



M-DCPS  
**YOUR BEST CHOICE**

# REALNews

Office of Postsecondary Career and Technical Education

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## CONTRIBUTORS

LA6 SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

LINDSEY HOPKINS  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

MIAMI LAKES EDUCATIONAL  
CENTER AND TECHNICAL  
COLLEGE

MIAMI PALMETTO ADULT AND  
CONTINUING EDUCATION CENTER

NORTH MIAMI ADULT AND  
CONTINUING EDUCATION CENTER

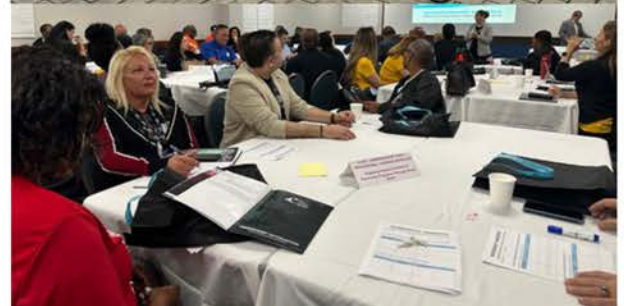
OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY  
CAREER AND TECHNICAL  
EDUCATION



## 2024-2025 ELITE CONFERENCE: ACCELERATING PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH

The 2024-2025 ELITE Conference took "Accelerated Performance" to new heights, gathering over 400 adult educators from Miami-Dade County Public Schools' twenty-one Adult and Continuing Education Centers and Technical Colleges. The event featured dynamic sessions and inspiring speakers, including Mr. Guillermo Santa Cruz, President of the Homestead-Miami Speedway, who delivered the keynote address. Dr. Jose L. Dotres, Superintendent, and Dr. Michael A. Lewis, Deputy Superintendent of School Leadership and Performance, were also in attendance, along with other school leaders. The conference was a vibrant display of team spirit, as each center was represented by enthusiastic educators committed to growth and excellence.

Throughout the morning, teachers and school leaders participated in interactive sessions aimed at transforming their professional practices. Leading industry vendors were on hand to share valuable resources and insights. The event concluded with a well-deserved lunch, offering attendees the chance to reflect on the day's learning. The ELITE Conference was more than just a professional development event — it was a fuel for growth, both individually and collectively. The knowledge shared, ideas exchanged, and connections made will continue to drive innovation and improvement within the school district's educational community.



## LINDSEY HOPKINS INSTRUCTOR NAMED ROOKIE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

[lindseyhopkins.edu](http://lindseyhopkins.edu)

### ROOKIE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

# Ms. Evlyne Colas

## Lindsey Hopkins Technical College

OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FINALIST

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Step up to Success*



We are thrilled to announce that Evlyne Colas an instructor at Lindsey Hopkins Technical College, has been named Rookie Teacher of the Year by the Office of Postsecondary Career and Technical Education. This prestigious award recognizes exceptional first-year teachers who make a significant impact on their students and demonstrate excellence in the classroom.

Ms. Colas was born in Haiti and immigrated to the United States with her parents when she was 18 years old. She knew that this move would improve her life, so she embarked on the journey. Ms. Colas' transformational journey began at Lindsey Hopkins Technical College, where she enrolled in English acquisition courses under the SAVES program.

Shortly after, she began working at Mercy Hospital. As she mastered the work, she transitioned to an interest in Nutrition Services. Immediately, Ms. Colas returned home to Lindsey Hopkins Technical College and enrolled in the Nutrition and Dietetic Clerk course under the SAVES program. Ms. Colas earned her certificate of program completion and became the Nutrition and Dietetic Clerk course instructor shaping the lives of students the same manner hers was transformed.

Ms. Colas has quickly become a standout at our technical college, known for her innovative teaching methods, dedication to student success, and ability to

foster an engaging and supportive learning environment. From hands-on projects to personalized mentorship, Ms. Colas has created a dynamic classroom experience that inspires students in the Nutrition and Dietetic Clerk class to reach their full potential academically and in the community.

"I'm honored and grateful for this recognition," said Ms. Colas "Teaching is about building relationships and helping students grow both academically and personally. Every success they achieve is a reminder of why I became an educator."

