Miami–Dade County Public Schools

Guide and Resources for Student Support

2025-2026

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

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Introduction

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is a school district that prides itself on providing support services to all families across our diverse and vibrant community in order to remove barriers to student success regardless of a student's academic pathway. No matter the hurdle a family may face, be assured that there is always help if you ask for assistance. This resource guide was created to provide guidance and resources to all families as they navigate their child's educational journey in Miami-Dade County.

Bullying Prevention Program

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students. To this end, the Division of Student Services is dedicated to eradicating bullying and harassment in schools by providing awareness, prevention and education in promoting a school atmosphere in which bullying, harassment, and intimidation will not be tolerated by students, school board employees, visitors, or volunteers. Anonymous bullying reporting is available via the student/parent portal. For more information, please visit the Division of Student Services website or call their office at 305-816-0436.

Children's Courthouse Education Liaison Office (CCELO)- Court-Involved Students

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools' (M-DCPS) Office of District Operations | Special Program's Children's Courthouse Education Liaison Office (CCELO) is the link between the school system and the Unified Children's Court system. CCELO is committed to providing educational support and advocacy services to our court-involved students and their families who are involved with the Unified Children's Courthouse and the child welfare system. Our mission is to build linkages between the Court and its partner agencies and stakeholders, and the school system in order to improve educational outcomes for court-involved students. The assistance provided to court-involved students and their families by the M-DCPS District Court Liaisons at the CCELO are in the areas of personal/social, academic, and career development.

The Children's Courthouse Education Liaison Office (CCELO) is a unique program located onsite at the Children's Courthouse. The CCELO staff provides direct support and assistance to students and their families, educational expertise in court, and consultation services to all Unified Children's Courthouse partners and child welfare agency personnel working with our court-involved students. The services provided by CCELO District Court Liaisons include, but are not limited to the following:

- Conducting student educational reviews to address the educational needs of students involved in the Unified Children's Court system.
- Facilitating educational conferences between court-involved students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) and school-site and/or agency personnel.

- Consulting and collaborating with Child Protective Investigators, Full Case Managers, Guardians Ad-Litem, Juvenile Probation Officers, and others involved in the Unified Children's Courthouse and child welfare system.
- Promoting school stability for all court-involved students and facilitating school re-entry and/or transition.
- Conveying information from the court and agency personnel to appropriate district, regional, and school-site staff.
- Assisting and supporting school personnel by providing educational consultation, recommendations, and resources for students who are under the supervision of Department of Children and Families (DCF) and/or the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

Visit the Children's Courthouse Education Liaison Office website or contact their office at 305-679-2800 for more information.

College Assistance Program- Postsecondary Advisement

The College Assistance Program (CAP) is a postsecondary advisory program in all public senior high schools in Miami-Dade County. The specialized focus of the program enables CAP advisors to serve students more effectively because of their specific expertise in this field. CAP advisors help students secure information for the selection of appropriate colleges, universities, vocational and/or technical schools; obtain and complete college admissions applications; and complete financial aid applications. The mission of the College Assistance Program (CAP) is to increase equitable college and career-readiness outcomes for all students. For more information, please visit the Division of Student Services website or call their office at 305-816-0436.

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Program- English Language Learners

When you register your child in school for the first time in the state of Florida, you will be asked to fill out a Home Language Survey. If a language other than English is spoken at home, your child will be tested to assess his/her language proficiency in English. If the test results show that your child is not proficient in English, he/she will be classified as an English Learner and will be scheduled into English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. Your child is taught by Florida certified teachers. English proficiency is taught by ESOL certified or endorsed teachers.

Your child will receive appropriate support based on test results. Test results are used to plan instruction, assessments, and evaluations. The results are also used to determine whether students are ready to be exited from the program. Your child will receive instruction to develop academic English language skills that allow your child to understand what they are taught in class. There are many digital tools to supplement instruction during and after school hours. The digital tools are accessed through the Schoology. Additionally, your child is entitled to testing accommodations including extended time to complete exams as well as the use of an English/Heritage language dictionary.

Schools are required to provide parents of English Learners with an annual update of their children's English language development. Schools are required to keep parents informed about their child's progress via interim progress reports, report cards, and parent conferences. Your child's grades can be accessed through the electronic gradebook in the parent portal or the M-DCPS mobile application.

