

## CREATING A PUBLIC SCHOOL OPTION FOR HOMESCHOOLED FAMILIES

### Case Study—Miami-Dade Public Schools

#### THE CHALLENGE

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is the fourth largest school district in the nation. With more than 340,000 students representing 160 countries and speaking 57 languages across 2,000 square miles, Miami-Dade serves one of the most diverse student populations in the nation.

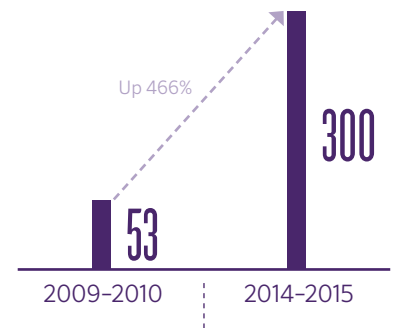
Several years ago, Miami-Dade Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho recognized that more than 3,000 students in the district were being homeschooled. He decided to create an option to address the specific needs of this population by partnering with parents who wanted the opportunity to work with a public school and to teach their own students. He established Miami-Dade Online Academy to provide a comprehensive K-12 public school that could be accessed from anywhere, and allow homeschooled students to learn at any time.

“The Miami-Dade Online Academy parental option allows the most influential people in a student’s life—the parents—to guide their children through the nationally award-winning curriculum,” says Dr. Ludy Lopez, the school’s vice principal. “Parents have more time to develop relationships that foster respect and honor; to teach students about morals, religion, and ethics; and to apply what has been learned to real life situations. This type of connection develops minds that are sound and relationships that give students the opportunity to succeed.”

#### THE SOLUTION

When Superintendent Carvalho decided to establish Miami-Dade Online Academy, his team started researching vendors that offered online curriculum. According to Dr. Lopez, “We were looking for the best—a partner with an established curriculum that is aligned to the state of Florida. We wanted someone with a reputation for being rigorous and a curriculum that was deep and wide. We chose FuelEd because they are the best.”

In addition, choosing FuelEd helped Miami-Dade Online Academy create a partnership with students and their families. “A parent who has homeschooled their child has made the decision to physically and mentally—as well as



GROWTH IN ENROLLMENT AT MIAMI-DADE ONLINE ACADEMY



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**Ludy Lopez**, Vice Principal  
Miami-Dade Online Academy



financially—dedicate their time to help their child,” says Dr. Lopez. “Now through the partnership with Miami-Dade Online Academy and FuelEd, parents are able to work with a certified teacher and a public school to educate their child. They have a curriculum that is approved by the State of Florida and aligned to the state standards in every grade level and in every subject.

“Teachers know their students better in this program because every communication is one-to-one,” adds Dr. Lopez. “Teachers assess each student’s level and how they learn, and then create an individual learning path for them. With this tailored curriculum, each student’s academic needs are met.”

Miami-Dade Online Academy uses the comprehensive K-12 curriculum from Fuel Education’s content partner, K<sup>12</sup>, to meet the individual needs of each student. With the K<sup>12</sup> curriculum, Miami-Dade Online is able to offer students:

- English/language arts, math, science, and history for all grades
- Four academic levels in high school: Core, Comprehensive, Honors, and AP®
- More than 55 high school electives
- More than 70 STEM courses

FuelEd also provides Miami-Dade Online Academy with the certified instructors, technology platform, and educational tools and services the district needs to run a successful full-time online program.

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“As a certified teacher, I can definitely say Miami-Dade Online Academy has provided a highly qualified, researched curriculum. I really appreciate the detail.”

**Tessa**

Parent of three Miami Dade Online Academy Students

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## THE RESULTS

Today, Miami-Dade Online Academy provides an option not just for homeschooled families, but for diverse student groups with varying needs. Students with illnesses, young athletes, high achievers, students needing remediation support, and students with parents whose careers require extensive travel have all chosen Miami-Dade Online Academy.

“We have students who have come to our program with a lot of deficiencies in some of the state standards. With the help of our certified teachers, parents,

## CLIENT PROFILE

### Miami-Dade Public Schools

**Location:** Miami, FL

**Enrollment:** 340,000+ students

**Challenge:**

Create a public school option for 3,000+ homeschooled students

**Result:**

- Enrollment at Miami-Dade Online Academy grew from 53 students in 2009 to 300 students in 2014.
- In addition to providing an option for homeschooled families, Miami-Dade Online Academy serves students with illnesses, young athletes, high achievers, students needing remediation support, and students with parents whose careers require extensive travel.



Miami-Dade Online Academy helps the nation’s fourth largest school district meet the individual needs of its diverse student population.

and staff, we are able to create educational programs for those students who needed, so desperately, those standards retaught in a different way,” says Dr.Lopez.

“In our school, we address each individual skill and each individual level based on the student. We’re excited to see our students excelling because the curriculum helps them understand concepts better. We don’t have to hold them back because they’re in a specific grade level. We can help them move forward.”

### From Humble Beginnings

Miami-Dade Online Academy started with 53 students in 2009. Five years later, school enrollment has risen dramatically to 300—and the number of graduates has more than tripled. Miami-Dade Online Academy graduates have received notable honors, including the Superintendent’s Distinguished Diploma and acceptance into Harvard University.

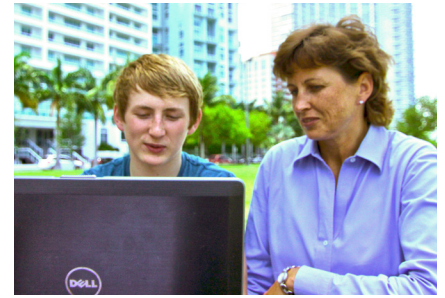
“I’ve had students tell me that if it wasn’t for Miami-Dade Online, they never would have graduated from high school,” says Dr.Lopez. “For me, that is success. I know our program is making a positive difference in the lives of our students and their families.”

To learn more about Miami-Dade Online Academy students, watch the video on the FuelEd YouTube page.

“The biggest difference I have seen in my daughter, Haley, since she’s become a Miami-Dade Online Academy student is seeing her confidence soar through the roof. It’s not all online. She’s participating in clubs. She started a charity. She’s involved in community organizations and events. She’s a totally different kid.”

**Antonio**

Parent of two Miami-Dade Online Academy Students



Miami-Dade Online Academy gives gymnast Tyler and his mother and Learning Coach, Sherry, the flexibility to keep up with his rigorous training schedule and travel to gymnastic competitions around the world.



Derrick and Tessa say Miami-Dade Online Academy has helped their children become self-motivated learners.

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