

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL...

Black History Month

We have scheduled Barrington Irving as a speaker for Black History Month on Monday, February 23, 2009. The schedule is as follows:

8:45 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Grades K, 1, 5, and 2
9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.
Grades 3, 4, 6, and 7

In addition, students will be able to later take a group picture with Mr. Irving at a cost of \$2.00.

Additionally, students can wear their Black History T-Shirts on Fridays during the month of February.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is sponsoring a Black History Essay Contest for Elementary and Secondary Schools. Please see the attached information regarding the Black History Essay Contest. All entries must be received on or before Friday, February 13, 2009. Please note there is an informational sheet for elementary and another for secondary (middle school students).

More information regarding Black History Month is forthcoming.

Ada Merritt K-8 Center's New Website

Parents, please visit our new website at adamerritt.dadeschools.net. The website includes updates, the school calendar, pictures and links to the most commonly visited websites.

No More Paper!

Beginning March 1, 2009, there will be a link on the website to the Ada Merritt K-8 Center Monthly Calendar and Principal's Message. The school will be posting up notes on the Ada Merritt K-8 Center website.

In order to accommodate those who do not have access to a computer there will be copies of the monthly calendar available in the Main Office.

Posting of School-wide Flyers

As of March 1, 2009, we will no longer be posting flyers on doors and walls. Instead we are asking the school community to utilize two main bulletin boards; the bulletin board located near the elevator and the bulletin board in the Main Office. Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation.

Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition Uniform Event

The Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition will take place during March 26 through April 12, 2009. On Friday, March 27, 2009, (a Teacher Planning Day/No School) any student wearing a uniform logo can take advantage of a free entrance. The special event will only be available from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. so mark your calendars!

FCAT Writing

On Tuesday, February 10, 2009, all fourth grade students will take the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT). Testing will begin promptly at 8:45 a.m.

Therefore, it is imperative that students arrive on time to school on this day. Your support in this matter will be appreciated.

Upcoming Events

March Events:

- FCAT Testing, Grades 3-7
- SAT Testing, Grades 1 and 2
- PYP/MYP Teacher Workshops
- Sixth and Seventh Grade Invention Convention Planning
- Sparky Visit – Grades K-5
- PTA Gala/Auction/March 13, 2009

April Events:

- Spring Break (April 6 – April 10, 2009)
- Earth Day Celebration
- PYP Reauthorization Visit
- Earth Day
- Sixth and Seventh Grade Invention Convention Exhibit

May Events:

- Teacher Appreciation Week
- IS/IE Show
- Festa Junina
- Spring Arts Event - TBA
- PYP Exhibition – Fifth Grade
- Sixth and Seventh Grade Final Exams
- Accelerated Reader (AR) Field Trip
- Fifth Grade Promotional Ceremony
- Fifth Grade Field Trip
- End of Year Awards Programs

First Annual Ada Merritt K-8 Center Spelling Bee

This year Ada Merritt K-8 Center is participating in the 69th Annual Miami Herald Spelling Bee. The winners are:

Elementary Level:

School Champions:

Olivia Santos, Fourth Grade

First Runner Up: Emily Otero, Fifth Grade

Middle School Level:

School champions:

Micaela Tenenbaum, Seventh Grade

First Runner Up: Aliyah Symes, Sixth Grade

The following students participated in the written and oral portions of the Spelling Bee. We are proud of all the students for a job well done.

Finalists from the Classroom Spelling Bee 2008-2009

Fourth Grade

Teacher	Students' Names
Ms. Hernandez	1. Dayna Montijo 2. Jazmin Gardner 3. Chelsea Baron 4. Odelay Garcia
Ms. Perez-Cernuda	1. Jose Heijn 2. Alejandra Gomez 3. Tia Jackson 4. Jocelin Mora 5. April Mullen
Ms. Cabrera	1. Joshua Borba 2. Rabboni Mason
Ms. Velazquez	1. Kalani Duran 2. Alyah Basit 3. Olivia Santos 4. Jaya Launer 5. Andrew Walker

Fifth Grade

Teacher	Students' Names
Ms. Suarez	1. Pedro Sanchez
Ms. Pinckney	1. Brittany Perez
Ms. Torok	1. Tatiana Streeter
Ms. Wong-Murray	1. Emily Otero 2. Melissa Boza 3. Sydni Wells 4. Alejandra Subero 5. Ben Marks 6. Olivia Herrera 7. Salman Hameed 8. Matthew Kauffman 9. Sophie Gelber 10. Jordan Basit

Sixth Grade

Teacher	Students' Names
Ms. Cabrera	Aliyah Symes Dasia Gibson Amelia Leon Mariana Suguieda Angelo Fajardo Nicole Mejia Manuela Silva Gustavo Mendonca

	Ashley Dennis Jasmine Almonte
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Seventh Grade

Teacher	Students' Names
Mr. Douglas	Ana Reyes Micaela Tenenbaum Ian Martin Emmanuel Espinales

I would also like to thank Ms. Lourdes Cobas, Ms. Diane Davis, and Ms. Sonia Garcia for the time dedicated to planning and coordinating the Spelling Bee.