In grades K-5, support is also provided in the Curriculum Content in the Home Language (CCHL) for ESOL Level 1 and 2 students with less than two years in the ESOL program in math, science and/or social studies in Spanish or Haitian-Creole. At the secondary level, Home Language Assistance Program (HLAP) is provided to assist students in content areas in the student's native language. English Learners have the right to participate in all programs. This includes advanced courses (Honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate), talented and gifted programs. If a child has special learning needs, Special Education programs are also available. Parents have the right to refuse to have their child enrolled in an ESOL program, but not the right to refuse classification of EL status.

Tutoring funds are available for ELs to participate in before, after and/or Saturday school for supplemental tutoring in Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. K-12 supplemental software programs that explicitly teach oral language acquisition and foundational literacy skills for ESOL level 1 students are used in your child's classroom. For additional information, visit the Department of Bilingual Education and World Languages website or call their office at 305-995-2428.

Exceptional Student Education Program

The Office of Educational Services and Exceptional Student Education (ESE) serves children and families throughout the District by developing, coordinating and overseeing programs that support students with disabilities to ensure that curriculum, instructional and behavioral practices are tailored to meet their educational needs. The Department is also committed to enhancing academic success for all students by providing access to age-appropriate school and community resources that will benefit the individual needs of each student. Specific programs and services include early identification and intervention, psycho-educational evaluation and placement, transition support and truancy prevention.

If you are concerned about problems your child may be having in reading, math, writing, speech/language or behavior, your first and primary contact is your child's teacher. The teacher will, in collaboration with you, develop a Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) to address academic concerns. If after the PMP is implemented, your child continues to experience difficulties, you may request assistance from the School Support Team (SST).

The School Support Team is a problem-solving team and a resource for assisting teachers and parents with providing interventions for children. You may contact your child's school and ask to speak with the MTSS Coordinator if you wish to request assistance from the SST. The team will provide teachers with resources and support in developing and putting

into action interventions within your child's classroom according to your child's needs. Your child's progress will be monitored to determine how your child is responding to the intervention(s).

If the SST determines that the interventions prescribed and implemented for your child need additional support, a request for a psycho-educational or speech/language evaluation may be requested. Classroom based interventions will continue as a support for your child's learning needs. A psycho-educational evaluation is the process for gathering additional information to assist in program planning for your child and to determine if a child has a disability, needs special education and/or related services. A psycho-educational/speech language evaluation must be completed before special education or related services can be provided to a child with a disability. Visit the Office of Educational Services and ESE website or call their office at 305-995-2037 for more information. They can also be reached via email at ESE@dadeschools.net.

Gifted Education Program

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Gifted Education Program provides qualitatively different programs designed to meet the needs of gifted students. Gifted students are defined as those who have superior intellectual development and are capable of high performance. Students who meet the State eligibility criteria are provided with a range of gifted service delivery options (K-12) to meet each student's special needs. Instructional programs for gifted students emphasize acceleration and enrichment based on students' strengths. The Gifted Education Program offers a differentiated curriculum based on content, concepts, processes, and applications through products/projects in language arts, mathematics, science and/or social studies. Such a differentiated curriculum provides for in-depth consideration of topics and concepts beyond the requirements of regular courses, and therefore, is designated as an academically accelerated program. Currently, over 39,000 students in Miami-Dade County participate in the gifted program and all traditional public schools provide services to gifted students. For more information, please call Advanced Academic Programs at 305-995-1934.

Mental Health Services

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), through the Office of Mental Health and Student Services, prioritizes the social, emotional and mental well-being of all students. Local and national resources are available for students, parents, and community stakeholders. In collaboration with community agencies, students in need of additional therapeutic intervention are provided services on a referral basis. Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Department of Mental Health Services was established in July 2018 to enhance the coordination of District and community resources to deliver evidence-based mental health care for students. All K-12 schools have an assigned mental health coordinator who provides direct services to students and families and also ensure referrals to community agencies when an added level of support is needed. For more

information, please visit the Mental Health Services website or call their office at 305-995-1020 or the Mental Health Parent Assistance Line at 305-995-7100.

