prepared Graduates (continued)



The following high schools implement an eight-period schedule, thereby giving students expanded opportunities to take additional academic and academy classes in their schedules.

- Booker T. Washington Sr. High School
- Coral Gables Sr. High School
- Hialeah Sr. High School
- Homestead Sr. High School
- John A. Ferguson Sr. High School
- Miami Beach Sr. High School
- Miami Carol City Sr. High School
- Miami Central Sr. High School
- Miami Edison Sr. High School
- Miami Jackson Sr. High School
- Miami Norland Sr. High School
- Miami Northwestern Sr. High School
- Miami Sr. High School
- Miami Southridge Sr. High School
- North Miami Beach Sr. High School
- North Miami Sr. High School
- Ronald Reagan/Doral Sr. High School
- Westland Hialeah Sr. High School

To learn more about SSR, visit <http://ssr.dadeschools.net>.

What Your Child Should Learn in Senior High School



Every student in Florida is exposed to the same benchmarks within a grade level. The Florida Department of Education has created the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, a list of learning goals for students in every grade. Schools must make sure that their teachers teach these skills in their classrooms.

High School Graduation Requirements for 2010-2011



SUBJECT	NUMBER OF CREDITS REQUIRED	NOTES
Language Arts	4.0	English I, II, III, and IV. ESOL courses may be included. Students who scored at Level 1 on the grade 8 FCAT Reading test must also take an intensive reading course as an elective.
Mathematics	4.0	These credits must be earned in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. Algebra I must be completed by or in grade 9, Geometry by or in grade 10, and higher level mathematics courses. Recommended sequence is Algebra I (9), Geometry (10), Algebra II (11), Analysis of Functions (12) and/or Pre-Calculus.
Science	3.0	Earth/Space Science must be completed in grade 9, Biology in grade 10, and Chemistry or Physical Science in grade 11. Recommended sequence is Earth/Space Science (9), Biology (10), Chemistry (11), and Physics (12). 11th-grade science class must be taken whether student has completed three credits or not.
U.S. History	1.0	
American History	1.0	
American Government	0.5	
Economics	0.5	
Performing Fine Arts	1.0	Any course in art, dance, drama, music, speech, debate, or practical arts. One credit in performing/fine arts or a practical
Physical Education	1.0	Students may fulfill the requirement by taking the Personal Fitness course and any other approved physical education course. Other options for completing these credits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in an interscholastic sport at the junior varsity or varsity level for two full seasons and passing the Competency Test on Personal Fitness with a "C" or above. • Completing one semester with a grade of "C" or above in a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps drill class, marching band class, or a physical activity class. This would satisfy the one-half credit required for physical education. The other one-half credit would need to be gained through the one-semester Personal Fitness course. • Students whose physical condition, as certified by a physician, prevents participation in a regular program may fulfill the requirement by participating in a modified or an adaptive physical education program.
General Electives	8.0	If the student is classified as LEP (Limited English Proficient), a Developmental Language Arts through ESOL course is required each year as an elective.
TOTAL CREDITS	24	
ADDITIONAL 2010-2011 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS		

If Your Child is Ready for More Advanced Classes



Students who desire a more challenging academic experience have a number of options available to them in high school, including Honors and Advanced Placement courses, the International Baccalaureate program, dual enrollment, and online classes.

More information about the following options is available on the pages indicated.

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- Advanced Placement (AP).....Page 31
- Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE).....Page 32
- International Baccalaureate (IB).....Page 33
- Dual Enrollment.....Page 34
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or Miami-Dade Virtual School (M-DVS)
- School for Advanced Studies (SAS).....,Page 36

Honors Classes



Senior high school students capable of handling a more rigorous curriculum that is presented at a faster pace are encouraged to enroll in honors classes. These courses, which give students the opportunity to explore the curriculum in greater depth, award students one bonus point applied toward their weighted Grade Point Average (GPA). Students are selected to participate in honors classes based on academic performance and teacher recommendation.

Advanced Placement (AP)



AP classes are college-level courses that provide students with a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum. Students are selected to participate in AP classes based on academic performance and teacher recommendation; however, motivated students who desire the challenge can request to be included in an AP course. Each May, students enrolled in AP classes take the AP exam given by The College Board and paid for by the District. All students who are enrolled in an AP course are expected to participate in the AP exam. Based on the AP exam results, students may be awarded up to two semesters of college credit at the discretion of the university. Students in AP classes are awarded two bonus points applied toward their weighted GPA.

AP classes are available to high school students in 33 subject areas. The number of AP classes available varies from school to school. Ask your school for details. If several students are interested in taking an AP class together that their high school does not offer, they can request that a course be set up for them.

Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)



The Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) is an international pre-university curriculum and examination system for academically able students. It is a flexible, broad-based, two-year curriculum which is being offered worldwide in schools and colleges. AICE features courses written specifically as preparation for honors degree programs. It encourages high academic standards and provides an ideal basis for study at the college and university level. The AICE program is currently offered at John I. Smith Elementary, Eugenia B. Thomas K-8, Jorge Mas Canosa Middle, Miami Lakes Middle, Doral Middle, Highland Oaks Middle, Miami Lakes Ed. Center, G. Holmes Braddock Senior High, American Senior High, and Ronald Reagan Senior High schools.

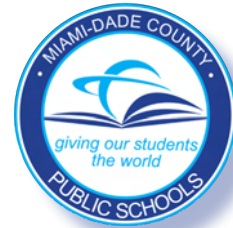
An AICE diploma is awarded on the basis of examination scores and coursework performance during six-full-credit courses. The full AICE diploma ensures that all students follow a broad and balanced academic program. Advanced Subsidiary (AS) certificates listing subjects passed is issued to those students who do not earn the full diploma. Within this framework, AICE offers an extremely flexible curriculum which can be tailored to students' interests, abilities and future plans. Students in AICE are awarded two bonus points applied toward their weighted GPA.

International Baccalaureate (IB)



This program is a demanding pre-university course of study that is intended for highly motivated students. The IB Diploma covers the last two years of high school and culminates in a series of international examinations in various subjects. It is offered at four senior high schools in Miami-Dade: Coral Gables, Coral Reef, John A. Ferguson and North Miami. Based on the results of the final examinations, a student may be awarded up to two years of college credit. In addition, students in IB classes are awarded two bonus points applied toward their GPA. Students may apply to participate in one of the District's IB programs. Acceptance is based on academic performance and teacher recommendation.

Dual Enrollment



This state-sponsored program lets senior high school students take college courses and have the opportunity to earn both college and high school credit. The state pays for the cost of the tuition and the District pays for the textbooks. Because students may take these classes on a college campus, students are responsible for their own transportation. Students in Dual Enrollment classes will be awarded two bonus points applied toward their weighted GPA.

Students must have completed grade 9 in order to participate in dual enrollment. In addition, students must have a 3.0 unweighted GPA and pass the College Placement Test (CPT) or achieve the required minimum score on the SAT or ACT.

There are several options available to students interested in participating in dual enrollment courses. All M-DCPS students who meet the eligibility criteria may enroll in dual enrollment courses during the fall, spring, and summer terms at Miami Dade College, Florida International University, and the University of Florida. Additionally, several M-DCPS high schools offer dual enrollment courses on their high school campuses both during the school day and after school.

The School for Advanced Studies at Miami Dade College and the Advanced Academic Academy at Florida International University also offer students in grades 11 and 12 an opportunity to avail themselves of these courses and earn both a high school diploma and an associate of arts degree simultaneously.

Online Classes



Students who are home-schooled, unable to attend school, or wish to earn additional middle or high school credits outside of their regular school setting can take courses online through the **Florida Virtual School (FLVS)**. This free, accredited, online program delivers courses over the Internet and provides communication with certified teachers on a regular basis via telephone, e-mail, online chats, instant messaging, and discussion forums. A student's full-time school may not deny access to courses offered by FLVS assuming that the selected course is appropriate for the student in terms of academic history, grade level and age. For more information, call 407-317-3326 or visit www.flvs.net.

Limited online courses are also available through the **Miami-Dade Virtual School (M-DVS)**. Students may take these courses in addition to their normal course load or as part of their school day. These courses are franchised from the Florida Virtual School and taught by M-DCPS teachers. For more information, call the M-DVS office at 305-995-1915 or visit mdvs.dadeschools.net.

School for Advanced Studies (SAS)



This program is designed for grade 11 and 12 students seeking an academically challenging curriculum and a small-school environment, coupled with dual enrollment in the Miami Dade College system. Students must meet certain academic criteria to apply. SAS is located at three MDC campuses. For more information, call SAS at the Kendall campus at 305-237-0510, the North campus at 305-237-1089 or the Wolfson (downtown) campus at 305-237-7270, or visit <http://sas.dadeschools.net>.

