

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL...

Brazilian Independence Day

Brazilian Independence Day is September 7, 2015. We will be raising the Brazilian Flag on Monday, September 8, 2014, at 9:00 – 9:30 a.m. in honor of this important day.

Kindergarten and First Grade parents are invited to join us as we raise the Brazilian Flag outside the school by the flag pole near the “Walkers” Dismissal Area.

All students are permitted to wear green and yellow on Monday, September 8, 2015, for a \$1.00 donation to PIPA.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month begins on September 15, 2015 through October 15, 2015. Please note that, as always, we will be having activities in and out of the classroom that support our Hispanic Heritage.

Testing Calendar 2015-2016

Parents, we have provided you with copies of the 2015-2016 Miami Dade County Public Schools Testing Calendar. A virtual calendar is available at www.dadeschools.net under the Calendars link.

Important Dates

Date	Event
September 2, 2015	PTA Meeting in Room 144
September 24, 2015	Interim Progress Reports go home
September 10, 2015	Open House, Grades K-8 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.
September 18, 2015	PTA Membership Day for K-5 Grade Students
September 29, 2015	September Student of the Month at 1:15 p.m. in the Cafeteria
October 1, 2015	Kick-off United Way Student Campaign – Sports Day \$1.00 Donation to United Way
October 2, 2015	Picture Day – Students will wear their uniforms for their pictures.
October 5, 2015	IS/IE Begins
October 9, 2015	United Way Twin Day \$1.00 Donation to United Way
October 16, 2015	United Way International Day \$1.00 Donation to United Way
October 23, 2015	United Way Pajama Day \$1.00 Donation to United Way
October 27, 2015	Student of the Month at 1:15 p.m. in the Cafeteria
October 29, 2015	United Way Character Dress Up Day \$1.00 Donation to United Way
	End of First Grading Period
October 30, 2015	Teacher Planning Day
November 6, 2015	International Food Festival
November 11, 2015	Veteran’s Day – No School for Students
November 17, 2015	Report Card Distribution #1
November 18, 2015	Science Fair
November 25, 2015	Teacher Planning Day
November 26 and 27, 2015	Thanksgiving Recess
December 1, 2015	Student of the Month at 1:15 p.m. in the Cafeteria
December 3, 2015	Interim Progress Report Distribution #2

Values Matter at Ada Merritt K-8 Center

The Values Matter Initiative focuses on our school district's Student Code of Conduct and nine core values. These values are important to being a model student and having a positive impact on others. We will be emphasizing and celebrating positive behavior.

Students will be participating in classroom lessons and watching videos that expand on the nine core values.



Reminders About Attendance

Parents,

Attendance continues to be a major component of your child's success in school. We need your support to ensure that students are in school **on time** every day.

Students in kindergarten and first grade should be in seated in class by 8:20 a.m. Second through eighth grade students should be in class by 8:35 a.m.

Students will not be dismissed 30 minutes before dismissal times.

I thank you for your cooperation and continue to count on your support.

Media Center Hours

Please be informed that the Media Center will be available to parents from 7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. daily and 3:10 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. daily; except for Wednesdays, 1:55 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

The Media Center hours were revised to make the Media Center more available to students and teachers during school hours.

We thank you for your cooperation.

International Education (IE) and International Studies (IS) Classes

International Education (IE) and International Studies (IS) classes will begin on Monday, October 5, 2015.

Code of Student Conduct

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is committed to providing a safe teaching and learning environment for students, staff, and members of the community. On January 16, 2008, the School Board approved a newly revised Code of Student Conduct (COSC).

The revised COSC identifies, recognizes, and rewards model student behavior within a framework of clearly established and enforceable rules and policies. It advocates a holistic approach to promoting and maintaining a safe learning environment and requires active participation from students, parents/guardians, and school staff. Students and parents/guardians can access the English and Haitian/Creole versions of the document on the M-DCPS Website located at: <http://ehandbooks.dadeschools.net/policies/90/indes.htm> or you may request a copy from your child's school. The Spanish version of this document will be forthcoming.

The school district believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents/legal guardians, staff, and community members creating an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for district and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers will demonstrate appropriate behavior; treat others with civility and respect, and refuse to tolerate bullying or harassment (M-DCPS Code of Student Conduct).

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has an Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy. Please speak to your child about reporting any bullying or harassment to a school official. All allegations will be investigated.

Please ensure you review the Code of Student Conduct with your child.

Parent and Student Handbook

The Parent and Student Handbook is available on the Ada Merritt K-8 Center website. The Parent and Student Handbook

outlines district and school policies on attendance, conduct, grading, arrival/dismissal, lunch, peanut/nut free practice and many more important topics.

We encourage you to take the time to review the Parent and Student Handbook with your child.

All students should return the Parent and Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form to their teacher.



FREE Breakfast!

Breakfast is free for all students. Please encourage your child to come by the Cafeteria in the morning and to take advantage of the free breakfast provided for every student.

Breakfast is served until 7:30 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.

School breakfast improves student behavior and learning environments.