Please join us in congratulating Ms. Colas on this well-deserved honor. We look forward to seeing all the future accomplishments she will achieve as she continues to make a positive impact on our students and the Lindsey Hopkins community.



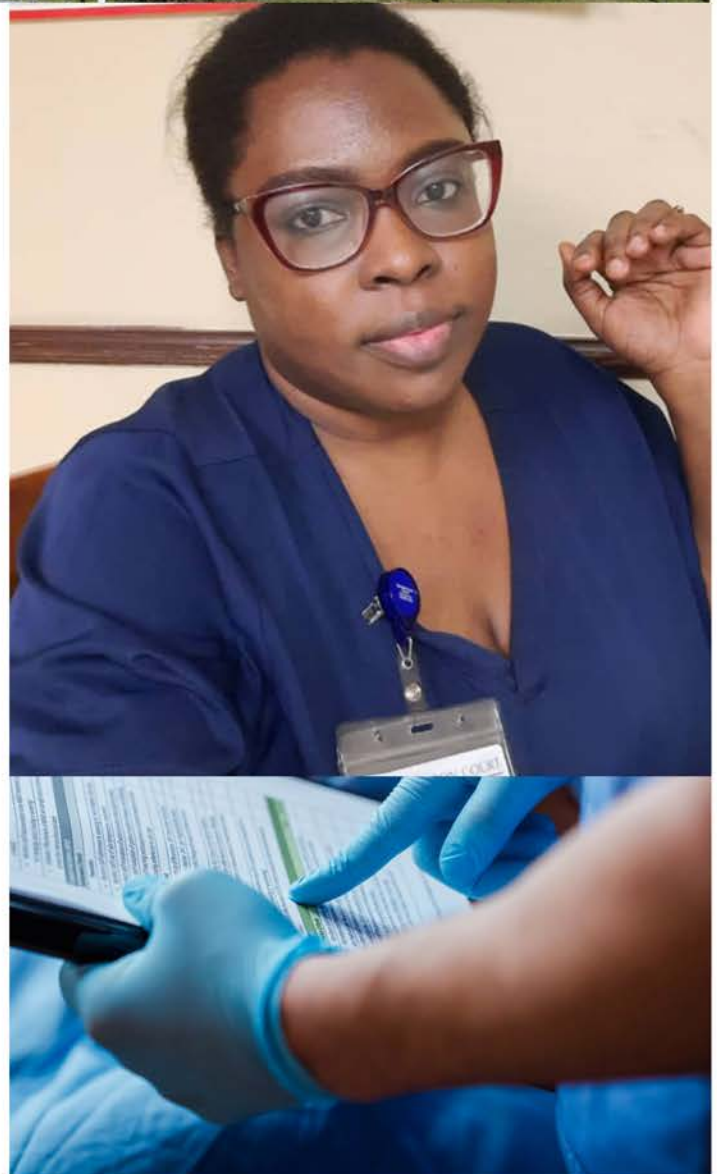
## STUDENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT: JESSICA'S JOURNEY TO ACHIEVING HER DREAMS

[northmiamiadult.edu](http://northmiamiadult.edu)



Jessica's inspiring journey began just one year ago when she enrolled in an ESOL class at the North Miami Adult & Continuing Education Center to improve her language skills. Driven by her dream of building a brighter future, Jessica soon discovered the Integrated Education and Training (IET) program. With immense determination, she enrolled in both Phlebotomy and Nursing Assistant courses, all while adapting to her new life in the USA.

Completing the Nursing Assistant course was a significant milestone for Jessica. Through focused preparation and dedication, she successfully passed her nursing board exams and became a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). However, her journey did not stop there. Jessica continued to expand her skills by completing the Phlebotomy course, mastering patient care and blood collection with the same perseverance and passion that had already brought her so far. Recently, Jessica achieved another milestone when she was hired by a Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. In her first week on the job, Jessica has already made a remarkable impact, quickly transitioning from a student to a professional in the healthcare field. Her success story is a shining example of hard work and resilience, proving that with dedication, any dream is achievable. Jessica's experience highlights the life-changing power of education and the opportunities it provides. Her story serves as an inspiration to our entire community, encouraging others to pursue their goals, no matter the obstacles. We are incredibly proud of Jessica and look forward to seeing her continued success as she builds a thriving career in healthcare.