Standardized Tests Your Child Will Take in Senior High School in 2010-2011



NAME OF TEST AND MONTH GIVEN	GRADES TESTED	PURPOSE OF TEST
Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) October	10 9, 11 Interested students	Measures a student's academic abilities as compared to other students throughout the nation and provides information about a student's general academic development compared to those planning to attend college. Used to identify students who qualify for scholarships in the National Merit and National Hispanic Scholars programs. Also used to identify applicants for appointment to military academies.
Florida College Entry-Level Placement Test (FCLEPT) January-May	10-12 Interested students	Given to interested students on a voluntary basis to determine if they are ready for college-level work. The results are used to counsel students in their choice of colleges and/or careers. The FCLEPT is an untimed, standardized multiple-choice test taken on a computer. It consists of three subtests: reading comprehension, sentence skills and elementary algebra.
Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) Fall, Winter, Spring	9-12 Selected students	Monitors students' progress in reading to determine the need for remedial instruction.
Interim Assessment in Reading, Mathematics and Science Baseline, Fall, Winter	9-10 (Reading and mathematics) 10-11 (Science)	Assists teachers in determining students' areas of strength and weakness. Schools that must submit progress reports to the State are required to administer the assessments in all three administrations; other schools may choose to administer the assessments.
FCAT Writing March	10	Students are asked to write in order to explain or to persuade. Students have 45 minutes to plan and produce a written response (an essay) to an assigned topic or prompt. The writing prompt is scored holistically based on a rubric with scores ranging from a low of one (1) to a high of six (6).
Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) • Sunshine State Standards, Reading, Mathematics and Science (SSS) April	9-10 11 (Science only)	The FCAT tests in Reading, Mathematics, and Science (grade 11 only) are standardized, criterion-referenced tests. The tests assess student achievement on selected benchmarks, as defined by the Sunshine State Standards.
FCAT Retake Reading and Mathematics (Graduation Test) Spring/Fall	Eligible students in grades 10-13	The FCAT graduation test is administered for the first time to all students in grade 10 in the Spring. Students in grades 11 and above who have not previously passed the FCAT graduation test have further opportunities to participate in the retake administrations in the Fall and Spring of each school year.
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) January-March	12 - Selected grades and schools	Timed tests in selected subjects (English, mathematics, reading, science, writing, U.S. history, geography, civics, and the arts) that measure and compare student progress across the nation. Individual student reports are not provided.
Florida Competency Examination on Personal Fitness (FCEPF) December, May	Interested students in grades 9-11	Assesses mastery of the physical education course, Personal Fitness 1501300. A student can be exempted from the physical education requirement by making a "C" or better on the FCEPF and participating in two full seasons in an interscholastic sport at the junior varsity or varsity level.
College Board Testing Program SAT I and SAT II Given a number of times during the year	Interested students in grades 10-12	The SAT I Reasoning Test consists of multiple-choice items in verbal and mathematics and an essay in writing. The SAT I is used in reviewing applications for admission to many colleges and universities. The SAT II Subject Tests cover specific subject areas. Students wishing to show their mastery of a particular subject may choose to take these tests as part of their college application process. There are registration deadlines and fees for all of the SAT tests.
American College Testing Program (ACT) Given a number of times during the year	Interested students in grades 10-12	Multiple-choice test in English, reading, mathematics and science reasoning. The ACT is used in reviewing applications for admission to many colleges and universities. There are registration deadlines and fees for this test.
Advanced Placement (AP) Examinations May	AP students in 9-12	Given to students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses. They measure achievement in the subject areas covered by the course taken. Many colleges will award college credit to a student who achieves a score of 3 or higher on an AP examination.
International Baccalaureate (IB) External Written Examinations May	IB students in grades 11-12	Given to students enrolled in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. Students may take IB tests in literature, foreign language, social science, experimental science, mathematics and the arts.
Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA) March-April	9-12	The CELLA is a criterion-referenced test administered to measure the growth of students classified as English Language Learners (ELLs) in mastering the skills in English in four domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
Statewide End of Course Exams Algebra I	9-12, enrolled students	Statewide End of Course Assessments are computer-based, criterion-referenced assessments that measure the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for specific high-school level courses. The Algebra I EOC will be administered in May 2011 to all students enrolled in Algebra I in grades 6 through 12. Field tests for EOC Assessments in Geometry and Biology will be given in a sample of high schools in May 2011, but these tests will not count for students; the results will be used in developing tests to be used beginning in the 2011-12 school year.
Field Tests Biology, Geometry May	9-12, enrolled students, selected schools	

In Grades 9-12, Your Child Should Learn to:



- Read and analyze increasingly complex types of literature.
- Conduct research from a variety of sources.
- Write papers and other documents with ease, using correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Make effective oral presentations.
- Use algebra and geometry to solve mathematical problems.
- Understand and be able to use data analysis.
- Understand the basic principles of atomic theory.
- Understand the properties of matter, energy, force, and motion.
- Understand how the earth was formed and how it is changing.
- Understand the solar system and what scientists know about the universe.
- Understand the make-up and genetic development of living things.
- Use scientific processes to solve problems.
- Understand how science, technology, and society relate to each other.
- Understand and analyze the history of the United States and the world.
- Know the geography of the world and how people interact with the physical environment.
- Define personal political beliefs based on knowledge of American democracy and government.
- Understand how financial institutions work and how to manage money.
- Understand different economic systems in the world and how they relate to each other.
- Understand the negative consequences of and healthy alternatives to substance abuse, bullying, harassment, and other self-defeating behaviors.

Timeline for Implementation of the Florida Secondary School Redesign Act Amendment



ENTERING 9 TH GRADERS 2010 – 2011	ENTERING 9 TH GRADERS 2011 – 2012	ENTERING 9 TH GRADERS 2012 – 2013	ENTERING 9 TH GRADERS 2013 – 2014
Algebra I – the EOC assessment will be 30% of the student's grade for the course*	Algebra I – the EOC assessment must be passed in order to earn credit for the course*	Geometry – the EOC assessment must be passed in order to earn credit for the course*	Chemistry or Physics and an equally rigorous science course required for graduation
Geometry required for graduation	Geometry – the EOC assessment will be 30% of the student's grade for the course*	Biology I – the EOC assessment must be passed in order to earn credit for the course*	
	Biology I required for graduation and the EOC assessment will be 30% of the student's grade for the course*	Algebra II required for graduation	
Major area of interest repealed	FCAT Science will be discontinued as the EOC assessment is implemented		
Grade 9 FCAT Mathematics will be discontinued as the EOC assessment is implemented	Grade 10 FCAT Mathematics will be discontinued as the EOC assessment is implemented		

* These requirements will be in effect according to the above schedule for middle school students who enroll in the respective senior high school courses.

Sr. High School Course Requirements for 9th-Graders in 2010-2011



English: 4 credits with major concentration in composition, reading for information, and literature. (English through ESOL must be taken by ELL students.)

Mathematics: 4 credits (Algebra I by grade 9, Geometry by grade 10, and two courses equivalent to Algebra I or higher). A recommended sequence includes Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Analysis of Functions and/or Pre-Calculus.

Science: 3 credits taken in grades 9-12, two of which must have a laboratory component. One of these credits must be taken in grade 11. For students who enter grade 8 in 2010-2011, these credits represent additional courses beyond those taken in middle school. A recommended sequence includes Earth/Space Science; Biology; Chemistry or Physical Science or Integrated Science III or Environmental Science; and Physics.

Social Science: 3 credits including one credit in U.S. History, one credit in American History, one-half credit in American Government, and one-half credit in Economics.

Physical Education: 1 credit to include integration of health.

Performing/Fine Arts: 1 credit in performing/fine arts or a practical arts course that incorporates artistic content and techniques of creativity, interpretation, and imagination.

Majors, Minors, or Electives: 8 credits, 4 of which must be in the student's major area of interest; remaining credits may be used for another major, minor, elective courses or intensive reading or mathematics courses.

Graduation Options for Student Who Entered Grade 9 in 2010-2011



	24 CREDIT OPTION	18 CREDIT COLLEGE PREPARATORY OPTION	18 CREDIT CAREER PREPARATORY OPTION
LANGUAGE ARTS/READING/ESOL	4 credits (major concentration in composition & literature and reading for information)	4 credits (major concentration in composition & literature and reading for information)	4 credits (major concentration in composition & literature and reading for information)
MATHEMATICS	4 credits (Algebra I, Geometry, & 2 courses at the Algebra II level or higher)	4 credits (Algebra I, Geometry, & 2 courses at the Algebra II level or higher)	4 credits (Algebra I, Geometry, & 2 courses at the Algebra II level or higher)
SCIENCE	3 credits (Earth/Space Science & Biology I and 1 course from the following: Chemistry, Physical Science, Physics, or Integrated Science III)	3 credits (Earth/Space Science & Biology I and 1 course from the following: Chemistry, Physical Science, Physics, or Integrated Science III)	3 credits (Earth/Space Science & Biology I and 1 course from the following: Chemistry, Physical Science, Physics, or Integrated Science III)
SOCIAL SCIENCE	3 credits (World History, United States History, United States Government, & Economics)	3 credits (World History, United States History, United States Government, & Economics)	3 credits (World History, United States History, United States Government, & Economics)
FOREIGN LANGUAGE	Not required (foreign language credit is required for admission to state universities)	2 credits in the same language or demonstrated proficiency	Not required
PERFORMING/FINE ARTS/PRACTICAL ARTS/CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION	1 credit in performing/fine arts or a practical arts course that incorporates artistic content and techniques of creativity, interpretation, and imagination.	Not required	3 credits in a single career/technical education program, 3 credits in career/technical dual enrollment courses, or 5 credits in career/technical education courses
PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH	1 credit	Not required	Not required
ELECTIVES	8 credits	2 credits	1 credit unless earning 5 credits in career/technical education
GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)	2.0	3.5 (beginning with students who entered 9 th grade in 2006-2007 and thereafter; for students who entered 9 th prior to 2006-2007, required GPA is 3.0)	3.0
MINIMUM GRADE TO EARN COURSE CREDIT	D	B (weighted or unweighted)	C (weighted or unweighted)
ANTICIPATED TIME TO COMPLETION	4 years	3 years	3 years
TESTING	Students must earn a passing score on the Reading and Mathematics sections of the FCAT graduation and/or EOC test.	Students must earn a passing score on the Reading and Mathematics sections of the FCAT graduation and/or EOC test.	Students must earn a passing score on the Reading and Mathematics sections of the FCAT graduation and/or EOC test.
COMMUNITY SERVICE	Required (see Explanatory Notes chart)	Not required	Not required

Three-year Graduation Option



Students may follow an accelerated three-year graduation option requiring only 18 credits to graduate. Students who wish to take this option can choose the College Preparatory Program or the Career Preparatory Program. These options require students to focus on core subjects and eliminate most elective courses. Students must still pass the Grade 10 FCAT and have an unweighted cumulative GPA of 3.5 for the College Preparatory Program or a 3.0 for the Career Preparatory Program on a 4.0 scale to be eligible for an accelerated graduation option.

