

# NEWS ALERT



*Miami-Dade County Public Schools*

*Office of Communications - 1450 N.E. 2nd Avenue, Miami, FL 33132 - 305-995-1126 - [dadeschools.net](http://dadeschools.net)*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, March 13, 2020

**CONTACT:** Daisy Gonzalez-Diego

305-995-2060

## **M-DCPS Announces Districtwide School Closures Effective Monday, March 16, 2020**

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) will close all school sites for the week of March 16, beginning Monday, due to COVID-19 (coronavirus). The following week, Spring Recess, will continue as planned.

Since the beginning of the outbreak, M-DCPS has continued to describe the situation as fluid and evolving. As of yesterday evening, the situation escalated rapidly and substantially, with the notification of a confirmed coronavirus case in the Town of Bay Harbor Islands, which led to the closure of Ruth K. Broad/Bay Harbor K-8 Center. Late Thursday evening, Miami Dade College also directly notified students at the School for Advanced Studies and those participating in dual-enrollment courses, that all campuses are closed. The college's decision impacted thousands of M-DCPS students and families.

Ultimately, the past 24 hours have raised significant concerns regarding the timeliness and accuracy of interagency communication, as well as the availability and reporting of coronavirus testing. As a result of this unsustainable situation, Schools Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho has made the difficult decision to close all District schools for the week, by invoking School Board Policy 8420, declaring an emergency closure of all schools for the week starting March 16.

"The decision to close our schools is not one that we take lightly; as we know when kids are not in school, our community is directly impacted," said Schools Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho. "There is a significant difference between preparing for a hurricane and preparing for the potential impact of the coronavirus. Hurricanes typically follow a track; COVID-19 is unconventional and unpredictable. We don't know the time, place or people it will touch. We strive to make decisions that are in the best interest of students, families, and employees. The well-being of our students and staff must be valued above all."

The District has been preparing for the possibility of school closures since day one. The Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP), which has been developed and shared with teachers across M-DCPS, can be found at <http://icp.dadeschools.net/>. The expectation is that students will continue to progress in their learning under the consultation and guidance of their teachers. The District is providing teachers with additional professional development online to support distance learning on Monday. Teachers will receive that information from the District's Office of Human Capital Management.

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## *Schools Closure / add one*

As part of the established plan, the District has also adapted content to be accessible for students with special needs.

A support hotline was established for teachers, students, and parents seeking assistance with distance learning. The number for the hotline is 305-995-HELP. It will be active until 8 p.m. tonight, from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. Saturday and resume operations from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. next week.

All parents were notified to fill out an emergency preparedness mobile device survey over the last week to assist the District in ensuring students have access to digital devices and internet, should schools be closed. Early this morning, the District began device distribution to families who indicated they do not have a mobile device at home. Distribution will continue at all schools until 7:30 p.m. tonight; except in the case of Ruth K. Broad/Bay Harbor K-8 Center, where an alternate site will be made available. M-DCPS will resume device distribution on Saturday, and specific device pick-up times will be communicated directly to parents via automated messaging. Activities scheduled at schools, including Saturday Academy and facility rentals, will operate as scheduled over the weekend. The SAT administration scheduled for Saturday, March 14, 2020, will proceed as planned.

Beginning Monday, families in need of Internet connectivity may obtain service for 60 days, free of charge, from Comcast. Information about this service will be provided on <http://distancelearning.dadeschools.net>.

The following employee groups will continue to provide essential services: all Managerial Exempt Personnel and select administrative support personnel; limited safety and security personnel; and select food service, sanitization and maintenance teams. The District will be monitoring and advocating for proposed federal legislation designed to provide relief to hourly employees impacted by coronavirus. As part of established School Board Policy, the District will consider all available options to allow employees to make up hours not worked during the emergency. The District is also in conversation with federal entities, advocating for the reimbursement of expenditures associated with the emergency closure of schools.

With Spring Break approaching, many employees likely made plans for travel. We strongly recommend that you 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.

M-DCPS employees who need mental wellness support can contact the Emergency Assistance Program at 305-995-7111. This service will be provided from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday – Friday.

M-DCPS will continually provide a deep sanitization of schools. 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.

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*Schools Closure / add two*

All contractors and vendors have been directed to follow established CDC coronavirus protocols.

The hotline for the Department of Mental Health Services will also be available to assist students and their families during this time of uncertainty and anxiety. Students and parents may reach the hotline at 305-995-7100 from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday – Friday.

The District is aware that 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 fully prepared to implement a community feeding plan to provide meals for students and families. All schools will be providing 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.

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 all of its medical centers.

Those with questions may continue to call the District's Emergency Operations hotline at 305-995-3000. The District will continue monitoring all developments in this evolving situation and will communicate via automated messaging, social media, media announcements. The latest updates will also be posted at <http://covid19.dadeschools.net>.

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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