## AN INSPIRING JOURNEY: FROM PASSION TO PROFESSION

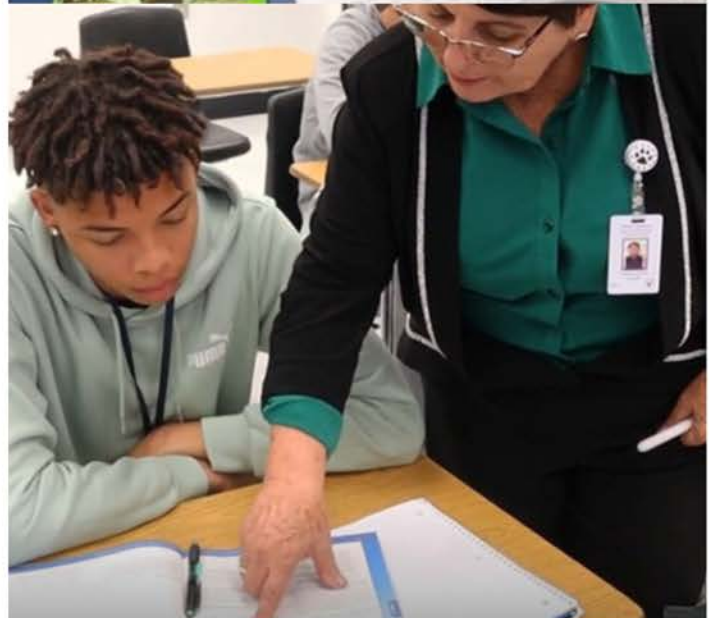
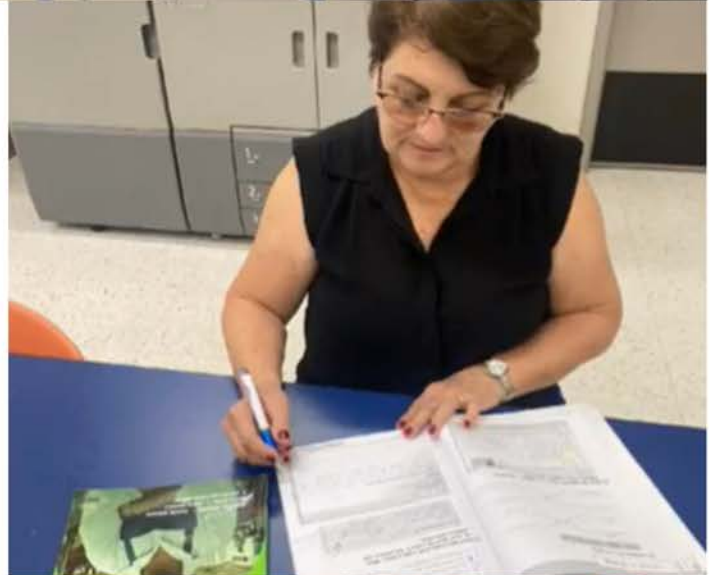
[palmettoadulthoodedu.com](http://palmettoadulthoodedu.com)



Virginia Jimenez's journey is a testament to resilience and the power of education. Born and raised in Cuba, she was a dedicated math and science teacher, inspiring students with her love for learning. After relocating to Miami, Virginia faced the challenge of adapting to a new culture and overcoming a language barrier. Determined to succeed, she enrolled in the ESOL program at Miami Palmetto Adult & Continuing Education Center, where she spent late nights studying and immersing herself in English.

Her hard work paid off when she completed the ESOL program and pursued her GED® in Spanish. This experience allowed her to connect deeply with her students and reignited her passion for teaching. Virginia's perseverance led her to a teaching position at Miami Palmetto Adult, where she now teaches math and science for the GED® program in Spanish.

Ms. Jimenez brings a unique perspective to her classroom, using her own journey to inspire students. She encourages them to believe in their potential, creating a supportive environment where each student is valued. Through her story, she teaches not just academic lessons, but also resilience, hope, and the belief that it's never too late to achieve one's dreams.



