

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL...



I would like to welcome everyone back from the Winter Recess. The faculty and staff of Ada Merritt K-8 Center are ready for the second half of this school year and we are looking forward to all the exciting activities that will take place during the remainder of the school year. Below are some of the things that will be taking place in the next few months.

January Events:

- PYP/MYP Informational Tour
- Classroom Spelling Bee
- PYP/MYP Teacher Workshops
- Third Grade Reading Portfolio Administration Window (through May 8, 2009)
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (4th Grade)

February Events:

- Report Card Distribution (Second Marking Period)
- Black History Month Activities
- PYP/MYP Teacher Workshops
- PYP Parent Workshops
- FCAT Writing Test (4th Grade)
- 69th Annual Miami Herald Spelling Bee

March Events:

- FCAT Testing, Grades 3-7
- SAT Testing, Grades 1 and 2
- PYP/MYP Teacher Workshops
- Sixth and Seventh Grade Invention Convention Planning
- PTA Gala/Auction

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

As always, I appreciate your ongoing support and commitment as we ensure that our students are getting the best quality education possible. Ada Merritt K-8 Center continues a commitment to the Primary Years Program, Middle Years Program, Dual Language Program, International Studies and International Education Programs. As always, we are committed to the development of the whole child. Our goal is that all students exceed their maximum potential.


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/indices.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.

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.



Traffic Safety

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.



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 Friday, January 30, 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

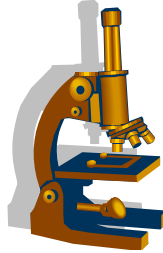
You may find all this information at <https://paypams.com/HomePage.aspx>.

69th Annual Miami Herald Spelling Bee

Ada Merritt K-8 Center will be participating in the 69th Annual Miami Herald Spelling Bee hosted by Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts. Fourth through seventh grade students will participate in a Classroom Spelling Bee. Classroom finalists will then participate in a written test and an oral spell-down. The finalist will be participating in the 69th Annual Miami

Herald Spelling Bee taking place at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts on February 25, 2009. The Middle School champion from Miami-Dade County will be attending the National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. Please see the attached letter.

Science Informational Session for Parents



On Friday, January 29, 2009, we will be having a Science Informational Session for Parents at 8:45 a.m. in the Media Center. The purpose of this session is to provide information regarding the science curriculum at Ada Merritt K-8 Center.