BREAKTHROUGH

improving student achievement…

Build. Accelerate. Sustain.

A message from the Assistant Superintendent…

I would like to personally welcome each of you back, *Are You Ready?* It is an exciting time for the Education Transformation Office (ETO) as we continue to grow and adjust during a time of nation-wide and global change. The world of education is an exhilarating area in which to work and we will continue to meet those areas through professional development opportunities, district instructional support and parent workshops to ensure ETO schools *Build. Accelerate. Sustain.* student achievement.

We are transforming the way we operate to continuously improve our ability to ensure high quality effective teaching, use data to make decisions on instruction, interventions, and enrichment as well as developing tomorrow's leaders.

Inside this issue…

It's a New Year… Make Every Day

"A Diploma in Every Hand!"

Get Involved in Your Child's School.

Our administrators, teachers, students, and parents continue to meet the challenges of our field and excel despite obstacles. We should all be very proud of where we are today and excited about where we are headed.

I would like to thank you for all you do and bringing your passion to our schools. Each of you has the vision, the wherewithal and the eagerness to help us pave our way into the future. You are truly our greatest asset today and tomorrow, and we could not accomplish what we do without you and your leadership. Throughout this school year, I ask you to stay engaged and remain open-minded as we work together to shape the future of *our schools*.

Respectfully,

Dr. Pablo G. Ortiz
Assistant Superintendent

It's A New Year… Make Every Day Count!

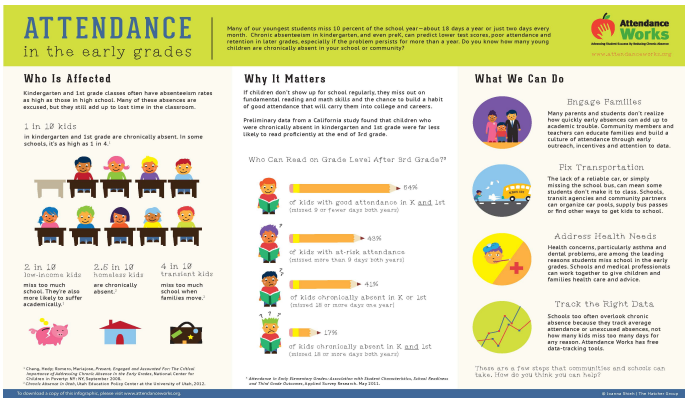
"Student Success begins with Attendance"

Attendance Works is a national and state initiative that promotes awareness of the important role that school attendance plays in achieving academic success starting with school entry.

As students are returning back to school this September, the problem of excessive absenteeism and its long-term effects are being recognized nationally with Attendance Awareness Month. The month long campaign is designed to bring attention to the crisis of absenteeism in schools and the effect it has on student success. Missed school days also mean lost funding for school districts. The single largest source of public school funding is school district revenue limits, which are paid to districts by the state based on student attendance.

Specific guidelines for student attendance are reflected in the Student Attendance Reporting Procedure e-Handbook Grade PK-12 located at dadeschools.net.

At Attendance Works, one of their top priorities is building public awareness about the importance of school attendance. They used research briefs, webinars, press releases and toolkits. Today, they are pleased to share their first infographic spelling out the facts about chronic absence in the early grades. To download a copy of this infographic, please visit www.attendanceworks.org.



Help Your Child Succeed in School: **Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early**

School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

DID YOU KNOW?

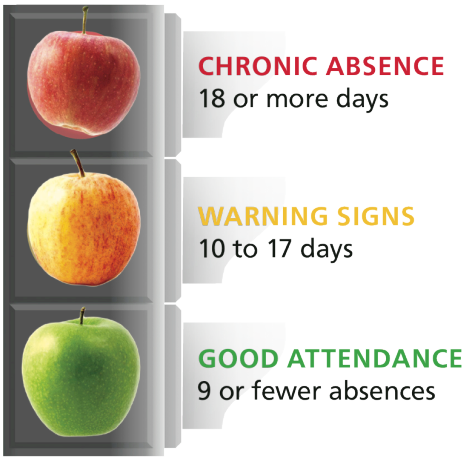
- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

When Do Absences Become a Problem?



Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

For more on school readiness, visit **attendanceworks.org** and **reachoutandread.org**

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Giving Back to the Community

Members of the Miami Dolphins Women's Organization (MDWO) went shopping with 20 girls from Paul Laurence Dunbar K-8 Center for back to school clothes at Sears in the Westfield Broward Mall. Each student had $300 to spend for back to school clothes courtesy of the Miami Dolphins Foundation and Sears.