- Schools that provide breakfast in the classroom to all students show decreases in tardiness and suspensions as well as improved student behavior and attentiveness.
- Providing students with breakfast in the classroom setting is associated with lower tardy rates and fewer disciplinary office referrals.
- School breakfast programs can lower absence and tardiness rates and improve standardized achievement test scores.

Parent Volunteers/Visitors

Effective immediately, parents, students, employees and community members who wish to volunteer at your school should register on-line through the M-DCPS portal(s).

Parents, please remember to sign-in if you plan to be in school after 8:35 a.m. A Volunteer / Visitor's Badge can be obtained from the Main Office. Please use the same procedure when visiting the park while physical education classes are in session. Please assist us in keeping our students safe.

STUDENT ABSENCES

Please be reminded that if your child is absent from school; he/she must bring a written note, within three school days, explaining the absence(s) in order to be excused. The following are considered excused absences:

- a. student illness
- b. medical appointment
- c. death in family
- d. observance of a religious holiday or service when mandated for all members of a faith that such a holiday or service be observed
- e. school-sponsored event or activity previously approved
- f. other individual student absences approved by the principal

Parents, we appreciate the great effort being made thus far to have students in school on time. Please continue supporting us as we encourage students to be on time to school everyday.

If you do not provide a written note explaining the absence(s) it will be considered unexcused.

Please review the attached letter regarding the Attendance Plan.

Please note that parents will automatically receive a Connect Ed message once the student has three absences.

Media Center Etiquette

Remember that there is no eating or drinking in the Media Center. We need to keep the computers clean and in working condition. It is important that we follow the Media Center rules so that the Media Center can be maintained in the best condition for our students. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

"Keep It Neat!" Campaign

*Keep it neat,
Stay in your seat!*

*Don't eat or touch,
Your neighbor's lunch!*

*Check the table and floor,
Before you walk out the door.*

*It's the cool scene,
To keep our school clean!*

Parents, to promote balanced, caring, cooperative, and respectful citizenship, we have initiated the "Keep it Neat!" Campaign. During breakfast and lunch the students are encouraged to make sure they don't drop wrappers, utensils, napkins or other items on the cafeteria floor. In addition, students are encouraged to talk with friends, read or just enjoy a quiet meal. Students may not walk around the cafeteria. Instead, they are to wait for their teacher during lunchtime to arrive before they throw their tray and/or other items away.

Peanut/Nut Free School

Let's be mindful that Ada Merritt K-8 Center is a peanut/nut free school. Please refrain from sending to school any peanut or nut containing products. In



order to avoid accidental contact I am urging all parents to discourage their children from sharing foods, utensils, and containers.

Traffic Safety

Please assist us in respecting all crosswalks and speed limits around our school. Miami-Dade County ranks #1 in the State of Florida and 3rd in the nation for pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Our students will participate in the WalkSafe Program in our continued efforts to reduce the number of pedestrian injuries and fatalities.



Parents, please keep in mind that the "walkers" dismissal area is for parents who stand and wait for their child's class to be dismissed. The teacher acknowledges the parent(s) and the child then walks to where you are.

Please note that if you want to have your child come to your car you must use the **circular driveway** located at the opposite side of the school (4th Street). We need your support and cooperation to ensure the safety of our students during arrival and dismissal.

Additionally, please use caution when dropping off and picking up your child. For safety and convenience, we are recommending that you please use the circular driveway area.

Morning Drop-off

This is a reminder that students whose homeroom classroom is in Building One should wait for their teacher to pick them up at 8:20 a.m. Students whose homeroom class is located in Building Two should wait for their teachers sitting outside their assigned classroom. Security monitors will be

supervising the students. Parents are not allowed in classrooms during the morning drop-off. Please understand that school must begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. and we need your support in maximizing instructional time. Accordingly, please ensure your child is in his or her classroom by 8:30 a.m.

Circular Drive Pick-Up

Parents who chose to utilize the Circular Drive Pick-Up must remain in their cars. School personnel will dismiss students to your car. Students will not be dismissed to parents who "walk-up" to the Circular Driveway.

Parents who wish to "walk-up" may do so at the "Walkers" Dismissal Area located at the North Side of the school on Southwest Third Street.

In order to continue to have a safe and smooth daily dismissal, it is important that all parents support the school guidelines on Dismissal.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Student of the Month

The purpose of the Student of the Month Ceremony is to recognize students in Kindergarten through Fifth Grades, who have demonstrated attributes from the International Baccalaureate (IB) Learner Profile, for example: being an inquirer, knowledgeable, a thinker, a communicator, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-taker, balanced, and/or reflective. This includes showing the following attitudes: appreciation, confidence, commitment, cooperation, curiosity, creativity, empathy, enthusiasm, independence, integrity, respect and tolerance.

The format of the Student of the Month ceremony has changed. The ceremonies will

still take place each month; however, they will take place in the afternoon at 1:15 p.m. in the cafeteria. Students will receive a t-shirt, a pencil, a certificate and will make their own special ice-cream creations.

The September Student of the Month Celebration will take place on September 29, 2015.