This program is not for everyone. Students must decide before the end of grade 9 whether to pursue this option. Parents and students should carefully consider all aspects with their school guidance counselors before enrolling.

If You are Concerned Your Child May Not Graduate



Many parents are concerned that their children will not receive a high school diploma because they did not pass the Grade 10 FCAT. Students who do not pass the FCAT in grade 10 will be given several opportunities to pass the test in grades 11 and 12. Students can receive additional academic help from their schools through the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. (See **“If Your Child is Not Doing Well in School”**).

Beginning with the graduating class of 2003-2004 and thereafter, 12th-grade students who have failed to earn a passing score on the FCAT graduation test and have attained the **SAT or ACT scores concordant with the FCAT passing scores applicable to their graduating class** shall satisfy the assessment requirement for a standard high school diploma.

If your child is in grade 12 and is not able to pass the FCAT, you will want to explore other graduation options available to him/her, including receiving additional FCAT help and earning his/her GED. Students who do not pass the FCAT by the end of grade 12 year may continue to take the test each time it is offered through the adult education program.

If your child is disabled and has an IEP (Individual Educational Plan) and does not pass the FCAT by his/her graduation year, he/she may graduate with a special diploma or certificate of completion. Students with disabilities may also apply for a waiver of the FCAT if they have met all other requirements for graduation except a passing score on the FCAT. Students with disabilities are also allowed to continue to attend high school and take classes to help pass the FCAT until age 22.

Get Help Applying to College



If your child wants to attend a college or university after graduation, you should start planning early in grade 9. You and your child will want to explore what kind of college will be the best match for him/her, the college entrance tests required, and the types of financial aid and scholarships available.

One of the best places to start learning more about applying to college is through the College Assistance Program (CAP) at your child's high school. Every M-DCPS high school has a CAP advisor, a member of the Student Services Team at the school who is responsible for helping students apply to college. The CAP advisor has information on colleges and universities located throughout the United States and internationally. The CAP advisor can help your child select a college, fill out applications and financial aid forms, and even visit colleges. You should meet with your child's guidance counselor if you have other concerns about the college application process and academic preparation for college.

Florida's official online student advising system, located at www.facts.org, is an excellent source of information for Florida students applying to college. You can also find more information on colleges and universities at your local library or online.

Concordant Test Scores by Graduation Year



	READING		MATHEMATICS	
	2009-10	2010-11	2009-10	2010-11
FCAT	1926	1926	1889	1889
SAT	410	420	370	340
ACT	15	18	15	15

Get Help Applying to College, continued



College Entrance Exams

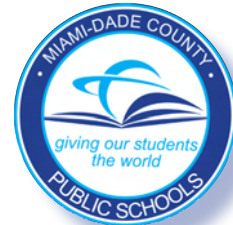
Your child will need to take special tests called college entrance exams to apply to college. (See the chart on Standardized Tests in this section). The two most important tests are the College Board SAT-I: Reasoning Test and the ACT Assessment. Most colleges and universities require applicants to take these tests. The testing organizations will schedule these tests during the year, but it is up to your child to register to take them. There is a fee to take each test. The results of the tests are mailed to the colleges of your child's choice. In most cases, your child will need to submit college applications in his/her senior year. Some colleges offer the choice to apply for an "early decision." This requires a student to accept a college's offer of admission early in the school year.

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program

Florida offers three types of scholarships through the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program, which is funded by the Florida Lottery. These are the Florida Academic Scholars Award, the Academic Top Scholar Award, the Florida Medallion Scholars Award, and the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars Award. They can only be used at eligible public and private colleges and universities in Florida. Applicants must have a minimum GPA of between 3.0 and 3.5, as well as meet other academic and/or vocational requirements. For more information, contact your child's school guidance counselor, call the toll-free Bright Futures Hotline at 1-888-827-2004 or visit www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/bf.



V. What All Parents Need to Know



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Parent/Family Involvement



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Parents Can Make a Big Difference



Be a Very Involved Parent

Home is where the start is. When parents or guardians are actively involved in their children's education, their children perform better in school. Involvement begins when parents support learning at home. Read to and with your child. Ask them about their homework. Turn off the TV so that reading and learning can take place. Let your child know that you expect them to do well and to get a good education.

One powerful way to be involved is simply to "Be There" for your child. See pages 50-51 to learn how.

“Be There” for Your Child



“Be There” simply means connecting in a special way with your child. It means turning ordinary moments into something extraordinary by talking about education, an experience or something of interest to your child. It adds smiles and hugs to your daily challenges. It turns difficult moments into teachable moments. It transforms relationships and creates lasting memories. Our schools need you to help your child achieve. When you connect with your child every day, your child benefits for life.

When a child knows a parent cares about his or her education, the following can happen:

- Achievement in school improves; students earn higher grades and test scores and enroll in higher-level programs
- Children want to go to school
- Courses are passed, credits earned and students are promoted to the next grade
- Self-confidence improves
- Children have better social skills and behavior at home and at school
- Students graduate from high school and go on to postsecondary education.

How to “Be There” for Your Child



Here are some ideas on how you can Be There for your child. The ideas can be adapted to any age group.

- Have your child help you sort the laundry. Make up a story together about the “laundry monster” who likes to confuse people with look-alikes.
- While eating dinner, ask your teen a question to stretch his/her imagination, such as “If you were the smartest person on earth, what would you use your intelligence to do?”
- In the grocery store, tell your child he/she may pick out three items to take home, but they must contain less than 10 grams of sugar each.
- When driving in the car, ask your young child to find the letters of the alphabet in signs you pass. With the teenager, ask them to help you calculate how many miles per gallon you’re getting with each automobile you drive.

For more ideas, call the Office of Parental Involvement at 305-995-1233 or visit www.bethere.org.

Get to Know Your Child's School and Teacher



Whenever possible, spend time at your child's school and, even if you can't be physically present, communicate often with your child's teacher. A great way to stay in touch is through the Parent Portal. You'll need to obtain your Parent PIN number by visiting the school. Then you can register online at **myportal.dadeschools.net/parent**. From then on you can access your child's classes, grades and attendance from any computer with Internet access. Find out when parent meetings are and try to attend. When there is an "Open House" or "Back to School Night," be sure to go. Many schools print newsletters for parents with information on parent meetings and other school events. If your school has a newsletter, be sure to read it.

Become familiar with the school's principal, assistant principals, school guidance counselors and staff members. Also, get to know your school's Community Involvement Specialist (CIS). The CIS is often a parent just like you who has been hired to encourage communication between parents and the school. The CIS often speaks a second language.

Sometimes it may seem that the principal or staff is too busy to answer your questions. Remember, it is your right to be part of your child's education. Be patient and be persistent until your questions are answered.

Make Sure Your Child Attends Class



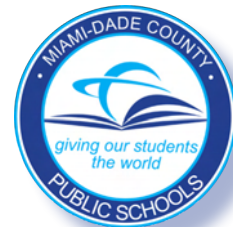
There is probably nothing more important to a student's success in school than regular attendance. This means being in school on time, every day, and parents need to ensure that their children are present.

When a child is sick, that is of course an excused absence, but when a child must miss five or more consecutive days because of illness, the family must provide a written statement from a medical provider. A medical provider must also provide a written statement if a child is absent from school because of a medical appointment. The only other excused absences from school are because of a death in the family, the observance of a mandatory religious holiday, a school-sponsored event or an enrichment activity that has been preapproved by the principal, a mandatory court appearance, or an outdoor suspension.

When a child returns to school from an excused absence, parents should also ensure that all make-up assignments are completed and returned to the teachers.

For additional information, please see the School Board Rule 6Gx13-5A-1.041 at www2.dadeschools.net/schoolboard/rules/Chapt5/5a1.041.pdf.

Volunteer With Your Child's Class



One way to get to know the people in charge of the school is to volunteer to help out in the office, classroom or media center (library). You may also volunteer to accompany the children on field trips. Security measures require that parents complete an application and be screened before they volunteer in class or help with a field trip. For more information, contact your child's school or call 305-995-1439.

Make the Most of Parent-Teacher Conferences



If your child is experiencing difficulties, the teacher may contact you to schedule an individual conference. You may also ask for an individual conference at any time that you have a concern. To do so, call the school or write a note to the teacher, giving at least 48 hours' notice.

Join the Local PTA or PTSA



Each school has a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA). This local organization is connected to the Miami-Dade County Council of PTAs/PTSAs, which is connected to the Florida PTA. The PTA's mission is threefold:

- to support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;
- to assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise, protect and prepare their children; and
- to encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of our state.

For more information, call 305-995-1102 or visit pta.dadeschools.net or floridapta.org.

Ask About Your EESAC



By an act of the Florida Legislature, each school must have an Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC) composed of parents (elected by parents), teachers (elected by teachers), education employee (elected by education support employees), a student (elected by students), the principal, and local business and community leaders appointed by the principal. A majority of the committee members must not be employed by the school district. All interested community members are encouraged to attend EESAC meetings even if they are not voting members of the council.

The EESAC is responsible for developing and making final decisions about the School Improvement Plan (SIP), which addresses issues such as curriculum, budget, discipline, training, instructional materials, technology, staffing and student support services. The EESAC also advises the principal on the development of the school's budget.

Even if you do not wish to become an EESAC representative, you should get to know the parents who are. Ask them what issues the EESAC is discussing, find out where to get copies of the minutes and actions, and feel free to make comments and suggestions on the topics that concern you.