MIAMI DOLPHINS FOUNDATION

BB&T Reading Room/Literacy Center
@ Frederick Douglass Elementary School

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Miami is proud to reveal their new Reading Room/Literacy Center at Frederick Douglass Elementary. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony took place on Friday, September 6th. This was made possible with funding from BB&T who awarded Big Brothers Big Sisters with $2,500 to develop a new, stimulating reading and learning environment for children in need. Thank you, BB&T!

BB&T

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Miami & Mentoring Resource Center

ATTENTION PARENTS

"A Diploma in Every Hand!"

Miami-Dade County Public Schools offers students at all levels a variety of programs to prepare students for postsecondary education in order to maximize each student's academic talents and interests. The Advanced Academic Programs described below provide accelerated mechanisms for students to take college level courses while still in high school.

Advanced Placement (AP) Program Advanced Placement (AP) courses are available in all high schools and enrollment is open to students through teacher recommendation. Although some students enroll in AP courses as early as grade 9, most students begin taking AP courses in grades 10 and/or 11. These courses are challenging, providing college-level course work while students are still in high school. Toward the end of the school year, students participate in the AP exam that assesses student's knowledge in the specific content area. Scores range from one through five. Most colleges and universities will award students college credit for their AP course, if they have scored a three or above on the exam. This benefits students and parents, as students will not have to pay or take these courses over once they enter a post-secondary institution. AP courses are offered in the following subjects: Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Science, Science, Technology, Foreign Language, and the Arts.

Dual Enrollment Dual enrollment (DE) provides students the opportunity to enroll in college courses while still in high school. In Miami-Dade County Public Schools, DE is provided through Miami Dade College (MDC), University of Florida (UF), and Florida International University (FIU). Students who qualify may enroll in a college course, and the tuition and textbook cost is waived for the student. Most M-DCPS high schools offer DE courses on their campuses both during the school day and after school. Upon completion of the DE course, the credit earned can be used towards fulfillment of a high school graduation requirement, and can also be used as college credit. In order to qualify for dual enrollment, students must be entering or be in grade 10, grade 11, or grade 12, must have a 3.0 unweighted grade point average (GPA), must pass the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT) or achieve the required minimum score on the SAT or ACT, and meet all the criteria for admission to MDC or FIU. In order to receive high school credit for Dual Enrollment courses, students must submit the college transcripts to their high school counselor. For eligibility and availability of DE courses,

2013-2014
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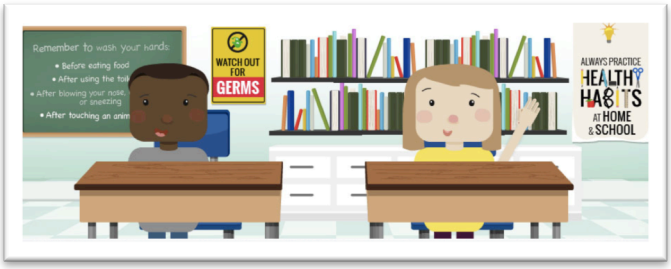
Education Transformation Office
Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Celebrating the Inaugural "Healthy Habits" Week!



The National Education Association (NEA), National PTA and Lysol launched the inaugural Healthy Habits Week on September 23, 2013 – a collaborative effort to reinforce the importance of practicing healthy habits among school-age children.

As students get back in the swing of things this school year, it is extremely important for them to remain healthy and thriving. Every year, the common cold results in 22 million lost days of school for students, as a result of the 2.2 million cases of the common cold that affect Americans under the age of 17 annually… Following the worst cold and flu season in over a decade, it's essential to stress the importance of hand washing, along with other good hygiene habits, to reduce student absences.

Want join the movement? Go to http://www.lysol.com/mission-for-health/healthy-classrooms/school-materials to access Healthy Habits Program resources.

Get Involved in Your Child's School

The School Volunteer Program consists of reliable talented volunteers and mentors that serve in our schools to support the District's goal of student achievement. Volunteers work under the direction of the Principal and/or school volunteer liaison and are considered our partners in education. Before beginning services, all volunteers must register through the M-DCPS portal in which a complete comprehensive background search is conducted. There are over 30 volunteer activities to choose from such as:

- Classroom Assistant - helping a classroom teacher with individual classroom needs.
- Tutor - work with small groups in the classroom under the direction of the teacher to assist with academic tutorial work.
- Chaperone – assists teachers and students for field trips.
- Club Assistant – include school booster clubs and other school related organizations.
- Listener/Oyentes - an adult friend to a child, under the direction of a school counselor.
- Mentor - volunteers who are placed one-on-one with students or in small groups. Their role is to provide a support system for the students.
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To register as a school site school volunteer, contact your school's front office and speak to the School Volunteer Liaison or visit our website at www.dadeschools.net and register through the parent or community portal.