

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet[X] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Joshua Davidow
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Don Estridge High Tech Middle School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1798 NW Spanish River Boulevard
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Boca Raton State FL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 33431-4410

County Palm Beach

Telephone (561) 989-7800 Fax _____

Web site/URL
<https://www.palmbeachschools.org/DonEstridgeMiddle> E-mail joshua.davidow@palmbeachschools.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mike Burke E-mail mike.burke@palmbeachschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Palm Beach Tel. (561) 434-8000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Frank Barbieri Esq.
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 134 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 44 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 38 High schools
 - 8 K-12 schools

 - 224 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

☒ Urban (city or town)
☐ Suburban
☐ Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	0
K	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	437
7	435
8	413
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	1285

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 9 % Asian
 - 16.8 % Black or African American
 - 20.2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.6 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 48.7 % White
 - 4.5 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 school year: 2%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	19
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	20
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	1243
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Spanish, Haitian, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese Zhongwen, French, Bengali Bangla, Gujarati, Telugu, Arabic, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Serbian Srpski, Tagalog, German, Kannada, Korean, Norwegian, Swedish Svenska, Ukrainian, Albanian, Dutch Netherlands, Filipino, Hindi, Hungarian Magyar, Indonesia Bahasa Indonesia, Kwakiutl, Mandarin, Marathi, Polish, Sindhi, Tatar.

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %

27 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 26 %

Total number students who qualify: 337

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 15 %
Total number of students served 194

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>26</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>12</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>90</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>34</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 16 %
Total number of students served: 211

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 2

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	63
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	19

12. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	95%	99%	98%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2022.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

The faculty is dedicated to promoting the highest level of academic standards that are measured by classroom performance, as well as state and national assessments. This is demonstrated by the faculty's multi-level approach to curriculum, quest for professional development, and support of students beyond the regular school day.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

https://www.palmbeachschools.org/about_us/non_discrimination_statement

18. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Students entering grades sixth through eighth grade wishing to attend Don Estridge High Tech Middle School must submit an application during the application period of November through January. The parent and student must be full-time Palm Beach County residents at the time of application submission. There are no Middle School Choice program eligibility criteria. The lottery selection is a completely "blind" process, there is no weight on gender, race, or ethnicity.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Don Estridge High Tech Middle School actively works to sustain a diverse student enrollment. Don Estridge, High Tech Middle School's diversity marketing plan and objective seeks to recruit a diverse student body that reflects the economic, cultural, and gender diversity in accordance with Palm Beach County schools. This is also reflected in the multitude of cultures in which the school supports over 20 main languages spoken at home. We support an adequate pool of candidates similar to the diversity of Palm Beach County. Each year, Don Estridge High Tech Middle School represents over 60 elementary schools in the Palm Beach County School District as well as private schools. These elementary schools represent urban, suburban, and rural areas in Palm Beach County. With over two hundred thousand students in Palm Beach County, Don Estridge High Tech Middle School's bussing zone extends over 140 square miles, with currently 892 bus riders out of our 1241 active students, which is over 70 percent of the entire student population as bus riders. These students represent various urban, suburban, and rural communities of Palm Beach County because Don Estridge High Tech Middle School is a total choice school and does not have an attendance zone. Strategies for promoting Don Estridge High Tech Middle School are evident in our marketing plan which reflects the Palm Beach County School District diversity plan. Therefore, we must actively promote Don Estridge High Tech Middle School to the areas of the county which represent high numbers of minorities including African American, Haitian, and Hispanic populations. Some of which are bussed in over twenty miles away. With Don Estridge High Tech Middle School located in Boca Raton, Florida, we boast the highest percentage of African American students in the greater Boca Raton area.

The coursework at Don Estridge High Tech Middle School includes traditional, Cambridge, and accelerated curriculum offerings. The core academic studies include mathematics, sciences, languages, and the studies of our world. An extensive selection of electives is available which include visual arts, music, drama, physical education, business, technology, and robotics.