Find More Facts About Your Child's School



Information about each M-DCPS school, such as data on student standardized test scores, qualifications of teachers, attendance rates, mobility rate (which measures how often students move in and out of the school), student membership, etc., is available through the following sources:

The Office of Strategic and School Improvement Planning provides reports with demographic and test data on individual public schools. For a selection of detailed reports, visit osp.dadeschools.net and click on “Clearinghouse for Planning” on the left side of the page. Select a specific school or click on “Advanced Search Options” for selecting schools. For more assistance, call the office at 305-997-2692.

You may also ask your child’s school directly for information on the professional qualifications of your child’s classroom teacher(s) and/or paraprofessionals, including their licensing status, degree major, graduate degree(s) and the field of certification. By law, your child’s school must make this information available to you.

Pursue Your Own Education



The Parent Academy is a free, year-round, parent engagement initiative of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, helping parents become full partners in their children’s education. The Parent Academy helps educate parents about the importance of their roles, unites families and schools, and gives parents a fuller sense of their rights, responsibilities and the educational opportunities available to their children and to them. Classes are available in schools throughout the District and at select community sites. The curriculum helps bring parents more skills, knowledge and confidence to champion their children’s education. Parents are teachers, role models, mentors and providers—and have great power to make their children’s lives better.

For Parent Academy course listings and locations, call 305-995-1920 or visit **theparentacademy.dadeschools.net**.

Become Involved



Several District-level committees assist the School Board and the staff in an advisory capacity. Many of these committees are looking for parents who will serve.

See page 61 for a list of some of the committees that recruit parents to become members. All of these committees welcome the public to observe and participate in their meetings.

M-DCPS Committees with Parent Volunteers



COMMITTEE NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION
District Athletic Advisory Committee Reviews and advises the board and Superintendent on matters regarding the Athletic Program, physical education, sports medicine, etc.	Tel. 305-995-7576
Attendance Boundary Committees (District, Joint, or School Site) Identifies schools for changes and conducts public hearings on proposed school boundaries.	Tel. 305-995-7626
District Wellness Advisory Committee Makes recommendations regarding the overall health and wellness of students and staff.	Tel. 305-995-7116
Diversity, Equity, and Excellence Advisory Committee (DEEAC) Reviews issues on maintaining a multicultural system.	Tel. 305-995-1580
Educational Excellence School Advisory Council Support Committee Reviews waivers and requests from school's EESAC.	Tel. 305-995-2692 http://opi.dadeschools.net/EESAC
Ethics Advisory Committee Ensures the integrity of the Board's decision making processes.	Tel. 305-995-1436
Family and Community Involvement Advisory Committee Brings together parents, community and business representatives, and staff to enhance opportunities for parental involvement in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.	Tel. 305-995-1233 http://parents.dadeschools.net
Miami-Dade Coalition for Community Education Committee Supports the expansion of community education.	Tel. 305-817-0014, ext. 2500
Miami-Dade County Council PTA/PTSA The leadership organization for local schools' PTA/PTSA organizations. Many educational programs, information, and leadership training are available.	Tel. 305-995-1102
Parent Leadership Council (PLC) Addresses the educational needs of English Language Learner students. Information and leadership training is available.	Tel. 305-995-1233
School Site Planning and Construction Committee Makes recommendations to the School Board on the selection of sites where schools may be built.	Tel. 305-995-7289
Student Services Advisory Committee Reviews and makes recommendations on the counseling, career, substance education, and student development priorities in the District.	Tel. 305-995-7315
Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities Parents of students with educational challenges, citizens with an interest, and professionals in the field of ESE, as well as staff work together to gain understanding and to provide support for students with educational exceptionalities.	Tel. 305-995-2027
Title I District Advisory Committee (DAC) Parents, Title I Community Involvement Specialists (CIS), Title I Administration, District staff, and community resource providers work together to survey and support the needs of families in schools implementing the Title I program. DAC also helps to develop the Title I District Parental Involvement policies and procedures.	Tel. 305-995-1713
Title I Regional Centers Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Parents, CIS, Title I Administration and District staff work together to promote shared responsibility with parents for their children's learning. The PAC also provides training and information to parents of students in schools implementing the Title I program.	Tel. 305-995-1713



Student Health is Important to Everyone



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- Physical Fitness.....Page 67
- Required Health Examinations.....Page 68
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- Meningococcal Disease and Meningitis.....Page 69

Florida KidCare: Children's Health Insurance Program



Florida KidCare is the state's health insurance program for eligible children under age 19 who do not have health insurance. Most eligible families pay \$15 to \$20 per month for coverage that includes physician visits, check-ups and shots, hospitalizations, surgeries, prescriptions, emergencies, visions and hearing screenings, dental care, behavioral health services and more. A small co-payment may be required for some services.

Florida KidCare eligibility is based on the age of the child, household size and family income. To qualify, a child must meet income eligibility requirements, be under age 19, be uninsured, and a U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen. Dependent children of a state employee eligible for health insurance or children in a public institution are not eligible for the Florida KidCare program. Children ages 1 – 18 who are not eligible for Florida KidCare may qualify for a full-pay option.

Florida KidCare may have limited space, and applications are accepted on a first-come, first served basis. To apply, visit www.floridakidcare.org or call 1-888-540-5437.

Physical Fitness



Children perform better in school when they are physically fit. However, many children are overweight due to poor diet and lack of regular exercise. Statistics show that the number of obese children has tripled in the last 20 years.

There are many ways to help your child improve his or her physical fitness. These include limiting time in front of the television, making healthy meals and snacks, and providing rewards and incentives for physical activity. Ask your school about after-school fitness programs and team sports opportunities. (Students are required to have a health examination and either school or football insurance before participating in athletics.)

Parents should enroll their children in physical education to ensure that they receive the recommended amount of daily physical activity. All students enrolled in physical education will receive a fitness report.

Required Health Examinations



Even healthy, active children need regular health examinations. Every child must have an examination (including a tuberculosis risk assessment) by a physician within the 12 months before entering the M-DCPS system. You may go to a private physician or neighborhood health center. Request that the medical provider complete the School Entry Health Exam (Form DH 3040). This form must be submitted to the school. It becomes part of your child's Cumulative School Health Record. (Students who transfer to M-DCPS from another Florida school system and have a completed form on file do not need to be re-examined.)

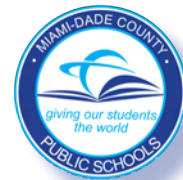
Immunizations



In addition to the health exam, all students entering the M-DCPS system must present a Certificate of Immunization filled out by the student's medical provider. The certificate of immunization will either be complete or temporary depending on the number and type of vaccines that the child has completed. This form also becomes part of your child's permanent health record. The principal will track this temporary certification and your child may be removed from school if he/she is not immunized by the time it expires.

If you object to immunization for religious reasons, you must complete a Religious Exemption Certificate (Form DH 681). Certain medical exemptions are also available from the student's medical provider. Students who are not immunized should be removed from school during any communicable disease epidemic. Turn to the next page for immunization guidelines for school entry.

Immunization Guidelines for School Entry



The immunizations listed below are part of a broader immunization schedule that is recommended for all children by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

TYPE	NOTES
DTP/DTaP	Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis or Diphtheria, Tetanus and acellular Pertussis. Five doses are required. However, if the fourth dose was given after the fourth birthday, a fifth dose is not required.
Hib	Haemophilus influenzae type b. Required for public preschool from two months through 59 months of age. The number required for Hib vaccination varies, depending on the child's age and type of vaccine received.
Tdap	Tetanus, Diphtheria, and acellular Pertussis. One Tdap is required for entrance to grade 7.
Polio	Four doses are required. However, if the third dose is given after the fourth birthday, only three doses are required.
Measles	One dose is required for Pre-K. Two doses are required in grades K-12, preferably in the form of MMR.
MMR	Measles, Mumps, and Rubella. Two doses are required from Kindergarten through grade twelve.
Hepatitis B	Three doses are required, however an accelerated two dose series is also available for adolescents 11-14 years of age.
Varicella	Also known as chickenpox. All students in grades Pre-K, 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th , 5 th , 6 th , 7 th , and 8 th will be required to have one dose. All students in kindergarten and first will be required to have two doses of varicella. Varicella vaccine is not required if there is documented history of the disease.

Meningococcal Disease and Meningitis



Meningitis is usually caused by viruses or bacteria and can affect people of any age. It can spread easily when large groups of people are in close contact.

Viral meningitis is often mistaken for the flu and can be spread in the same way. Bacterial meningitis is rare but much more serious, and can be life threatening. It most often affects infants, young children, and the elderly. Symptoms include sudden high fever, intense headache, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and rash. If your child has these symptoms, seek medical treatment immediately.

Please contact the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Division of Student Services, Comprehensive Health Services office at 305-995-1238 for more information.



Student Services



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- If Your Child is Not Doing Well in School.....Page 76
- The Progress Monitoring Plan.....Page 77
- The FCAT: What It Means for You and Your Child.....Page 78
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Find Out What Your Child is Learning in School



Pay attention to what your child is learning in school. Look regularly at your child's homework assignments and samples of work he/she brings home. Ask your child's teacher for a copy of the "syllabus" or outline of the course of study for the year or grading period. Look at the schoolbooks that your child brings home. When you visit your child's school, look at the students' work on the classroom walls. Ask for materials for home learning activities.

You can also look at the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, the list of learning goals that all teachers in Florida are required to follow. View the standards on the web at <http://etc.usf.edu/flstandards/index.html>.

You will receive two types of written reports on your child's progress in school. See the following page for more information.

