

NEWS ALERT



Miami-Dade County Public Schools

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

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M-DCPS Continues Its Proactive Coronavirus Readiness Efforts

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) continues to closely monitor COVID-19 (coronavirus) developments. We are following guidance from the Florida Department of Health (FDOH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), and other state officials to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our students and employees. Although we are operating with a heightened sense of awareness and urgency regarding the coronavirus, teaching and learning, as well as all local extracurricular and athletic activities, continue uninterrupted in M-DCPS. The latest information obtained from the State of Florida indicates the potential impact to our students to be at the lowest risk level. However, in order to ensure the District is fully prepared to respond to any scenario, we have implemented a series of preventive and proactive measures to address coronavirus. Recognizing that this remains a fluid situation, adjustments will be made as necessary.

"Miami-Dade County Public Schools is addressing coronavirus with an abundance of caution and due diligence," said Superintendent of Schools Alberto M. Carvalho. "The actions of this administration, with the leadership of our School Board, will continue to be guided, not by convenience, but with the safety of our students and employees in mind. Emergencies by nature are not predictable, but we are prepared to handle any situation that may arise."

Facility and School Bus Sanitation

For weeks, all school-site administrators have been reminded to follow established hygiene protocols implemented during flu season. These include encouraging children and employees to stay home when sick and see their medical provider immediately; utilizing school-based healthcare staff to promote healthy school environments; reviewing and encouraging proper handwashing techniques; and ensuring appropriate cleaning procedures are followed.

We have also issued directives to all school administrators promoting personal hygiene and enhanced cleaning procedures both in school facilities and on school buses; and all head and lead custodians have received in-person training specific to enhanced cleaning protocols. We are also monitoring District inventories of cleaning supplies, and specialized equipment has been ordered and received in the event facilities or buses are impacted. Should sanitation needs exceed the capacity of the District, the County has committed to providing resources to assist in the cleaning and sanitation of schools.

(more)

COVID Precautions/ add one

In an abundance of caution, there is a plan for the rapid deployment of cleaning and sanitization resources to schools and District offices that have been identified as having a potential risk.

Communications

The District has a dedicated webpage designed to provide the most current information regarding coronavirus to the M-DCPS community. The website is <http://covid19.dadeschools.net>, and it will serve as the primary source of information for all stakeholders, including media.

The District's Emergency Command Center will be partially activated and a hotline established to address inquiries from parents, students and employees. That hotline number is 305-995-3000.

Parents and employees will continue to receive information regarding coronavirus via automated telephone and email messaging, and through District letters and flyers made available through schools, social media, and media outreach. As such, we continue to remind parents about the importance of updating their contact information with their child's school to ensure they are receiving the most accurate news.

Rumors and unfounded claims exacerbate a difficult situation. We are asking that our school community depend on the facts they are receiving directly from M-DCPS rather than relying on speculation. If there are specific questions, stakeholders are encouraged to contact the District's hotline.

Student Attendance and Travel

We have continued our proactive efforts to direct new students arriving from outside the U.S. who wish to enroll in M-DCPS to do so at one of the New Student Service Centers. The sites were established in the northern and southern ends of the county and are staffed by counselors and a nurse to assist in the registration and health clearance process.

As a precaution, the District has instituted a moratorium on excursions to other countries and, based on guidance provided by FLDOE, an immediate moratorium has been placed on all out-of-state air travel. All in-county as well as in-state field trips, athletic events, and activities not requiring air travel are being evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Parents received information regarding self-isolation protocols for students if they may have had direct or indirect exposure to the virus, either by recently returning from an area with a current advisory or residing in the same household as an individual who returned from said area.

Students and/or parents who have returned from warning level areas or cruise travel and are exhibiting symptoms are to contact the health department. Additionally, students are continuously encouraged to remain at home if they are sick and to seek medical attention.

(more)

COVID Precautions/add two

All perfect attendance incentives and recognitions for students have been suspended for the remainder of the academic year.

Instructional Delivery

According to the FLDOE, there are currently no plans to modify the existing state assessment calendar. The test schedules at schools will likely remain in place.

In the unlikely event that the District must close schools, we have developed an Instructional Continuity Plan to provide opportunities for digital learning by leveraging the District's digital technology resources. The plan can be found at <http://icp.dadeschools.net>. Professional development opportunities related to distance learning are already being conducted.

The District's Division of Academics has created lesson plans titled "Prevent the Spread" utilizing all aspects of the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) curriculum to teach students at all grade levels to raise further awareness of COVID-19. Students are learning about viruses and how they spread; the functions of the immune system. They are demonstrating their learning by creating art models for study, as well as awareness posters.

Employee Attendance and Travel

All District-sponsored travel for staff to areas with travel advisories or declared public health emergencies is cancelled, as well as participation in large conferences that require air travel. Any changes will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Employees have received information regarding self-isolation protocols if they may have had direct or indirect exposure to the virus, either by recently returning from an area with a current advisory or residing in the same household as an individual who returned from said area. Emergency short-term leave procedures have been developed for employees required to self-isolate.

Consultations have been conducted with United Teachers of Dade (UTD) and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) regarding COVID-19 protocols. Information sessions will be held with all other employee groups.

Business Operations

Vendors, contractors, and volunteers have been advised that they must follow all established CDC and M-DCPS protocols when at school sites.

The District is currently reviewing all Facilities Use Agreements that may be subject to cancellation for convenience and will make decisions based on the health, safety, and security of students and employees, as well as the latest guidance issued by appropriate authorities.

(more)

COVID Precautions / add three

Procedures have been established for the continuity of critical business functions, such as payroll and procurement, in light of potential partial or full school closures. In addition, staff is monitoring and will be petitioning for federal economic relief, as needed.

Additional Measures Being Taken

Parents/guardians are the primary providers of comfort to children during these times, so we encourage them to stay updated on the facts so as to not alarm their children or families. Additionally, each school has a certified school counselor prepared to meet with students and families. Student Services teams at schools are trained and ready to assist with any personal or academic issues.

The Employee Assistance Program will continue to assist employees who may require additional support in light of the coronavirus outbreak.

Students and staff at schools that serve as polling sites for the March 17, 2020, election will be separated from voters. Once the polling stations close, the voting area will be cleaned and sanitized.

The District is prepared to distribute meals to students in schools that may close. In addition, we have petitioned for the relaxation of federal requirements governing the School Lunch Program to further expedite the provision of meals to those impacted.

Although the coronavirus represents a challenge, M-DCPS has approached it proactively and diligently with a comprehensive plan for our entire organization. We understand and take seriously our role during times of uncertainty.

For the latest updates visit <http://covid19.dadeschools.net>.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), an A-rated district, is the nation's fourth largest school system with nearly 400 schools and a diverse enrollment of more than 350,000 students from over 160 countries. Our ongoing tradition of groundbreaking achievement has earned top recognition at the national and international levels. M-DCPS also recently reached a landmark graduation rate of 89.2 percent.

For the most up-to-date information, please download the Dadeschools mobile app to your iPhone or Android device. Follow us on Twitter [@mdcps](#) and [@miamisup](#), on Instagram [@miamischools](#) and [@miamisup](#), and on Facebook at [MiamiSchools](#) and [AlbertoCarvalho](#)

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