

# NEWS ALERT



*Miami-Dade County Public Schools*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Sunday, March 15, 2020

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## **M-DCPS Provides Support to Students and Families During School Closures**

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is continuing its efforts to provide support to students and their families during school closures, which begin tomorrow, March 16. From distance learning, to community feedings, to facilitating childcare for essential medical personnel, M-DCPS stands firm in its commitment to support the South Florida community during this time of uncertainty.

“For weeks, we have been hoping for the best, but preparing for the worst,” said Schools Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho. “We have taken the necessary steps to provide our students with continuity of education and ensure that they do not go hungry. However, as with any challenging situation, we must all recognize that there will be bumps along the road. We ask parents and community members to exercise patience as we navigate through these uncharted waters.”

### **Digital Connectivity Efforts**

Since Friday morning, M-DCPS has distributed more than 42,000 mobile devices to students who did not have them to ensure that students across the district will have continuity of learning from home.

Beginning Monday, Comcast is offering free WiFi via Xfinity hotspots where Xfinity service is available for 60 days. This is in addition to the Internet Essentials Program, normally \$9.95 per month, that will provide an in-home modem and 60 days of free service for eligible low-income M-DCPS families. Participation in this program is strongly recommended for those in need. More information about the free internet service can be found at <http://distancelearning.dadeschools.net/>. Access to free WiFi connections via hotspots should be limited to educational use or other essential health and safety functions. Comcast has also agreed to provide flexibility on late fees and payment options. Those struggling to pay for internet service should contact 1-800-Comcast.

### **Distance Learning Framework**

Since concern over coronavirus began, M-DCPS began preparing its comprehensive Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP) and shared it with teachers, students and parents. This information may be found at <http://icp.dadeschools.net/>. As part of the established plan, the District has also adapted content to be accessible for students with special needs. Students can access their applications via the Student Portal.

(more)

## *M-DCPS Supports Community / add one*

The expectation is that students will continue to progress in their learning during the closure of schools under the consultation and guidance of their teachers and the collaboration of parents/guardians.

Students were sent home with a School Closure Student Checklist on Friday, which also includes teachers' ICPs. If they did not receive the checklist, parents/guardians should contact their child's school. The M-DCPS ICP is cloud-based. Students do not need a M-DCPS-issued device if they have access to a computer or mobile device at home.

On Monday, the District will be hosting a webinar for teachers to provide additional professional development regarding the ICP and Microsoft Teams to support distance learning.

A support hotline has been established for teachers, students and parents/guardians seeking assistance with distance learning. The number for the hotline is 305-995-HELP. It will be in operation from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. this week.

### **Meal Distribution for Students**

Food insecurity is a serious concern in our community. M-DCPS provides free breakfast for all students and free or reduced-price lunch to more than 73 percent of students. With the support of local community partners, M-DCPS is ready to implement a community feeding plan to provide meals for ALL students.

Schools will provide hot grab-and-go meals for both breakfast and lunch between 9 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday of next week. These meals will be prepared by M-DCPS food service personnel. Students can report to their enrolled school or their neighborhood school to collect the meals. Meal distribution will take place in an area along the external perimeter of the building.

### **Sanitization Efforts**

M-DCPS will continually provide a deep sanitization of schools. Beginning on Monday at 6 a.m., teams consisting of regional custodians, supervised by master custodians, will begin visiting all schools conducting thorough cleanings. Nine teams, consisting of 20 to 30 custodians each (a total of 180 custodians), will be going to schools using hospital-grade germicides to clean floors, classrooms, restrooms, cafeterias, gyms, all common areas and contact points; wiping and mopping down surfaces and fogging where needed. Maintenance personnel will also address air quality control by cleaning air conditioning filters and coils. The crews will be following contagious disease protocols which include personal protective gear and washing everything they use.

### **Schools Police Support**

The Miami-Dade Schools Police Department (M-DSPD) will patrol school sites throughout the week. Officers will be assisting at food distribution centers, answering calls for service at all district sites and providing round-the-clock coverage at the Police Command Center. The M-DSPD will also assist local municipalities and Miami-Dade County with any incidents involving juveniles and continue to collaborate with local, state and federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, to monitor social media activity.