Migrant Education Program- Migrant Students

The Title I Migrant Education Program provides educational and support services for migratory students to ensure they have the same opportunities to meet the same academic standards as other children. M-DCPS Title I Migrant Education Program provides comprehensive supplemental services to ensure maximum academic achievement and the highest quality education for our migrant students.

Our funding supports high quality education programs for migratory children and helps ensure that migratory children who move among the states are not penalized in any manner by disparities among states in curriculum, graduation requirements, or state academic standards. Funds also ensure that migratory children are not only provided with appropriate education and support services that address their special needs, but also that such children receive full and appropriate opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic content and standards that all students are expected to meet.

M-DCPS Title I Migrant Education Program has been improving the lives of farm workers and their children by delivering free, supplemental educational and support services to the migrant community, and has made significant contributions toward curtailing the dropout rate among migrant high school students as evidenced by the number of migrant students graduating from high school.

To reduce the impact of educational barriers, the U.S. Congress authorized federal funding to establish the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in 1966 under the authority of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The United States Department of Education (USDOE) currently administers the Office of Migrant Education (OME) responsible for meeting the special needs of migratory children and youth. Visit the Title I Migrant Education program website or call their office at 305-258-4115 for more information.

The Parent Academy

The M-DCPS Parent Academy is a free, year-round, parent engagement initiative of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, helping parents become full partners in their children's education. The goal of this program is to provide educational excellence for all our children by informing parents about the importance of their roles, connecting families with schools and resources, and giving parents a fuller sense of their rights, responsibilities, and the educational opportunities available. In-person and virtual sessions are offered on selected topics that are aligned with caregivers' needs. A variety of online resources are available through this website including pre-recorded webinars in English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole. Be the link to your child's success! Visit the M-DCPS Parent Academy website to access workshop information, workshop registration

procedures, pre-recorded sessions, and other resources for the entire family. Explore the virtual campus at https://parentacademymiami.com/high-school-beyond/or call their office at 305-271-8257.

Project UP-START- Families in Transition

Project UP-START, under the Department of Title I Administration, is the Education Program for Children and Youth Living in Unstable Housing in Miami-Dade. The program assists schools with the identification, enrollment, and attendance of students in unstable housing to help ensure their successful academic achievement. The core of the program is to prevent children and youth in transition from being stigmatized, separated, segregated, or isolated.

Each school has a designated School UP-START Liaison to help identify students living in unstable housing. The liaison also works with Project UP-START staff to provide services for the students. Students who live two or more miles from their School of Origin (the school they attended before becoming unhoused), can request transportation services through Project UP-START. Families or school staff of eligible students should call the Project UP-START office to request case management services or to schedule an in-person appointment with a Project UP-START staff member in person. Efforts are made to expedite psycho-educational evaluations for children who may be gifted or who are experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties. Project UP-START also works to increase advocacy on behalf of students through the distribution of information to school-based personnel on issues related to unstable housing and available community resources.

Additionally, Project UP-START offers an after-school tutorial component at selected shelters that is designed to supplement learning. Activities to promote a healthy sense of self and to strengthen academic competence are part of the tutorial sessions. The parent/family component brings participants to workshops to learn ways to help their children with homework, how to communicate with school staff, and/or how to ask for guidance for accessing the Parent Portal. Parental/family involvement meetings are scheduled on a regular basis at selected shelter sites to encourage the academic success of students participating in the Project UP-START Program.

Services are available to students enrolled in Miami-Dade County Public Schools from Head Start through 12th grade who are experiencing unstable housing. Any student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, as defined by the Stewart B. McKinney-Bruce Vento Homeless Assistance Act, qualifies for Project UP-START. Students who meet the definition described above, are living with someone who is not their parent or legal guardian and are not in foster care are considered Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and also qualify for services. Visit the Project Upstart website or contact their office at 305-995-7558 for more information.

SAFE (School Allies for Equity) Network- LGBTQ+ Student/Parent Support

The SAFE (School Allies for Equity) Network was established 30 years ago in M-DCPS. The mission of SAFE is to provide school and district employees with the knowledge necessary to build comprehensive support for all students and parents, including students who are LGBTQ+. The program is comprised of a direct service liaison, in every school that is selected by administration and is trained on current topics that impact the wellness and safety of LGBTQ+ students. M-DCPS SAFE Network helps to offset all the risk factors LGBTQ+ students face in schools. Resources to support LGBTQ+ students may be found in this link.

