

Update 8.14.20

Good Afternoon,

Tempus Fugit. It's hard to believe that we are rapidly approaching the start of the 2020-2021 school. Who would have thought that we would do so under the scourge of a pandemic? At this time of the year, we typically worry about hurricanes; praying that one, like Hurricane Andrew, doesn't come our way. Our recent experience with Hurricane Isaias, reminds us that things could be much worse. It certainly was for many of the folks who live along the East Coast of the United States. I convey these thoughts because it is important for all of us to maintain an accurate perspective about our current conditions. Sure, COVID-19 is scary and disruptive, but for most of us it's just annoying. For others, it's deadly. The infection and hospital rates in Miami and Florida are too high. We can't even begin to think about returning to school until these rates decline to five percent. So, all students in Miami-Dade will start the year using My School Online (MSO). Safety trumps everything else. Transition to Schoolhouse learning is dependent upon improved community conditions (Stage II).



My School Online (MSO) is the distance learning option for those students in grades K-12 who wish to continue their education full-time through innovative learning environments but still maintain their enrollment status at their brick and mortar schools. MSO students will have their attendance taken as they participate in classes online during regular school hours and follow a standard school schedule. Teachers in MSO meet daily with their students utilizing web conferencing technology embedded within the platform. MSO also affords students the opportunity for whole-group and small-group instruction, personalized learning, and support services, such as guidance and mental health counseling, interventions, and therapies as needed. While enrolled in My School Online, students are expected to log into live sessions with their teachers every scheduled school day, attend online class as scheduled, be prepared to start online classes on time and demonstrate appropriate digital citizenship behavior while online.



In my previous updates, I have described the various platforms students and teachers will use to interact this year. Some of them, like K12, are completely new to students, teacher and parents. Teachers will be able to interact with their entire class, a small group of students, or individual students on this platform. During lessons, teachers can respond to student questions and provide real-time support and progress monitoring. While logged onto the platform, students can access their lessons, interact with peers, and complete group work and/or group projects. Additionally, teachers will be able to host parent and student conferences during planning periods, before school and/or after school as appropriate.

This is a first for us and for that reason, the district is providing extensive professional development for teachers and orientation sessions for students and parents during the Week of Welcome (WOW) that begins August 24th. Parents are asked to visit <http://miamiweekofwelcome.com> during that week so they may engage in topics, such as Connecting Virtually, Healthy Mind and Body, Supporting Student Success

and Your Child on Campus that are designed to orient and assist parents with My School Online. Additionally, we ask that parents tune in to the Superintendent's Parent Webinar that will be telecast at <https://dadeschools.eduvision.tv> on August 25th beginning at 5:30 PM. Parents may also submit questions about MSO or other inquiries to questions@dadeschools.net until August 20th so they may be answered before school begins. Students and parents are invited to view the promotional video for the Week of Welcome at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/rauyu8rgd0ym2rm/WOW-30S-PROMO-HDTV-1080-ENGLISH.mp4?dl=0>. We will also host Zoom meetings for students and parents as well during that week to provide more specific details about MSO at MAST@FIU.

Student course schedules will be posted on the Parent and Student Portals and the District's Mobile App in the next few days. Students may log into the Student Portal or mobile app to access their schedule, and parents may access their child's schedule through the Parent Portal or mobile app by logging in using their assigned PIN. The courses reflected in your child's schedule may have change since June because of the difficulty we encountered when students were placed into two different houses (online vs. in school). We did the best we could do given the circumstances and our goal was to ensure that students had all the courses they need for graduation. No schedule changes are possible unless your child is scheduled into a course he/she has already taken. We will address that concern after school opens.

Parents who do not have a pin, should contact their child's school to secure a PIN. Keep in mind that school for our students begins at 7:20 AM and ends at 2:20 PM and the school follows a block period rotation. Students will meet periods 1-3-5 the first day of school on August 31st. FIU begins their classes on August 24th which is a week before our start time. Students enrolled in FIU classes should log into <https://my.fiu.edu/> to see the specific course details.

We are using a different company for uniform apparel and accessories this year. The PTSA has been looking at different companies and they have selected one that conducts business completely online and ships your purchases to your home address. The PTSA will host its annual meeting very soon. If you are interested in running for the position of Vice-President or Recording Secretary or you just want to help, please contact Dr. Mitra Raheb at draheb@yahoo.com. Our PTSA is fabulous and all the money they raise comes back to our students. Fantastic!

WOW! And I'm not referring to the Week of Welcome. We know it's a lot to absorb. Hang in there. We will all get there together. In the meantime, keep following CDC guidelines: wear a mask, maintain social distance, avoid crowds, and wash your hands frequently. Until next time, *Carpe Diem*, and bye for now.

Matthew Welker