Field Trip Reminder

Parents, I would like to remind you that if you are interested in attending field trips for your child's class, it is important that you ensure to go through the Miami-Dade County Public School's Volunteer Process. For more information concerning volunteer clearance, please see Ms. Hesami, School Counselor. Thank you.

Dial-a-Teacher

The Dial-a-Teacher Program is a free service provided by Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Please see the attached informational flyer.



The school is collecting Box Tops for Education. Please check household product boxes for Box Tops. You can drop Box Tops off at the Main Office, Cafeteria (next to the pencil and stamp machine), or you can hand them to your child's teacher. Attached is a worksheet titled, "How Many Box Tops Can You Catch?" We encourage you to identify any household products that may be part of the Box Tops for Education Program, cut out the  and paste them on the sheet provided herein.

We are encouraging all parents to participate and include your child in this effort. All Box

Tops collected will be turned in for money and benefit the Ada Merritt K-8 Center PTA.

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, Spanish, and Haitian/Creole versions of the document on the M-DCPS Website located at: <http://ehandbooks.dadeschools.net/policies/90/index.htm> or you may request a copy from your child's school.

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

Parent and Student Handbook

The Parent and Student Handbook was provided to all parents on the first week of the 2008-2009 school year. The Parent and Student Handbook outlines district and school policies on attendance, conduct, grading, arrival/dismissal, lunch, peanut/nut free policy and many more important topics.

Parent Volunteers/Visitors

Parents, please remember to sign-in if you plan to be in school after 8:30 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.

ATTENDANCE

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

Student tardies are being monitored. As a reminder, students must be in their seats BY 8:30 a.m. Any students arriving thereafter are considered tardy.

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.

Morning Drop-off

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.

This is a reminder that students in kindergarten through third grade are to wait for their teachers by their classrooms until 8:20 a.m. fourth through seventh grade students are to wait for their teachers to pick them up in the cafeteria. 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. We ask that parents use the circular driveway. We respectfully request that you facilitate the unloading in an effort to expedite the process and ensure the safety of all students. Once again, your ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

Student of the Month

The purpose of the Student of the Month ceremony is to recognize students, kindergarten through seventh grade, who have demonstrated an effort to be an inquirer, knowledgeable, thinker, communicator, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-taker, balanced, and/or reflective. Students who show the International Baccalaureate (IB) Learner Profile attitudes may also be highlighted as Student of the Month. These attitudes include; appreciation, confidence, commitment, cooperation, curiosity, creativity, empathy, enthusiasm, independence, integrity, respect and tolerance. This month's Student of the Month Celebration will take place on , 2009.

After-School Community Classes

Classes are available through our After-School Enrichment Program. Students do not have to be enrolled in the After-school Care Program to

take advantage of these classes. Please take the time to review the classes, days, fees and times.

After-School Supervision

An increasing number of students are not being picked-up according to the dismissal times listed below. This situation poses a safety problem. Please be advised that there is NO supervision of students after dismissal time.

Effective immediately, you are informed of the following: Students left in school after dismissal and not participating in any supervised after school programs/activities, will be escorted to the After-school Care Office, Room 104. Parents will be assessed a fee of \$10.00 per child for the day.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

School Lunch

Miami-Dade County Public Schools Department of Food & Nutrition serves breakfast at NO CHARGE to all students at all schools everyday. Ensure that your child is on time and ready to learn by having him/her enjoy this most important meal of the day. Breakfast is served from 7:30 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.

Please note that the cost of lunch has changed for the 2008-2009 school year. The cost of lunch is now \$2.50 for students and \$3.00 for adults. Free/reduced students will now pay \$0.40 for lunch.

Negative Lunch Balances

Elementary students in grades K-5 can charge up to five meals. Students will then receive notice that they have a negative lunch balance. When a negative balance for an elementary student reaches \$11.25 (or \$2.00 for free/reduced lunch), then that student will be offered an alternate meal, if they do not have lunch money.

Please note that sixth and seventh grade students **are no longer permitted to charge meals.** Alternate meals are provided to those students who have a negative balance and do not have lunch money.