M-DCPS encourages and supports our GSA clubs in our schools by providing professional development to the GSA sponsors and the district collaborates with outside agencies around community events. Please contact the Division of Student Services at 305-816-0436 for more information.

School Counseling Program

School counseling services are provided by school counselors at every school PK -12 and Adult/Vocational/Technical Education Centers. Every school in the District has at least one school counselor and a mental health coordinator assigned to the school. These highly trained professionals work with families to provide counseling services and community resources. School counselors promote achievement through an annual comprehensive school counseling program that incorporates academic, career, and social emotional activities and resources. For more information, please visit the Division of Student Services website or call their office at 305-816-0436.

Teenage Parent Program

The Teenage Parent (TAP) program is a comprehensive dropout prevention program designed to provide educational and ancillary support services to pregnant and parenting students enrolled in any Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). Services are in place at all M-DCPS schools including specialized educational centers, outreach locations, and several charter schools. The program offers a specialized curriculum, referrals to health care providers and social services agencies, childcare during school hours, and transportation. TAP is a voluntary program, governed by Florida Statutes and is available to all teenage parents who desire to work toward a high school diploma. Visit the Teenage Parent Program website or call their office at 305-636-7356 for more information.

TRUST (To Reach Ultimate Success Together) Program

The TRUST (To Reach Ultimate Success Together) Program is a comprehensive student assistance program designed to provide prevention, intervention, referral, and follow-up services to students and their families who may be experiencing mental health issues,

substance abuse and other self-defeating behaviors. TRUST counselors are additional counseling professional in some schools who provides additional services to students and their families.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida adheres to a policy of nondiscrimination in employment and educational programs/activities and strives affirmatively to provide equal opportunity for all as required by:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended - prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin, including actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, or citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended - prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 - prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. M-DCPS does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any education program or activity that it operates as required by Title IX. M-DCPS also does not discriminate on the basis of sex in admissions or employment.

Age Discrimination Act of 1975 - prohibits discrimination based on age in programs or activities.

Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended (ADEA) - prohibits discrimination on the basis of age with respect to individuals who are at least 40 years old.

The Equal Pay Act of 1963, as amended - prohibits gender discrimination in the payment of wages to women and men performing substantially equal work in the same establishment.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - prohibits discrimination against qualified students with disabilities.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) - prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, public service, public accommodations, and telecommunications.

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) - requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for certain family and medical reasons.

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 - prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

Florida Educational Equity Act (FEEA) - prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender, national origin, religion, marital status, or disability in public education.

Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992 - secures all individuals within the state freedom from discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin, age, handicap, or marital status.

Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) - prohibits discrimination against employees or applicants because of genetic information.

Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2002 – No public school shall deny equal access to or a fair opportunity for groups to meet on school premises or in school facilities before or after school hours or discriminate against any group officially affiliated with Boy Scouts of America or any other youth or community group listed in Title 36 as a patriotic society.

Veterans are provided re-employment rights in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4312 (Federal Law) and Section 295.07 (Florida Statutes), which stipulate categorical preferences for employment.

In Addition:

School Board Policies 1362, 3362, 4362, and 5517 - Prohibit harassment and discrimination against students, employees, or applicants on the basis of age, citizenship status, color, disability, ethnic or national origin, FMLA, gender, gender identity, genetic information, linguistic preference, marital status, political beliefs, pregnancy, race, religion, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, social and family background, and any other legally prohibited basis. Retaliation for engaging in a protected civil rights activity is also prohibited.

For additional information about Title IX or any other discrimination/harassment concerns, contact the U.S. Department of Education Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights and/or:

Office of Civil Rights Compliance (CRC)
District Director/Title IX Coordinator
155 NE 15th Street, Suite P104E
Miami, Florida 33132
Phone: (305) 995-1580 TDD: (305) 995-2400
Email: crc@dadeschools.net
Website: https://tinyurl.com/MDCPS-CRC

For additional information on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or any other student disability concerns contact:

Department of Exceptional Student Education
1501 NE 2nd Ave, Suite 407
Miami, Florida 33132
Phone: (305) 995-2037 TDD: (305) 995-2400
Email: ese@dadeschools.net
Website: https://ese.dadeschools.net