## MIAMI LAKES TECH'S CHEF GARY RECOGNIZED FOR 40 YEARS OF CULINARY EXCELLENCE

[miamilakes.edu](http://miamilakes.edu)



Mr. Gary Spitnale (Chef Gary), a culinary instructor at Miami Lakes Educational Center and Technical College, recently received a prestigious Educator of the Year award for 2024 during the annual Banquet Awards hosted by the American Culinary Federation (ACF) of West Palm Beach Chapter. Chef Gary, a believer in giving back to the community, is also a member of the Miami and Broward chapters. Chef Gary was honored for his 40 years of membership in the ACF and his exceptional work as a culinary instructor.

The recognition came as a surprise to Chef Gary, who humbly dedicated the achievement to his students, particularly those he mentors in the ACF chapters. "It's all about the students," Chef Gary said. "This is for them, especially the culinary students I work with, who inspire me every day."

In addition to his ACF recognition, Chef Gary recently celebrated 17 years in November as an instructor at Miami Lakes Tech. Before transitioning to teaching, Chef Gary had an illustrious career as a Corporate Executive Chef at Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, where he spent over 30 years as Vice President of Food and Beverage Consulting. The entire school community congratulates Chef Gary on his well-deserved recognition and thanks him for his dedication to shaping the next generation of culinary professionals.



## LUCAS ALVAREZ LA6 FOUNDATION: EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SKILLED WORKERS

[lucasalvarezla6.com](http://lucasalvarezla6.com)



**“PROVIDING FUNDING FOR VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SCHOOL ATTENDEES.” - LA6**

The Lucas Alvarez LA6 Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to providing scholarships and supporting underprivileged young adults in Miami-Dade County, while helping them attend a technical (vocational) trade school, where they can pursue rewarding careers. Founded in memory of Lucas Alvarez, who tragically passed away in a boating accident at a young age of 18, the foundation honors his passion for mechanics and dedication to helping others.

Since established in June 2020, the foundation has provided financial assistance for tuition, books, uniforms, and even computers, when necessary, for students to pursue a career in fields like automotive, HVAC, electrical, plumbing, welding, or even to pursue a degree. The foundation’s focus is on helping local students, with one of the first recipients being Ramiro Romero, a graduate of Miami High who attended Miami Lakes Technical College and was hired by Bonin Chevrolet, Homestead. In addition, the foundation has helped former graduates such as Kevin Vargas who is gainfully employed by Aventura Honda, and Lucas Moncada who is currently employed by AutoNation of Miami.

As of June 2024, the LA6 Foundation has supported over 20 of Miami-Dade County Public Schools Technical College students, empowering them to pursue careers in the automotive and trades industry. By identifying young adults with talent, passion, and drive, the foundation continues to change lives and honor Lucas' legacy. According to some of our automotive instructors, this scholarship program has been a true blessing to our district and of course our students.



## ANNOUNCING OUR NEW BRAND FOR ADULT & CONTINUING EDUCATION CENTERS



The Office of Postsecondary Career and Technical Education is excited to announce the launch of its new brand – Miami-Dade County Public Schools Adult and Continuing Education Centers. This new initiative represents our commitment to providing accessible, high-quality learning opportunities for individuals seeking to enhance their skills, advance their careers, or pursue personal growth. Our updated branding reflects a fresh, innovative approach to lifelong learning, with a focus on empowering our community through diverse programs that meet the evolving needs of adult learners. Whether you're looking to learn foundational skill, earn a certificate or license, or explore new interests, we are here to support you every step of the way. Together, we are shaping a brighter future through education.



### 2025 Technical College *Career Expo*

**FEBRUARY 12, 2025**  
**5 PM - 8 PM**

MIAMI DADE COUNTY FAIR & EXPO CENTER  
ARNOLD HALL 10901 CORAL WAY, MIAMI FL 33165

**FREE EVENT FOR THE  
GENERAL PUBLIC**



HABLAMOS ESPAÑOL • NÒU PALE CREOLE



## DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

Please ensure that the story is accompanied by high-resolution images that are clear and of good quality.

E-mail us at: [recruiting@dadeschools.net](mailto:recruiting@dadeschools.net)



### THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

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