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**M-DCPS Employee Information**

The following M-DCPS employee groups will continue to provide essential services: all school and District administrators (Managerial Exempt Personnel) and select administrative support personnel; limited safety and security personnel; and select food service, sanitization and maintenance teams. Employees in these groups who are required to report to work will be contacted by their worksite administrators.

While most hourly employees will not report to work, as part of established School Board Policy 8420, *Emergency Closure of Schools*, every effort will be made to provide opportunities to make up the hours not worked during the emergency at a later time.

With Spring Break approaching, many employees likely made plans for travel. We strongly recommend that employees refrain from traveling to areas currently at Level 3 or Level 2, and defer from cruise ship travel. Should employees choose to travel against these advisories, they must heed the related guidance provided by the CDC regarding self-isolation protocols.

Travel advisories and associated guidance continue to evolve as federal, state, and local entities learn more about COVID-19 and its impact. As such, employees are encouraged to visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website regularly.

Employees enrolled in a District health plan will incur no out-of-pocket costs for COVID-19 testing, if it is medically necessary.

**Other Important Information**

Magnet application notifications, scheduled for March 15, have been postponed. No application is in jeopardy and there is no action needed by students or parents/guardians at this time. Once schools have been cleared to open, the notification process will resume. Parents/guardians may visit <http://choice.dadeschools.net/> to submit questions to Magnet staff.

Online curriculum modules have been created for adult education learners. Students can access lesson plans through their respective school websites.

Miami-Dade Online Academy, the District's full-time K-12 virtual school, has not been affected by school closures. Students in this online school should continue working on their virtual program.

School sites scheduled to serve as polling sites for Election Day on Tuesday, March 17 will be open to the general public for voting as planned.

While classes are suspended, construction and facility enhancement projects will continue on an accelerated timeline. All contractors and vendors have been directed to follow established CDC coronavirus protocols.

The District will continue advocating at the federal level to support students and families by allowing flexibility to provide meals and providing the means to easily expand their Internet access.

## *M-DCPS Supports Community / add three*

The District is also advocating for the provision of funding to support the continuity of services and relief for employees affected by school closures, illness of family or self, and lost wages. Congress is now considering H.R. 6201, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

In an effort to support vital health services in South Florida, M-DCPS is working with partners to assist with the provision of childcare for employees of Jackson Health System near

Jackson's three campuses, in the north, central and southern parts of the county, as well as select employees of the University of Miami Health System. The childcare centers, located at school sites, will be sanitized nightly by M-DCPS personnel, and all childcare employees are held to the same background screening standards and coronavirus protocols as M-DCPS employees. A healthcare professional will be onsite at each center to assess each student before they enter the facility. Two District administrators and a police officer will be present as well.

### **M-DCPS Support Lines:**

- **District Emergency Operations hotline: 305-995-3000**
  - To answer questions from students, parents and other community members about school district-related coronavirus response efforts.
  - Hours of Operation: M – F from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
  
- **Instructional Learning Plan hotline: 305-995-HELP (4357)**
  - To support students, parents and teachers in engaging in distance learning.
  - Hours of Operation: M – F from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
  
- **Mental Health Services hotline: 305-995-7100**
  - To assist students and their families with mental health support..
  - Hours of Operation: M – F from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
  
- **M-DCPS Employee Assistance Program: 305-995-7111**
  - To assist with wellness support for employees.
  - Hours of Operation: M – F from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

### **M-DCPS Online Resources**

- <http://covid19.dadeschools.net>
  - Provides continual updates on M-DCPS actions connected to the coronavirus outbreak.
  
- <http://distancelearning.dadeschools.net/>
  - Includes information on digital resources for educators and students.
  - Provides information on free Comcast internet as well as useful digital tools and tutorials.
  
- <http://icp.dadeschools.net/>
  - Provides the M-DCPS framework for distance learning for pre-K-12 students.

(more)

*M-DCPS Supports Community / add four*

The District will continue to monitor all developments in this evolving situation and will communicate via the links above, as well as through automated messaging, media announcements and social media.

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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