

# WORKFORCE WIRE



Volume 5 | Issue 56 | March 2026



## HOT OFF THE WIRE

This month we recognize sports and extra-curricular activities as essential components of students' holistic education. At School for Advanced Studies (SAS), one student has successfully balanced rigorous academics while earning a world champion title in sailing.

High school junior David Coates (pictured) has become the Youth World Champion in the ILCA 6 class, winning the first U.S. gold medal in this category since 2002. The Coates family thanks SAS faculty and staff for their flexibility, which they credit as a key factor in David's opportunity to pursue gold.

## iLead

"iLead with my heart — always ready to roll up my sleeves and do whatever is necessary to support our students, programs, and schools."

— Dr. Magda R. Castro-Pereira  
Administrative Director  
Innovation and Advancement

## BODY & MIND

"What do you think the bird trusts more, the branch or its wings?"

— Wynn,  
your wellness buddy



March is **Arts in Our Schools Month**. March 2<sup>nd</sup> was **Read Across America Day**, and the week of March 2<sup>nd</sup> was **Nat'l School Social Work Week** and **Nat'l School Breakfast Week**. March 8<sup>th</sup> was **International Women's Day**, and the **2026 Miami-Dade County Youth Fair & Expo** will run March 12—April 5.



## ABOVE & BEYOND

Lourdes Duckardt is a special education teacher at Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High. A 30-year veteran educator, she advocates for student voices and physical teamwork through her EESAC membership and work as a Special Olympics coach. With meticulous summer scheduling to ensure year-round success, tireless energy and expertise, Ms. Duckardt creates a **SAFE** and supportive environment where every student is empowered to reach their full potential!

## Grass River



*Marjory Stoneman Douglas at Everglades National Park in 1987.*

As we celebrate Women's History Month, it's fitting to recognize figures whose contributions have not only shaped our past but continue to inspire our future. This year, as we reflect on the theme of "Women Providing Healing, Promoting Hope," one name resonates profoundly within Florida and beyond: Marjory Stoneman Douglas, who embodies the spirit of healing and hope through her tireless dedication to preserving one of the world's most unique ecosystems. Her legacy continues to thrive, notably through our specialized environmental science programs, like those at TERRA Environmental Research Institute.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas was a true pioneer. Her seminal, lyrical, researched 1947 book, "The Everglades: River of Grass," cemented her place in history by redefining public perception of the Everglades, transforming it from a "worthless swamp" into a vital, interconnected ecosystem crucial for the region's health and future.

Today, M-DCPS proudly carries Douglas's torch through **CHOICE** educational initiatives, particularly at TERRA Environmental Research Institute. TERRA, an M-DCPS

magnet school, is dedicated to cultivating the next generation of environmental stewards, scientists, and advocates. The school's rigorous environmentalism curriculum, led by Lisset M. Perez-Munoz and focusing on environmental science, research, and sustainability, directly echoes Douglas's passion for understanding and protecting our natural world.

TERRA students engage in hands-on research, field studies, and community projects that directly address local and global environmental challenges. From restoring local ecosystems to developing sustainable technologies, these young minds are empowered to be active participants in environmental healing and to foster hope for a greener future. They learn about the intricate web of life, just as Douglas interpreted in "River of Grass," and are equipped with the knowledge and skills to become leaders in conservation.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, let us remember Douglas—a woman who truly provided healing to a damaged ecosystem and promoted hope for a sustainable world, a hope that continues to flourish in the classrooms and field trips of Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

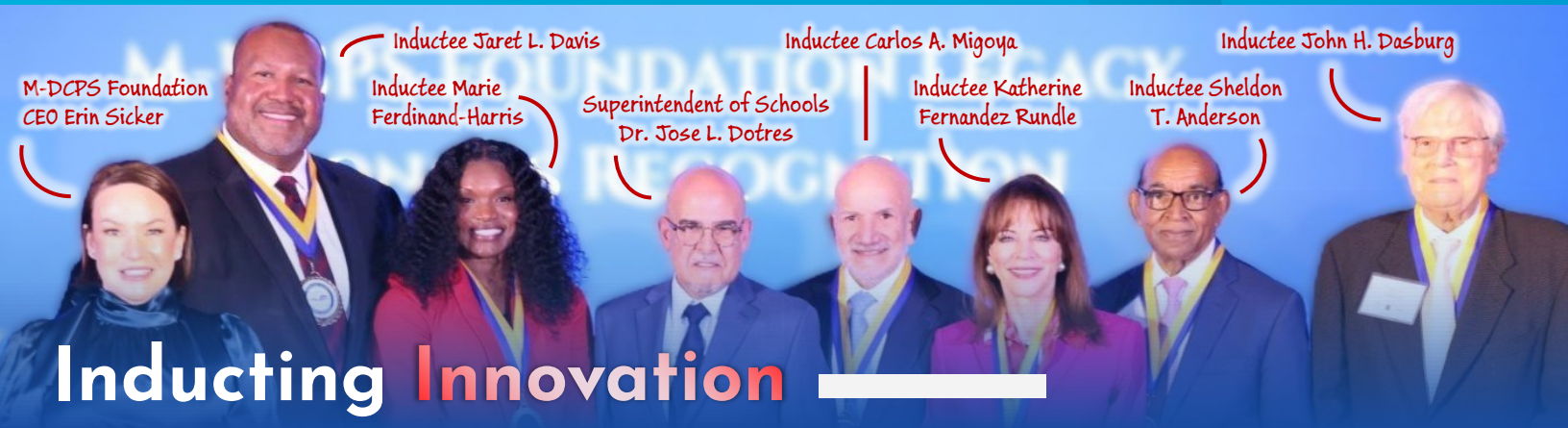


*TERRA students at Everglades National Park in 2026.*



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Inductee Jaret L. Davis  
 Inductee Marie Ferdinand-Harris  
 Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jose L. Dotres  
 Inductee Carlos A. Migoya  
 Inductee Katherine Fernandez Rundle  
 Inductee Sheldon T. Anderson  
 Inductee John H. Dasburg  
 M-DCPS Foundation CEO Erin Sicker

## Inducting Innovation

Six renowned and celebrated graduates of Miami-Dade’s public schools were inducted into M-DCPS’ Alumni Hall of Fame recently for their post-secondary and professional achievements. The ceremony brought together District representatives, alumni, and their families to celebrate the values that define M-DCPS excellence, innovation, choice, and safety, the same values that make our schools your best choice for a world-class education. With this year’s honorees, the Alumni Hall of Fame now includes 74 distinguished members whose accomplishments illuminate the extraordinary talent cultivated in our public schools. Click [here](#) to read more.



## Awarding Excellence

Last month, South Miami Senior High School Band Director Jennifer Jimenez (pictured) won a GRAMMY® and was recognized with the 2026 Music Educator Award, chosen among the ten finalists from over 2,000 initial nominations from 50 states. She was recognized for her transformative impact on students and her many years of dedication to the South Miami community. In addition to the award, Jimenez received a \$10,000 honorarium and a matching \$10,000 grant for the South Miami Senior High School music program.

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### Social Media



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