PAYPAMS

Miami Dade County Public School's Department of Food and Nutrition allows parents/guardians the convenience to pay on-line via the internet or by telephone for their child's meals with a credit or debit card. The parent/guardians will create a lunch account on-line for the child and will be able to access the following:

- a. view the account balance
- b. schedule automatic payments.
- c. receive low-balance e-mail reminders
- d. view a report of daily spending and cafeteria purchases

You may find all this information at <https://paypams.com/HomePage.aspx>.

BLACK HISTORY ESSAY CONTEST FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

GUIDELINES:

- Elementary school students up to grade 5 are eligible to participate in this contest. (Sixth grade students who are still housed in an elementary school and sixth grade students in K-8 center must enter the middle school competition.)
- Essays must be typed, with a maximum length of 500 words (2 pages), double spaced on white paper, and stapled on the upper left hand corner. **The prompt must be typed on the cover sheet.** The cover sheet must also include the student's name, grade level, and school. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in disqualification.
- All entries will be evaluated in their entirety with consideration being given to the following four elements: focus, organization, support and conventions.

Prompt:

- The election of President Barack Obama as the first African American President of the United States has shown the world that Americans are ready for change.

Now, think about what President Obama has talked about in his recent speeches and his plans for the United States as a world leader.

Now, write to convince President Barack Obama of the changes you believe would make the United States and the world a better place.

DEADLINE:

All entries must be received on or before Friday, February 13, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. **Faxed entries will not be accepted.**

PRIZES:

The Miami Times will award first, second, and third place prizes as follows:

- 1st place - \$300 U.S. Savings Bond
- 2nd place - \$200 U.S. Savings Bond
- 3rd place - \$100 U.S. Savings Bond

All entrants will receive a certificate of participation. Winners must provide a Social Security number in order to collect their prize. Prizes will be awarded on Tuesday, February 24, 2009 in the District's Black History Program

SUBMIT TO:

Dr. Sherrilyn Scott, Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor
School Board Administration Building Annex, Room 326C

Mail Code #9633 Annex Room 326C

Telephone: 305 995-1971

Email: sherrilynsconfig@daedeechools.net

BLACK HISTORY ESSAY CONTEST FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

GUIDELINES:

- All entries must be received on or before **Friday, February 13, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.** Faxed entries will not be accepted.
- Essays must be typed, with a maximum length of 500 words (2 pages), double spaced on white paper, and stapled on the upper left hand corner. **The prompt must be typed on the cover sheet.** The cover sheet must also include the student's name, grade level, and school. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in disqualification.
- All entries will be evaluated in their entirety with consideration being given to the following four elements: focus, organization, support and conventions.

PROMPT:

- The election of President Barack Obama as the first American president of African descent has conveyed to the world that Americans are ready for change.

Now, reflect on President Obama's agenda, campaign platform and recent speeches as it relates to his vision for the United States and its role as a world leader. Issues to consider: economy, foreign-policy, healthcare and human rights.

Now, write to convince President Barack Obama of the changes you believe would make the United States and the world a better place.

PRIZES:

The United Teachers of Dade will award first, second, and third place prizes in the middle and senior high school categories as follows:

- 1st place - \$400 U.S. Savings Bond
- 2nd place - \$250 U.S. Savings Bond
- 3rd place - \$100 U.S. Savings Bond

DEADLINE:

All entries must be received on or before **Friday, February 13, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.** **Faxed entries will not be accepted.**

All entrants will receive a certificate of participation. Winners must provide a Social Security number in order to collect their prize. Prizes will be awarded on **Tuesday, February 24, 2009** during the District's Black History Program.

- **SUBMIT TO:** Dr. Sherrilyn Scott, Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisor
School Board Administration Building Annex, Room 326C

Mail Code #9633 Annex Room 326C

Telephone: 305 995-1971

Email: sherrilynscott@dadeschools.net



Miami-Dade County Public Schools

giving our students the world

Principal
Carmen M. Garcia

Assistant Principal
Berham M. Garcia



American Heart Association



Learn and Live.

Miami-Dade County School Board

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February 3, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Ada-Merritt K-8 Center is participating in a very special community service program to raise funds for the American Heart Association. We're joining the fight against our nation's No. 1 and No. 3 killers — cardiovascular diseases and strokes.

On **Wednesday, February 18, 2009** our school will hold a Jump Rope For Heart (Grades 2 – 5) and Hoops for Heart (Grades 6 - 7) Event. These events are held at schools nationwide and not only help students learn about the benefits of regular physical activity and heart health, but also raise funds to support vital heart and stroke research as well as educational programs.

The American Heart Association is dedicated to helping people live longer, healthier lives. The money we raise helps people in our community learn how to avoid heart disease and strokes and also helps our local patient care. Our school will qualify for gift certificates for free physical education equipment based on the amount we raise, and students will qualify for individual thank-you gifts based on the donations they collect.