Student Progress Reports



You will receive two types of written reports on your child's progress in school:

- Your child's report card, which is sent to you every nine weeks. The report card includes grades of A to F for the different subjects your child is learning and for your child's conduct, numbers of 1 to 3 for your child's effort in each subject, and attendance information.
- Your child's individual test score reports from standardized assessments or tests, such as the FCAT. Each testing program provides a different type of individual report. The test reports you receive will provide explanations about the scores and about how your child is doing.

The most common types of reported scores: 1) describe how well your child performed in certain subject areas compared with other students who took the same test (such as a norm-referenced test); and 2) provide information about your child's performance compared with a standard or grade-level expectation. For example, the FCAT report will let you know if your child is meeting the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and if he/she is making progress from year to year. Individual test score reports are typically available eight weeks after the test is taken and are provided to parents by the student's school.

If Your Child Is Not Doing Well in School



There are many possible reasons why your child is not doing well in school. It is up to you and your child's teacher to work together to figure out the best way to help your child do better. Here are a few tips for dealing with poor school performance:

- Try not to become too emotional about your child's situation. Instead, focus on learning how you can best help your child make positive changes.
- Meet with your child's teacher and commit yourself to working together as a team.
- Work with your child's teacher and school to pinpoint exactly why your child is not doing well and what services are available to help.
- If your child is experiencing behavioral or emotional issues, be sure to contact the school counseling professionals (School Counselor, TRUST Specialist, School Social Worker, School Psychologist) immediately.

How the School Can Help: The Progress Monitoring Plan



If your child fails to meet state and district performance levels, the school must develop a Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP). The PMP process has been designed so that students who do not meet district and state performance standards are identified and monitored. The teacher will notify you using a district-developed letter that will accompany the interim progress report. If there is no progress or a reversal of progress, a parent conference will be scheduled for you, the teacher, guidance counselor, and/or administrator.

The FCAT: What it Means for You and Your Child



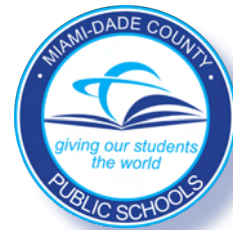
The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, or FCAT, is part of the State of Florida’s plan to improve student achievement. It is a series of tests that all children attending Florida public schools are required to take between grades 3 and 11 and includes tests in reading, mathematics, science and writing which measure students’ achievement on the state’s standards at each grade level. FCAT scores are also used to measure how much progress a student makes from year to year.

The FCAT reading and mathematics tests given in grade 10 are also used to determine if a student is prepared to graduate from high school. You can read more about the Grade 10 FCAT in the high school section of this guide.

- Reading the FCAT Student Reports
- About the FCAT Achievement Levels
- Measuring Your Child’s School
- How Can I Help My Child Do Well on the FCAT?
- Special Testing Accommodations
- Does the FCAT Tell Me Everything I Need to Know?

See page 83 for information about free tutoring for eligible students who need extra help to pass the FCAT.

Reading the FCAT Student Reports



Your child will take the FCAT assessments in March and April. A few months later, you will receive reports for each test. The reports are designed to be easy to read and understand.

- **FCAT Reading and Mathematics Report:** This shows your child’s scores on test questions measuring performance in reading and mathematics compared with what is expected of all children at that grade level. The scores include points earned on different content areas of the tests, “Achievement Level” scores which can range from 1 to 5, and “FCAT Scores” (developmental scale scores), which can range from 86 to 3008. The report also displays bar graphs that indicate how your child performed alongside what is expected at his/her grade level.
- **FCAT Science Report:** If your child is in grade 5, 8 or 11, you will receive a report on the science test, which shows how well your child did compared with the average child taking the test in Florida. The score includes points, “Achievement Levels,” which range from 1 to 5, and “FCAT Scores” (scale scores), which range from 100 to 500.
- **Writing Student Report:** If your child is in grade 4, 8 or 10, you will receive a report on the FCAT Writing test. The report provides a rubric score from 1 to 6 for your child’s essay; and information on the essay topic and how the essay was scored.

About the FCAT Achievement Levels



One of the important indicators in the FCAT Reading, Mathematics, and Science reports are the Achievement Level scores, which range from 1 to 5. Students who score at Levels 3, 4 or 5 are performing “at or above expectations.” Students who score at Levels 1 and 2 are performing “below expectations” and need additional help at school. If your child has scored at Levels 1 or 2, you will need to meet with his/her teacher to discuss what should be done to help your child improve his/her Reading, Mathematics or Science performance. The school may be required to develop a Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) for your child. To find out more about the Progress Monitoring Plan, see page 75.

If your child’s Achievement Level scores increase from one year to the next, this clearly shows that your child has made progress. In some grade levels, your child might also be making progress by scoring at the same Achievement Level for two years in a row. To learn more about FCAT Achievement Levels, turn to the next page.

Measuring Your Child's School



The State of Florida uses the Achievement Level scores along with other information to determine what grade your child's school receives every year. The state looks at Achievement Levels of different groups of students attending the school. School districts are required by the state to consider FCAT results in making decisions about students' needs for remediation or retention.

The FCAT scores from your child's school are also used for a national report on schools: the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report. This report shows how much progress students in different learning groups are making from year to year at a school. The AYP report is part of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a law for all schools in the United States. The law is designed to ensure that all children have "a fair, equal, and significant opportunity" to receive a high-quality education and master state standards such as the Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards.

To look at the AYP report for your child's school or any public school, visit <http://oada.dadeschools.net> and click on "Adequate Yearly Progress." You can also call the Office of Assessment, Research and Data Analysis at 305-995-7512 for any questions.

How Can I Help My Child Do Well on the FCAT?



You can help your child prepare for the FCAT by doing these simple activities at home:

- Encourage your child to read a variety of fiction and non-fiction materials, including books, magazines, poetry, etc.
- Encourage your child to read at least 30 minutes a day without a break.
- Take your child to the library regularly to check out and read books and magazines.
- Ask your child to retell stories and articles he/she has read.
- Ask your child “why” questions about what they have read. Ask him/her to compare and contrast stories and characters.
- Find ways for your child to practice writing at home, such as by writing notes to family members.
- Provide a quiet, comfortable place to study at home.
- Provide regular encouragement to your child, especially when he/she has done well.

Right before the test, here are a few more things you can do as a parent:

- Keep a positive attitude toward the test.
- Help your child relax.
- Make sure that he/she has a good night’s rest.
- Give your child a good breakfast.
- Keep a normal routine at home.

Special Testing Accommodations



If your child is enrolled in a special education or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program, he/she may be eligible for testing accommodations. Please check with your child's school for more information.

Does the FCAT Tell Me Everything I Need to Know?



Since the FCAT is given only once a year, it will not give you a total picture of your child's achievement or progress in school. FCAT scores can be very helpful in identifying specific areas where your child might need extra help, such as in the content area scores of each test. However, you should consider your child's FCAT scores along with other factors, such as your child's grades and ability to do well on other tests and assignments.

If you have any concerns about your child's work in school or performance on the FCAT, be sure to make an appointment to discuss them with his/her teacher.

Free Tutoring for Eligible Students



Some parents can now sign their children up for free tutoring. As a result of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001, children can receive extra academic help in the areas of math, reading, language arts, and science. This free tutoring is available if a child's school has been identified as in "Need of Improvement," "Corrective Action," "Planning for Restructuring" or "Restructuring" status. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) will be holding an enrollment period for 2010-2011 State-Approved Supplemental Educational Services (SES). Parent Information Packets will be sent home to parents of students who attend eligible schools.

Students attending eligible Title I schools and who receive free or reduced-price meals are eligible to participate in the SES Tutorial Program. SES is a tutorial program offered by private providers, approved by the State of Florida, at no cost to the parent. Services must be consistent with instructional programs of the school district and aligned with the State's academic content standards. Supplemental Educational Services must be provided outside of the regular school day (before and after school or on weekends). Parents interested in enrolling their children in SES may complete and submit an enrollment form at their child's school, via the District's Parent Portal at myportal.dadeschools.net/parent/, at one of the SES Parent Choice Fairs, or via fax at 305-995-2540. The enrollment period is August 24–September 8, 2009.

A list of the 2010-2011 Title I schools eligible to participate in SES and the dates and sites of Parent Choice Fairs for SES Fall Enrollment can be found at nclbchoice.dadeschools.net. For additional information, please contact Title I Administration at 305-995-4549 or 305-995-3198 or ask at your child's school.

If You Think Your Child Needs a Special Program



You have the legal right to request that your child be considered for special services, if he/she has one or more of the following problems:

- Trouble speaking and understanding English
- Trouble reading or writing
- Trouble paying attention
- Trouble sitting still and finishing tasks
- Trouble understanding what he/she sees or hears
- Very poor performance on standardized tests
- Emotional problems that interfere with learning
- Boredom with school – finding it too easy

See the following pages for information on receiving special services.

If You Think Your Child Needs Counseling Services



There are counseling professionals available at each school to assist students and parents/guardians with issues regarding academic, personal/social and behavioral concerns. These counseling professionals include: School Guidance Counselors, School Social Workers, TRUST Specialists, School Psychologists, and school health aides/health screeners. If you are interested in counseling services, please contact one of the identified counseling professionals at your child's school.

If you require further information on these services, please call the Division of Psychosocial Clinical Support Services at 305-995-7315 or visit our Web site at psy.dadeschools.net.

The ESOL Program



ESOL: For Children Whose First Language Is Not English

Your child's school has a special program for children who do not speak, read and write English well. This English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program helps your child learn English so that he/she can participate effectively in a regular classroom.

When your child enters school for the first time, you will receive a registration packet that contains a "Home Language Survey." This survey asks about the parent's native language and student's first language. The survey also has three questions:

1. Is a language other than English used at home? (when speaking to your child)
2. Did the student have a first language other than English?
3. Does the student most frequently speak a language other than English?

