



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Wednesday, July 29, 2020



M-DCPS Announces Plans for the 2020-2021 Reopening of Schools

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) announced today that in light of the viral surge in the community due to COVID-19, the 2020-2021 school year will begin on Monday, August 31, with students utilizing the District's new and comprehensive My School Online (MSO) distance learning model. The District's decision to open with MSO for all students is the result of several weeks of careful consideration based upon the counsel of the M-DCPS reopening workgroup comprised mostly of medical experts, meetings with county officials and continued science-focused analysis of the latest public health data, which is continually evolving. Additionally, the Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics today issued recommendations regarding the reopening of schools which support the District's decision to delay the start of physical schooling.

"Miami-Dade County Public Schools is proud to offer our families much-needed structure and stability as we adjust to a new reality. The decision to commence the academic year on the My School Online distance learning platform is representative of our commitment to safeguarding the health and wellbeing of our students and workforce, while providing a quality education to all," said Superintendent Alberto Carvalho.

Beginning August 24, M-DCPS will launch a Week of Welcome with activities and a week-long orientation tailored to help students and families prepare for the 2020-2021 school year. The Week of Welcome will focus on many topics, such as what a student's typical instructional day will look like; guidance on connecting and navigating the virtual environment; organizational skills for students; physical and mental wellness, as well as resources to support students and families. Families will be able to access training tools and a variety of webinars by visiting www.parentacademymiami.com. Beyond the extensive training provided over the summer months, teachers will undergo five days of training on distance learning for MSO as well as safety protocols to be followed when students return to the schoolhouse.

MSO will be powered by a new, robust distance learning platform. Students will maintain their enrollment status at their brick-and-mortar schools, but will attend school online during regular school hours and follow a standard school schedule which includes brain breaks, recess, and time for lunch. Official school attendance will be recorded and maintained for each class. Students are also highly encouraged to wear school uniforms while participating

in MSO. Through the innovative platform, teachers will meet with students daily, utilizing web conference technology; and wrap-around support services will also be provided, including counseling, therapies and mental health supports.

The District will continue to review opportunities to begin providing face-to-face instruction for students who may have significant learning needs. In a controlled and cautious manner, the District will explore the potential for a staggered reopening for students who may have widening learning gaps due to the extensive time they have been away from school. This will allow for the transition of subgroups of students to the schoolhouse based on need and academic fragility.

To ensure all families are properly equipped for MSO, the District has secured thousands of digital devices and Wi-Fi hotspots in addition to the 119,000 that have already been distributed to all students who requested them. M-DCPS is also collaborating with various governmental, corporate and non-profit partners to assist in the elimination of digital deserts in the community.

Meal distributions will also continue for M-DCPS students at school sites throughout the community. More than 5.8 million grab-and-go breakfasts and lunches have been provided to students since the closure of schools in March. The fall distribution dates and times are forthcoming but will occur outside of school hours. Additionally, students will be able to pick up several days-worth of meals at a time.

This month, all M-DCPS parents were asked to select their preferred learning model for the 2020-2021 school year. Nearly half of all parents selected the traditional Schoolhouse Model, representing a return to the physical school environment, with several significant modifications to ensure enhanced health and safety precautions. The M-DCPS reopening plan was built to pivot between models, as necessary, based on local public health conditions. Once local conditions support a physical reopening, schools will be able to accommodate the students whose parents selected the Schoolhouse Model, for five days a week, while following health guidelines. The District has eliminated the previously considered hybrid model of part-time in-school and part-time eLearning because it would provide inadequate support for working families and would place students behind in terms of instruction and content compared to the other models.

Throughout the month of September, M-DCPS will continue to monitor local conditions to ascertain whether it will be safe to reopen schools. By September 30, a decision will be announced on whether M-DCPS will begin implementing the Schoolhouse Model beginning October 5th or continue in a remote environment.

Once the District determines it is safe for students to return to schools, every effort will be made to maintain as much social distancing as possible. Various protocols and procedures have been developed to enhance safety, including the wearing of face coverings on buses and school campuses, modified drop-off/pick-up, food distribution and class transition procedures, additional sanitization and hygiene measures, and strategically-placed signage to reinforce safety. In partnership with Miami-Dade County, the District is also increasing school nursing staff levels and implementing a comprehensive and automated contact tracing program to prevent additional spread if a case is reported. Transportation, before and after care, athletics and other extracurricular activities will also be offered once schools reopen.

To view the complete M-DCPS reopening plan, visit reopening.dadeschools.net. An official Opening of Schools Guide will also be available next week.

Parents are encouraged to keep their contact information current and update their phone numbers and emails. To opt-in to receive emergency text messages, text Y to 67587. For the most up-to-date information, please download the Dadeschools mobile app to your iPhone or Android device. Follow us on Twitter @[mdcps](https://twitter.com/mdcps) and @[miamisup](https://twitter.com/miamisup), on Instagram @[miamischools](https://www.instagram.com/miamischools) and @[miamisup](https://www.instagram.com/miamisup), and on Facebook at [MiamiSchools](https://www.facebook.com/MiamiSchools) and [AlbertoCarvalho](https://www.facebook.com/AlbertoCarvalho)

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