Family and friends can support your child's participation by making contributions. However, we ask that children **not** go door-to-door or ask strangers for donations. If your child receives any cash donations, please convert those to a check prior to turning in the collection envelope. All checks should be made payable to the *American Heart Association*. The deadline for your student's collection envelope to be turned in is **February 17, 2009**.

To help your child raise money the fun and easy way, you are encouraged to use our online fund-raising tool found at www.americanheart.org/jump and click the link "I Am Ready!" Your child can personalize his or her own Web page and include a message about why he or she is participating in Jump Rope For Heart or Hoops for Heart Event. Next, send e-mails to friends and family to ask for support. After you have completed raising money online, print your child's online donation report and include it inside the collection envelope. Refer to the collection envelope for more detailed instructions on how fun and easy online fund raising really is.

Also, don't forget to ask your child's donors if their employers have matching gift programs. This is an easy way to increase donations collected by your child. To find out which companies will match the American Heart Association, please visit www.matchinggifts.com/aha. All matching gift forms should include your child's name and school name so the donations can be properly designated.

Jump Rope For Heart and Hoops for Heart is a fun event that helps our children understand the importance of community service and physical activity while helping to save lives. Our efforts truly make a difference! Please sign and complete the Permission Slip on the collection envelope so your child can take part in Jump Rope For Heart and Hoops for Heart.

Sincerely,

Julie Weaver
Teacher

Ada Merritt K-8 Center

660 S.W. 3rd Street - Miami, Florida 33130
(305) 326-0791 • Fax (305) 326-0927 • <http://adamerritt.dadeschools.net>



Ada Merritt PTA February News & Notes

Your Ada Merritt PTA is currently in the process of determining what item will be the main recipient of the funds raised at our annual PTA Gala and Silent Auction to be held on Friday, March 13th at Parrot Jungle Island. Previous projects that were supported by the Gala were the covered playground and the purchase of musical instruments. This year there are two options. One is to purchase for our fifth grade classrooms additional SmartBoards, an innovative interactive tool where teachers can incorporate into their lessons the internet and many different computer applications to educate in a fun and creative way. The second idea is to either replace the existing courtyard surface where our children have recess with a synthetic, grass-like surface used in athletic fields that requires little or no maintenance or re-sod the area and hope for the best. You are strongly urged to attend a special meeting to be held on Friday February the 20th when the membership will vote on the Gala fundraising initiatives.

Not My Child...

Not Our Schools...

No More Cuts to Public Education!

Your Ada Merritt PTA strongly suggests that you take action!

Did you know that Miami-Dade County Public School District has suffered close to \$300,000,000.00 in budget cuts in the past two years due to state budget reductions, rising costs and other factors?

That during the current special session your state legislators are voting on cutting an additional \$49,000,000.00 from OUR school district!

Your school district's administration now ranks as the state's leanest, according to the Florida Department of Education!

There is an expected \$ 5 BILLION dollar shortfall next year. How will public education and our children absorb the new budget cuts?

It's been mentioned that we'll need to be at 2006 budget levels to qualify for Federal assistance in the proposed Obama Economic Stimulus Bill.

Enough is enough. The state needs new money and we need our legislators to fight for funding for public education and our schools and our children!

What can YOU do?

Sign a Petition...
<http://capwiz.com/dadepa/issues/alert/?alertid=12600366>

Email your State Senator by connecting to <http://www.flsenate.gov> and your State Representative, <http://www.flhouse.gov> and look for your district's listing. If you do not know who your representative and senator are each website has an easy way to find them. If you are having trouble call toll-free 1 (800) 342-1827 and a nice helpful person will walk you through the process! Thank your representatives for their continued support!

Your PTA has some important news. This month the PTA is sponsoring several Black History Month activities at Ada Merritt, with the signature event being a speaking appearance by Barrington Irving, the young aviator that many of our students personally saw take off for his Flight Around the World a few years ago. He will address the kids on Feb 23rd!

Don't Forget to Help w/ the Silent Auction! The Ada Merritt PTA Gala needs items for the silent auction. Merchandise or services can be donated from your network of friends, family, and businesses such as restaurants, beauty salons, spas, hotels, even your child's dentist! The donation forms are available in the Main Office and the Media Center. Please contact Amando Kleidermacher with leads or questions. Email her at mandykleid@yahoo.com Also, Gala volunteers are needed! Please contact Amanda or Floriana, floriana@themartin.us

Also... The Winter Showcase video production is finished! Buy a DVD of "Songs for the Season". Proceeds go to the PTA. You can contact Bruce Barham @ amerprosvs@bellsouth.net for the DVD. Quantities are limited.