If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, your child will be tested to determine how well he/she understands English. See the next page for more information.

The ESOL Program, continued



If you answer “yes” to any of the three questions on the Home Language Survey, your child will be tested to determine how well he/she understands English. Your child may be placed in one of the four levels of ESOL. ESOL Level 1 and 2 students will be placed together in a classroom or will be pulled out during the reading/language arts block for instruction in English by an ESOL teacher. ESOL Level 3 and 4 students will be placed in a regular classroom with a specially-certified classroom teacher.

While your child is learning English, he/she will be retested annually with the Comprehensive English Language Learner Assessment (CELLA) to ensure that the student is learning English and will be ready to exit the ESOL program. You will be notified if the District is not meeting the CELLA annual achievement objectives.

Based on the results of the Home Language Survey and the placement tests, the student may be eligible for other special programs, including Curriculum Content in the Home Language (CCHL), Spanish for Spanish Speakers, etc. If you have any questions or concerns about the placement of your child in these programs, you should contact your child’s school and ask to speak to an administrator.

If Your Child Has a Physical or Emotional Disability



You may also seek special educational services from the school system if your child qualifies for any of the following programs:

- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Intellectual Disabilities
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Developmental Delay
- Speech/Language Impairments
- Emotional Behavioral Disabilities
- Physically Impaired with Traumatic Brain Injury
- Physically Impaired with Orthopedic Impairment
- Specific Learning Disabled
- Physically Impaired with Other Health Impairment
- Dual-Sensory Impairments
- Established Conditions
- Visual Impairment

The law protects students with disabilities. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA), children ages 3-21 with any disabilities listed under that law are guaranteed a “free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment” along with all appropriate “related services” required for your child to benefit from his/her education.

How to Request Help for Children Who May Need Special Education Services



If you are concerned about problems your child may be having in reading, mathematics, writing or behavior, first contact your child's teacher, who will work with you to develop an intervention to address these concerns.

If your child continues to experience difficulties after interventions are implemented, you may request assistance from the School Support Team. Contact your child's school and ask to speak with the Coordinator. These teams provide teachers with resources and support in developing and implementing interventions in the classroom according to your child's needs. Your child's progress will be monitored in order to determine his/her response.

If the Coordinator determines that the student has not sufficiently responded to the interventions and is in need of additional support, they may submit a request for Multidisciplinary-Team (M-Team) evaluation.

See pages 90-93 for more information on this topic. To learn about special education services for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, see page 94.

How to Request Help for Children Who May Need Special Education Services, continued



Parental consent must be obtained before a Multidisciplinary-Team (M-Team) evaluation is administered. The evaluation process should take no more than 60 school days and is based on the actual days your child attends school. The evaluation may include:

- A determination of the child's response to scientific, research-based instruction and intervention.
- Intellectual: a child's potential for learning as well as his/her learning style.
- Achievement: what a child has already learned in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics.
- Processing: the ability to store and recall information; to identify, discriminate, and organize visual information; to identify, discriminate, and organize auditory information; and listening comprehension and oral expression skills.
- Personality: social, behavioral, and emotional functioning as well as the ability to relate to others, to express and modulate emotions, and to show a range of emotions.

To learn what to do after the evaluation is completed, see page 91.

How to Request Help for Children Who May Need Special Education Services, continued



After the evaluation is completed, you will meet with a group of school professionals to discuss the results and determine what changes in your child's program planning are needed and/or whether your child has a disability and needs specialized instruction. You will be given a copy of the evaluation report and a written determination of eligibility.

If the Eligibility/Individual Educational Plan (IEP) team determines that your child is eligible for special education and related services, the next step is to develop an IEP with goals and objectives related directly to the strengths and needs identified during the evaluation process.

For questions to ask when your child is considered for an evaluation, see page 92.

How to Request Help for Children Who May Need Special Education Services, continued



When your child is considered for an evaluation, ask the following questions:

- What interventions have been put into action to address my child's learning needs, and how has he/she responded?
- Do the interventions need to be revised?
- Is my child's behavior impacting his ability to learn?
- Who has been monitoring my child's progress?
- How can I help support the intervention activities at home?
- What tests and other evaluation materials will be administered?
- Will the school psychologist observe my child in the classroom and talk to my child's teacher(s)?
- Will a translator or an interpreter be available if my child needs one? (Testing must be done in a child's native language or sign language if needed.)
- What kind of information will the school psychologist ask me to contribute to the evaluation?
- What will be done to help my child feel comfortable during the testing session?

See page 93 to learn about special accommodations, in regard to test-taking and other matters, for students with disabilities.

How to Request Help for Children Who May Need Special Education Services, continued



Special Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Some students with disabilities need accommodations to help them in the classroom. These accommodations should be documented in the student's IEP. Some students might need more time to complete assignments and assistance with taking notes. There are many ways that your child's school can help.

Some students with disabilities may take the FCAT with special accommodations, such as taking a test in large print, Braille, or sign language; taking the test with more frequent breaks or in a smaller setting, etc. However, some accommodations your child may receive in the classroom are not allowable when taking the FCAT. The school must inform you if your child cannot receive the same accommodations when taking the FCAT.

If you have questions or concerns about special accommodations for your child with a disability, call the Division of Special Education at 305-995-1796 or visit <http://ese.dadeschools.net>.

Special Education for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers



The Department of Health will evaluate **infants and toddlers (under the age of 3 years) with special needs**. There are two sites:

- For families north of Flagler Street:
Early Steps-North, at the Mailman Center for Child Development, 305-243-6660
- For families south of Flagler Street:
Early Steps-South, at Miami Children's Hospital, 786-268-2611

Preschoolers (ages 3 to 5) may be referred by parents, doctors, and/or preschool teachers to Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System-South (FDLRS-S) to begin the screening and evaluation process. For more information, call 305-274-3501 or visit <http://fdlrs-south.dade.k12.fl.us>.

If Your Child Is Not Able to Attend School



The Homebound/Hospitalized Instructional Program at Merrick Educational Center provides educational services at home to students who are unable to attend school for more than 15 consecutive days due to a medical condition and who meet all eligibility criteria. The program serves general education students in grades K-12, as well as ESOL and special education students who qualify. Once enrolled in Merrick, students in the Homebound/Hospitalized Instructional Program are taught in one of two ways:

- 1) A certified teacher from Merrick Educational Center visits the student at home to provide direct instruction; or
- 2) The student participates via telephone in classes for homebound students only that are taught by teachers at Merrick. The telephone classes are attended via phone by homebound students throughout Miami-Dade. Classes are provided in core academic subjects and electives. This method is reserved for students in grades 6-12.

Merrick Educational Center is at 39 Zamora Avenue in Coral Gables. For more information, call the school at 305-445-5188 or visit www.merrick.vpweb.com.

If You Don't Agree with What the School is Doing for Your Special Needs Child



You may ask for an interim IEP/EP review meeting anytime to consider making changes to an IEP/EP. Otherwise, the IEP is developed annually and the EP at least once every two years.

If your child has a disability and has an IEP and you do not believe that your child is receiving an appropriate education in your current school, you may want to look into the McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities. This program will pay for either full or partial tuition at a participating private school that you believe will better meet the needs of your child. Or, you can choose to transfer your child to another McKay public school in the District with an appropriate Special Education program that you believe is better suited to your child.

For eligibility requirements or more information, call the toll-free Parent Hotline at 1-800-447-1636 or visit www.floridaschoolchoice.org/information/mckay.

If you feel that your child is not receiving a free appropriate public education, you have the right to request Mediation and/or a Due Process Hearing. A Resolution Meeting is required with you, the school, and relevant members of the IEP Team prior to a due process hearing. See the next page for more information on this topic.

If You Don't Agree with What the School is Doing for Your Special Needs Child, continued



Mediation provides an opportunity to try to resolve issues before a hearing. At Mediation, an impartial mediator helps both sides try to resolve the problems. Mediation is voluntary for both parties and confidential.

If an agreement is not reached, you may go to a due process hearing. At the hearing, an administrative law judge will listen to you and the school's representative. You may present evidence and ask questions of witnesses. You may retain a lawyer or a qualified representative or individual with special knowledge or training regarding the problems of special education students to assist you at the hearing. Your lawyer's fees may be paid by the school system if you win the hearing and bring action in federal, district or state circuit court to recover fees.

If you lose the hearing and still believe that you are right, you can bring civil action in federal, district or state circuit court. You are required to have a lawyer to assist you with this. You have a right to be told by the school district about free or low-cost legal help and other relevant services that may be available in the area. The school or district must give you this information at any time you request it or whenever a due process hearing is requested.

If your child has a disability and is not eligible under IDEA04, he/she might be eligible to receive services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For more information, call the Section 504 Hotline at 305-995-2799.

See the next page for a list of organizations that can give you more information on services for disabled students.

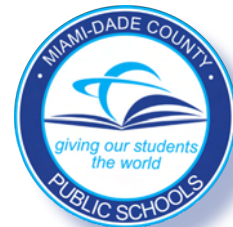
For More Information on Services for Students with Disabilities



The following organizations can give you more information on services for students with disabilities:

- Parent to Parent of Miami, Inc., 305-271-9797, www.PtoPMiami.org
- Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System/South (FDLRS) Parent Services, 305-274-3501, FDLRS North 305-754-4081, <http://fdlrs-south.dadeschools.net>.
- Families and Advocates Partnership for Education, 952-838-9000, www.fape.org (some materials are available in Spanish)
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 1-800-695-0285, www.nichcy.org (Web site available in Spanish)
- Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc., 305-576-0080, www.lsgmi.org
- Florida Department of Education, www.fldoe.org
- The Children's Trust, 305-571-5700, www.thechildrenstrust.org
- Vocational Rehabilitation, 305-438-4400, www.rehabworks.org
- Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc., 786-715-3395, www.fndfl.org
- CCDH, 305-596-1160, www.ccdh.org.

