

CONNECTION

A Newsletter for Miami-Dade County Public Schools Parents

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY SCHOOLS LAUNCHES *BRINGING WIRELESS TO THE CLASSROOM* FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN TO SECURE FEDERAL FUNDS FOR CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

Miami-Dade Superintendent of Schools, Alberto M. Carvalho has announced that The Foundation for New Education Initiatives, the nonprofit organization supporting Miami-Dade Schools, has launched a campaign called "Bringing Wireless to the Classroom," to raise \$7 million by January 31, 2012. The funds will be matched by federal dollars at a rate of \$100 for every \$10 raised locally, yielding up to \$70 million to fund needed technology improvements in Miami-Dade's public schools.

The District's goal is that all schools will be connected to Wi Fi by the 2012-2013 school year. The Foundation is urgently seeking contributions from local businesses and private citizens to meet the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) E-Rate program's January 31, 2012 deadline to have the local funding in place. "The opportunity to receive such a significant infusion of funds to be used specifically for technology upgrades in our schools," said Carvalho, "not only represents a chance to enhance the learning environment for every child, but would serve to spur private sector job creation as contracts are issued to perform the work associated with the installation and maintenance of digital upgrades districtwide."

To contribute online, visit www.helpdadeschools.com click the donate button, and request that the funds be given to the "Give Kids the World – A World of Technology" program.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS' GRADUATION RATE HITS ALL-TIME HIGH

Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) graduation rate has reached an all-time high of 77.7 percent for the 2010-2011 academic year. This is a 5.6 percent increase from last year's rate of 72.1 AND the highest graduation rate M-DCPS has achieved since the Florida Department of Education began tracking graduation statistics with modern methods in the late 1990's.

"This trend of strong improvement is very encouraging and demonstrates that our plan to increase student achievement is working," said Superintendent of Schools Alberto M. Carvalho. "We have brought together the best teachers and school administrators in this effort to help students graduate and prepare them for college and careers. These results come on the heels of solid reading and math scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Parents, teachers and school leaders can all take pride in these accomplishments," added Carvalho.

The improvement in the district's graduation rate was made possible by a detailed plan to address new high school accountability standards.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2012- 2013: A TOWN HALL MEETING WITH SUPERINTENDENT CARVALHO TO BE BROADCAST LIVE ON JANUARY 10, 2012

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Town Hall Meeting with Superintendent of Schools Alberto M. Carvalho will be transmitted live on WLRN Channel 17 on Tuesday, January 10 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will take place in the School Board Administration Building Auditorium, located at 1450 N.E. Second Avenue, Miami.

Designed with the community in mind, the third in a series of town hall meetings will offer a recap of the challenges faced during the last three years, provide an outlook for next school year, and engage community stakeholders in the education process.

WLRN LAUNCHES AMERICAN GRADUATE CAMPAIGN

WLRN Public Radio & Television has been selected by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to be the American Graduate public media hub station for Miami-Dade County. The American Graduate is a recently launched national initiative to help local communities find solutions to address the dropout crisis in the United States.

WLRN, one of 20 national media hubs, will implement awareness strategies and engagement activities in collaboration with M-DCPS staff and students, specifically targeting the district's middle school population.

On Tuesday, January 10, 2012 at 9:00a.m., to kick-off the local campaign, WLRN will convene a gathering of community stakeholders from Miami-Dade's education, business and civic arenas at the WLRN studios in downtown Miami. Miami-Dade Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho is the keynote speaker. During the forum, WLRN will also present the station's American Graduate video featuring local educational programs and leaders, including Superintendent Carvalho, encouraging students to stay in school and succeed.

The Miami –Dade school district's graduation rates have steadily risen over the past five years but there is more that can be done to improve the trend. WLRN will target M-DCPS middle schools for extended engagement. The participating middle schools are Mandarin Lakes K-8 Academy, North Dade Middle School, Nautilus Middle School, and Miami Gardens Middle School.

There will be launch events at these four schools where all 6th graders will be given wristbands, magnets and materials containing dropout prevention information and activities. Approximately 2000 6th grade students will be directly impacted by the project. Parents, community organizations, and the media will be invited to attend the events.

M-DCPS RECOGNIZES PERFORMANCE OF TOP PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

Miami-Dade County Public Schools recognized outstanding principals and assistant principals at a performance pay ceremony held last November in the School Board Administration Building auditorium in downtown Miami.

Superintendent of Schools Alberto M. Carvalho commended the top administrators for their accomplishments in increasing student achievement and for their hours of dedicated service.

"These individuals are the ones that have had to take pay cut after pay cut. They work many extra hours without complaints," Carvalho said. "It is time that we reward them for their dedication to support student achievement."

Miami-Dade was already the first school district in the state to reward teachers for their performance under Race to the Top (RTTT). The state does not require performance pay plans by school districts until 2014. However M-DCPS was able to achieve this goal thanks to the support of the union and the School Board members who have strongly maintained their commitment to local classrooms. This time, the school system was able to offer some financial support to those administrators who lead and inspire teachers to accomplish the goal of educating students.

SUPERINTENDENT ALBERTO M. CARVALHO NAMED THE 2011 SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR BY FLORIDA ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Schools Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho was named the 2011 Superintendent of the Year by the Florida Art Education Association (FAEA) at their awards breakfast ceremony in St. Petersburg, Fla.

"This is a tremendous honor that I share with many people at Miami-Dade County Public Schools," said Superintendent Carvalho. "The School Board and the District have made a very concerted effort to maintain art education programs. Children truly bloom when they are exposed to the arts."

Also honored were three Miami-Dade educators: Norland Middle School Principal Eugene Butler, Jr., Linda Mangual, an art teacher and lead museum educator at Dr. Carlos J. Finlay Elementary School, and 32-year veteran art educator Linda Stern from Jose Martí Middle School.

Butler was selected the 2011 FAEA Principal/Administrator of the Year. Mangual was the selected for the 2011 FAEA Distinguished Service Award, and Stern was honored with the 2011 FAEA Outstanding Middle Level Art Educator of the Year Award.

The FAEA presents annual awards to recognize individuals within the membership who have achieved the highest level of professionalism in art education, and to show appreciation for individuals or organizations that have contributed their services in an exemplary way to the association and to the professional goals they share.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Monday, January 16 – Observation of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday

Monday, January 23 – Teacher Planning Day

Friday, February 3 – Teacher Planning Day

Monday, February 20 – All Presidents Day

Monday, March 12 through Friday, March 16 – Spring Recess

Friday, March 30 – Teacher Planning Day

Friday, April 6 – Teacher Planning Day

UPCOMING SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

January 18 11:45 a.m. Regular Meeting

February 15 11:45 a.m. Regular Meeting

March 7 10:00 a.m. Conference Session: Attendance Zones for 2012-2013

11:45 a.m. Regular Meeting

April 18 11:45 a.m. Regular Meeting

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

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Produced by the Office of Public Relations
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Tammy T. Reed
Director

