



WORKFORCE WIRE

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Melissa Abril-Dotel

Juan Gabriel Martin

HOT OFF THE WIRE

Melissa Abril-Dotel, a 2nd grade teacher at North Beach Elementary School, has been named the 2025 Francisco R. Walker Miami-Dade County Teacher of the Year. Ms. Abril-Dotel believes education is more than memorizing rules and facts and prefers to ensure her students fully understand and find meaning in her lessons.

The 2024 Rookie Teacher of the Year is Juan Gabriel Martin, an alum of and now music teacher at Citrus Grove K-8 Center. Using Disney Imagineering principles as inspiration, each lesson is engaging and memorable. He crafts strong bonds with parents to ensure their children's needs are satisfied and their musical journeys thrive outside the classroom.

iLead

"iLead by focusing heavily on organizational goals and collaboration. In a very compliance-driven environment, iLead by empowering my team to optimize their personal skill sets to help drive the overall success of the team function."

— Charisma Montfort
Chief Procurement Officer

BODY & MIND

What are the fats on nutrition labels? **Trans** fats are a preservative no longer approved by the FDA. **Saturated** fats are found in red meats, stews, and coconut and palm oils, and can contribute to fatty liver disease, heart disease, and diabetes. **Unsaturated** fats are found in fish meats and olive/tree nut oils, and contribute to a healthy, balanced diet.



All Miami-Dade County public schools, as well as Region and District offices, will be closed Monday, February 19 in observance of **Presidents' Day**. We will reopen Tuesday, February 20.

ABOVE & BEYOND



Mayra de Leon is the Principal at Seminole Elementary. When one of her students started choking at lunchtime, she ran over to apply the Heimlich Maneuver until an onsite paramedic could take over. The piece of food was dislodged from the student's throat and the student was able to recover. Thanks to Principal de Leon's presence, vigilance and reactivity, a student's life was saved.



Making History

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) joins the national observance of Black History Month 2024, celebrating African Americans and the Arts. A look back at some exceptional graduates of M-DCPS provides just a small glimpse of the legacies led and barriers broken by our very own alumni – from Grammy and Oscar Award-winning names to those breaking ground in their field – another testament to how and why M-DCPS is **your best choice**.

Check M-DCPS' blog [here](#) for a closer look at M-DCPS' very own African Americans in the arts.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Dr. Precious Symonette

Fullbright Scholar

Dr. Precious Symonette, Creative Writing Teacher at Miami Norland Senior High and 2017 Francisco R. Walker Teacher of the Year, is now a Fulbright Scholar. A product of M-DCPS herself, Dr. Symonette exemplifies the school district's aim to educate the whole child. Having undergone a professional journey of global experiences that focus on innovation and community, her recent selection as a Fulbright Scholar underscores M-DCPS' commitment to providing all employees with professional growth opportunities and all students with a world-class education.

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