Is Your Family Experiencing Housing Difficulties?



In addition to the current economic crisis and the recent earthquake in Haiti, the number of families in need of assistance has increased greatly. The Homeless Assistance Program is a part of the Division of Student Services. There are several grants that support the programs and services provided to homeless students and their families.

If your family lives in any of the following situations:

- In a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground
- On the street
- In an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations, or
- Doubled up with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing.

Then, your preschool-aged and school-aged children have certain rights or protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act. your children have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where you live or how long you have lived there.
- Continue in the school they attended before you became homeless or the school they last attended, if that is your choice and is feasible.
- Receive transportation to the school they attended before your family became homeless.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address.
- And more

Please contact the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Division of Students Services District Homeless liaison at 305-995-7318.



School Choice



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It's Your Choice



One of the most exciting movements in public education today is that of school choice. Parents can now enroll their children in many types of public education. Choice programs offer unique courses and programs of study focusing on students' special interests, talents, and abilities. You can find detailed information on choice programs and about specific schools at <http://www.miamimagnets.org>. For additional assistance or information, please call School Choice and Parental Options at 305-995-1922.

Magnet Programs and Schools



If your child has a special interest or talent, you might want to look into a magnet program or school. Magnet programs and schools offer high-quality instruction and innovative educational programs that foster student diversity, academic excellence, school-to-career pathways, and real-world learning. There are 91 magnet programs/schools in Miami-Dade County, offering over 300 unique areas of study. This includes 26 elementary schools, 30 K-8 centers and middle schools, and 35 high schools. Magnet programs address the following themes of study:

- Career and Professions
- International Education
- Mathematics, Science & Technology
- Montessori (elementary school only)
- Visual & Performing Arts
- Liberal Arts

For your child to be accepted into a magnet program, you must submit an application to the school between October 1 and January 15. Some magnet programs also require students to have a strong academic record, talent, and interest in the selected theme. For more information, call the Office of School Choice and Parental Options at 305-995-1922 or visit <http://www.miamimagnets.org>.

Controlled Choice (Open Enrollment) Elementary Schools



Parents who reside within one of six specified attendance boundaries are offered an opportunity to indicate their preference for elementary school assignments. You may choose to send your child to more than one of the elementary schools assigned to one of the elementary schools assigned to a Controlled Open Enrollment Choice area. For a map and more information about the Choice Areas and a listing of the 14 elementary schools, call School Choice and Parental Options at 305-995-1922 or visit <http://www.miamimagnets.org>.

Bilingual Programs



Dual language programs, offered at a number of elementary, middle and senior high schools, feature instruction in English and a second language such as Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, Italian and Haitian-Creole.

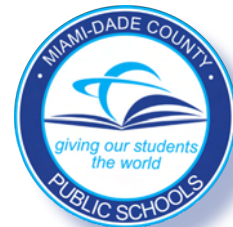
Dual language programs fall under three basic models: the elementary Bilingual School Organization (BISO), the Extended Foreign Language (EFL) program, and the International Studies (IS) program in grades K-12. The BISO model is offered to all students in selected neighborhood schools. The EFL model is offered as a choice in selected neighborhood schools. In both the BISO and EFL programs approximately 60% of instruction is in English and 40% in the foreign language. The IS model, part of the magnet schools programs, offers up to three hours of daily instruction in the target language, and is implemented in collaboration with the local consulates of the respective foreign governments. For more information on schools with dual language programs, contact the Division of Bilingual Education and World Languages at 305-756-2902 or visit <http://bilingual.dadeschools.net>.

Satellite Learning Centers



Two public elementary schools have been built to serve parents who work at the Assurant Group (at S.W. 196 Street, Miami) or at Mount Sinai Hospital (on Alton Road in Miami Beach). These schools are partnerships between the employer, which provides the facilities, and M-DCPS.

High School Academies



High school students may enroll in academy programs at 25 high schools that are affiliated with the National Academy Foundation. These “schools within schools” focus on Engineering, Finance, Hospitality and Tourism, or Information Technology. NAF Academies represent business/school partnerships that prepare young people for future careers through a combination of school-based curricula and work-based experiences. For more information, call 305-995-1922 or visit http://choice.dadeschools.net/naf_academies_overview.asp.

Charter Schools



Charter schools are tuition-free, non-sectarian public schools that operate under a performance contract, or “charter,” with the school district. Charter schools are free from many of the rules and regulations created for traditional public schools. For example, they have the freedom to design their own curriculum and create different types of learning environments. In general, charter schools are smaller and offer smaller class sizes than traditional public schools and require parent participation as a condition of the student’s enrollment. Students attending charter schools still must take all state-required standardized tests, including the FCAT.

Every charter school is different. Most are operated by groups consisting of teachers, principals, parents, organizations, colleges, or universities. However, there are charter schools governed by municipalities which afford the residents’ children first preference for enrollment. Charter schools also differ in regards to daily management. Many charter schools have outsourced day-to-day management and operations to management companies known as Education Service Providers (ESP); others have chosen internal resources or a hybrid of outsourced and internal resources to meet daily operational needs.

Academically charter schools vary as well. Though most charter schools offer a comprehensive educational program, similar to that of traditional schools, some offer special and/or innovative academic programs. Some of these programs include, but are not limited to: autism, language immersion, math and Greek, dropout prevention and course recovery, single gender, and special education. At the conclusion of the 2009-2010 school year there were 84 charter schools in Miami-Dade County. For addresses and contact information, call 305-995-1403 or visit charterschools.dadeschools.net.

Opportunity Scholarships



If your child's school has received a grade of "F" for two of the last four years, you may choose to send your child to an eligible "C" or higher-graded public school that has space available.

To qualify for an Opportunity Scholarship, your child must either: 1) have attended the low-performing school for at least 91 days during the year the school received the second "F" grade; 2) be currently attending another public school, but have been assigned to the low-performing school for the next school year; or 3) be entering kindergarten or grade 1 for the first time and assigned to attend the low-performing school.

Parents/Guardians must complete an Opportunity Scholarship Program form for an Opportunity Scholarship by July 2 of the year the school received the "F" grade. Forms may be obtained at the school or at the Office of School Choice and Parental Options. For more information, call the toll-free Parent Hotline at 800-477-1636 or visit www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/OSP.

Transfers to Other Public Schools through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act



In accordance with the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act passed by the U.S. Congress, all public schools are rated according to whether or not all of their students are making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This rating is different from the grades given to each school, although all Florida schools graded “D” and “F” automatically fall into the category of not making Adequate Yearly Progress.

Children who attend a Title I school that fails to meet AYP for three or more consecutive years will be allowed to transfer to an eligible public school, not designated as “in need of improvement,” that has space available.

To find out if your child’s school meets the two-year AYP goals, visit the Office of Strategic Planning at <http://osp.dadeschools.net>. Click on “Clearinghouse for Planning” on the left side of the page, select a specific school, and then click on one of the reports under “AYP.” For more assistance, call 305-995-7291.

Home Schooling



The Florida Home Education Program is designed to assist parents who choose to educate their children at home. Parents can use either the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Competency Based Curriculum or another curriculum that they have acquired on their own. Parents must first notify the District Superintendent by letter within 30 days of the intent to enroll their child in the Home Education Program. For information on home schooling and a registration form, call the Home Education office at 305-883-5323 or visit <http://attendanceservices.dadeschools.net/homeschool.asp>.

Corporate Tax Credit Scholarships



Parents of limited means may qualify to receive a scholarship to a participating private school under the Corporate Tax Credit Program. For information, call 800-447-1636.

Other Important Information



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How to Advocate for Change



How to Make A Complaint or Report a Serious Problem Regarding Your Child’s School:

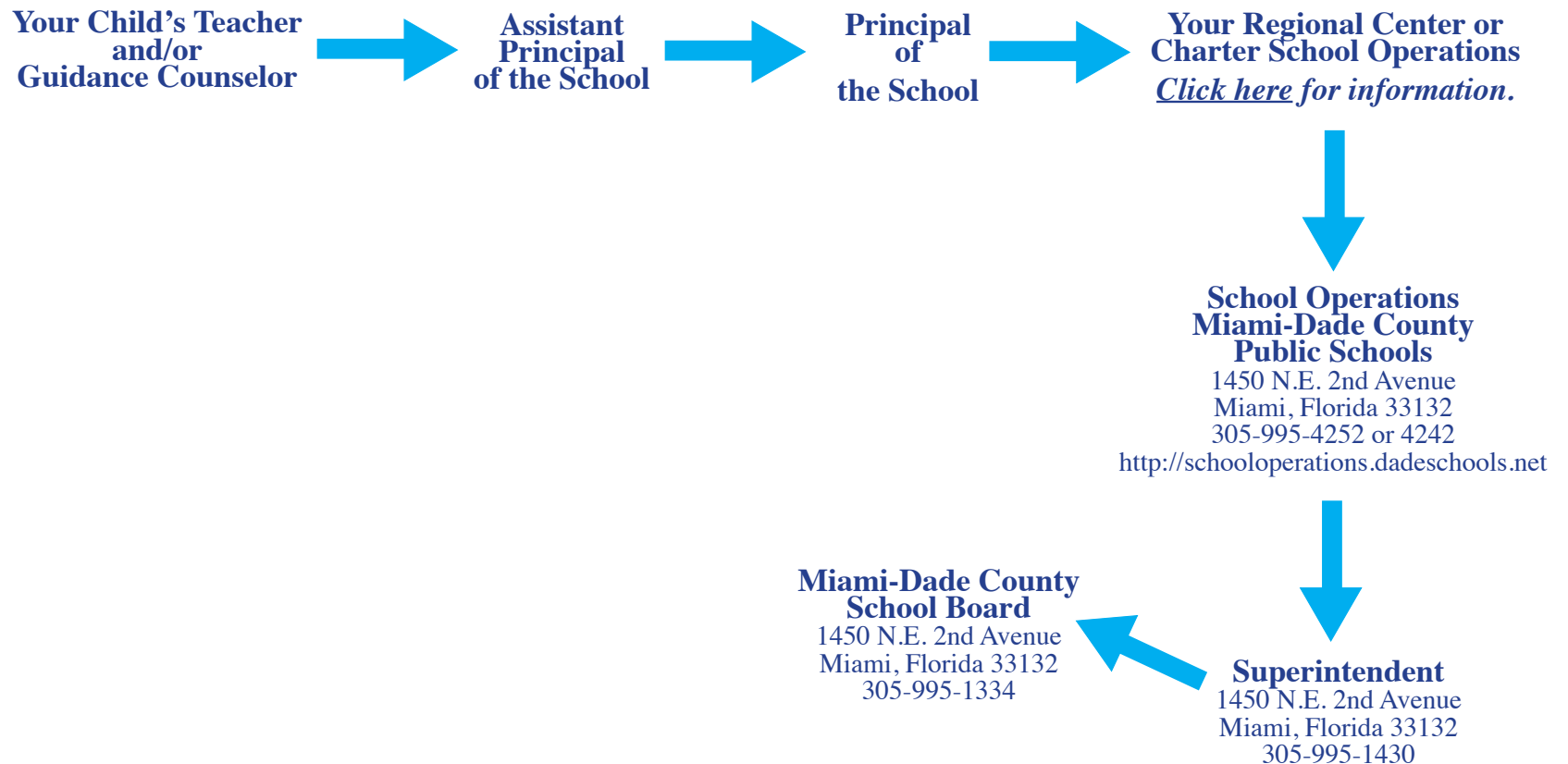
There may come a time when you need to report a serious problem that needs to be addressed. Or, you may join a group of parents who wish to recommend changes to your school or school system. Here are a few tips to help you get the most out of the system.

If you need to discuss an issue of concern regarding your child, or make a request of your child’s school, start by speaking with your child’s teacher. If the teacher is unable to help you, you should then speak to the appropriate person in the “chain of support”(see the next page) until you have received a response that is acceptable in resolving your concerns.

M-DCPS Chain of Support



If you need to discuss an issue of concern regarding your child, or make a request of your child's school, start by speaking with your child's teacher. If the teacher is unable to help you, you should then speak to the appropriate person in the “**chain of support**” below until you have received a response that is acceptable in resolving your concerns.



Your Local Region Offices



The public school system is divided into five regions, with an assistant superintendent assigned to each. The regional offices are called Regional Centers. Each Regional Center along with the Charter School Operations office is designed to provide outreach and services to families whose children attend schools in that area.

If you do not know in which Regional Center your child's school is located call 305-995-4242 or visit www.dadeschools.net and select, in the left bar, "Schools," and then, in the pull-down bar, select "School Information." On the page that appears, select the type of school (elementary, middle, senior, etc.).

Region I

733 East 57th St. • Hialeah, FL 33013
305-687-6565 • Fax: 305-685-2498

Region II

School Board Administration Building Annex
1500 Biscayne Blvd., Room 144 • Miami, FL 33132
305-523-0922 • Fax: 305-523-0947

Region III

1080 LaBaron Drive • Miami Springs, FL 33166
305-883-0403 • Fax: 305-882-1640

Region IV

9040 S.W. 79th Ave. • Miami, FL 33156
305-595-7022 • Fax: 305-595-3726

Region V

(located at Robert Morgan Educational Center)
18180 S.W. 122 Avenue • Miami, FL 33177
305-252-3041 • Fax: 305-251-2198

About the School Board



The School Board is a body of nine elected officials responsible for setting policies for the entire school district. The School Board focuses on making rules for running public schools in the county. It also appoints the District Superintendent.

School Board members are elected by their voting districts. School Board meetings are open to the public. They are usually held in the School Board Administration Building auditorium at 1450 NE 2nd Avenue, Miami, FL 33132, once a month, generally on Wednesdays starting at noon. The public hearing begins immediately following the conclusion of the regular agenda but no later than approximately 6:30 p.m. The Board meetings are broadcast live on television on WLRN-Channel 17 and on the radio at WLRN-FM 91.3. For information about making a request to address the Board on a particular issue, contact the Citizens Information Center at 305-995-1128 or visit <http://cic.dadeschools.net/schoolboardmeetings.asp>.

You may speak at a public hearing if you wish to address an issue under consideration by the board, make your local School Board member aware of important information concerning schools in his/her district, or appeal a decision made regarding your child. To view information on School Board rulings, current meeting agendas, or School Board Rules visit <http://www2.dadeschools.net/schoolboard/default.asp>.

Your Legal Rights



You have the right to ask the school to test your child free of charge if you think he/she might need special educational services, or if the services he/she is already receiving are not adequate. You have the right to request a free, independent evaluation of your child if you disagree with the results of the school's tests.

You have the right to receive copies of your child's school records.

You have the right to participate in the development of your child's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or English Language Learner (ELL) Plan.

You have the right to be represented by an attorney or advocate if you disagree with the educational program provided to your child.

Other Legal Rights



You and your child have certain rights under federal law that concern access to information about your child, freedom of speech and special education programs. You are protected by two important laws:

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Release of Student Information to the Military and Institutions of Higher Learning
- Equal Access for English Language Learners (META Consent Decree)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act



This law allows parents and students over the age of 18 to inspect and review the student's school records. You must first submit a written request to the school principal identifying the records you wish to review. You may ask for copies of the records and the school may charge you a fee for copies.

If you find something that is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of your child, you have the right to ask in writing that it be changed with an explanation of why it should be changed.

If the school refuses to change a record, you may request a hearing. If the request is denied at the school level, you may appeal the decision to the Regional Center Superintendent. If the request is denied at the region level, you may appeal the decision to the District Director, Division of Student Services.

If the appeal's hearing is in your favor, the school must correct the records. If the appeal's hearing upholds the school's decision, you may prepare a statement as to why you believe the record is wrong and this written statement will be added to your child's records.

It is important to know that standardized achievement test information for your child is provided through individual score reports such as the FCAT Student Reports. However, you cannot view secure test materials such as your child's test booklet.

Release of Student Information to the Military and Institutions of Higher Learning

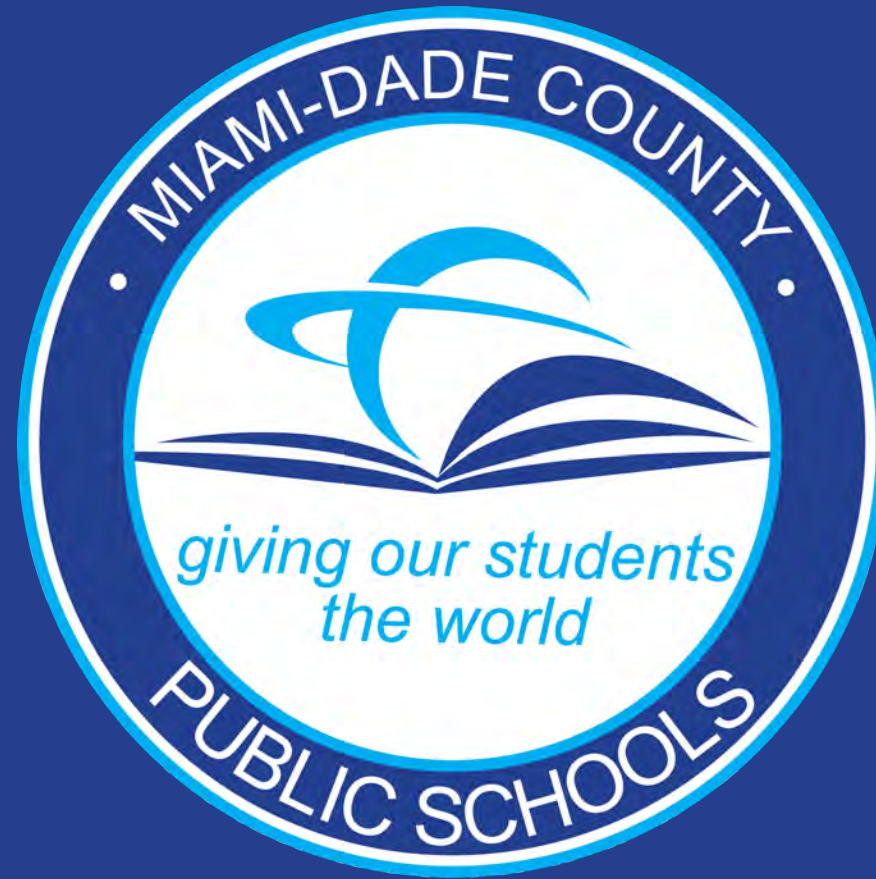


Release of Student Information to the Military and Institutions of Higher Learning. The release of directory information to the military services and institutions of higher learning is a stipulation under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the U.S. Patriot Act. You are notified annually of this provision and are provided an opportunity to restrict the release of such information by completing and returning the Directory Information Opt-Out Form to your child's school. The Opt-Out Form may be copied, completed and submitted to your child's school at any time during the school year.

Equal Access for English Language Learners



All “English Language Learners” in Florida schools are entitled to equal access to programs and services, under the META Consent Decree resulting from a 1990 court ruling. The decree also mandates specialized training for the teachers who service the ELL students, the way ELL students are initially screened and identified as well as, how their progress is monitored. Contact your child’s school for more information.



**The 2010-2011 Parent Resource Guide
is available online at
www.dadeschools.net**