The curriculum is linked to the state standards. Lessons are designed with a student-focused approach. Smartboards and other classroom technology are utilized to enhance the learning experience.

A Single School Culture has been developed to enhance the learning and social environment at the school. Our students produce examples of positive peer relationships and social skills that follow the established models at the school. The student-developed models are delivered by utilizing multiple forms of media.

School-to-home communication is enhanced through the student information system which can be used to access student assignments calendars, grades, and emails. Families receive a weekly bulletin to communicate general information, sports activities, club news, and upcoming events.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Don Estridge High Tech Middle School (DEHTMS) is dedicated to ensuring that each student receives the necessary reading instruction needed to become a proficient reader. Once the curriculum is thought out, Don Estridge fortifies that each classroom is equipped with a highly effective certified teacher. This way students can receive differentiated instruction tailored to their learning needs.

Students that attend DEHTMS have a few paths to success when enrolled in a reading course. The first step is to determine if the student needs intensive reading. DEHTMS believes that reading is critical in all aspects. To establish reading proficiency, students who score a level 2 or less on the statewide assessment are enrolled in intensive reading instead of a second elective. During intensive reading, students have the opportunity to work in small groups with their teacher to work on decoding, comprehension, and fluency. Teachers teaching incentive reading use InSight assessments and SPIRAL textbooks to help students meet and exceed reading goals. Information from these assessments is recorded and shared with Language Arts teachers so that teachers can continue to build on instruction. Once the student is in their regular Language Arts room, students are educated on their grade level, with the use of differentiated instruction. Don Estridge encourages side-by-side planning with intensive reading and Language teachers to continue to support students who may not be yet reading on grade level.

Language Arts teachers use the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T) standards from the Florida Department of Education. The (English Language Arts) ELA standards are used to promote proficient readers through the state of Florida, therefore, our Language Art teachers take time to unpack and break apart the necessary standards to boost student achievement. By unpacking standards, teachers take a deep dive into how they will present the content to the students on a level that the students will comprehend. Language Arts teachers began to encourage readers for the day by beginning with bellwork that aligns with our district's scope and sequence. Scope and Sequence is the curriculum used by our distinct to align with the B.E.S.T standards. Once the bellwork has been completed teachers begin the lesson and scaffold with students in order to build on the new reading or writing concept. Depending on the student's level some teachers may instruct small groups independence practice or group work. Language Arts teachers utilize engaging online software such as Reading Plus (an adaptive reading software), NearPod, NewsELA, and CommonLit. Kami is used to help students annotate online texts to increase their writing abilities. Students are assessed using the State of Florida progress monitoring assessment. Students are assessed three times a year, beginning, middle, and end of the year. In addition, Language Arts teachers assess students using district unit tests as well as diagnostic tests from ReadingPlus. The various Language Arts/Reading courses are offered as regular, advanced, and Cambridge.

1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The standards for Mathematics are also grade-specific standards. What students can learn at any particular grade level depends upon what they have learned before. Each skill builds upon another. The Florida B.E.S.T. (Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking) Mathematical Standards follow several mathematical practices with a focus on students making sense of problems and persevering in solving them, model with math, and attend to precision. At the same time, all students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards if they are to access the knowledge and skills necessary in their post-school lives. The B.E.S.T. Standards for Mathematics are a balanced combination of procedure and conceptual understanding. At Don Estridge we have implemented a 55-minute math period that encompasses a whole group lesson followed by small group instruction in order to meet the demands of the BEST Standards.

At Don Estridge, we understand that mathematics is a way of thinking, communicating, and learning about the world. Our mission is to ensure that each student is challenged to achieve growth and success in his or her mathematic development. Our mathematics curriculum involves the integrated, connected study of the

mathematics content as well as developed proficiency in understanding concepts, computing fluently, applying concepts, reasoning logically, and engaging with mathematics. Our instructional methods begin with teachers understanding what students know and need to learn and then challenging and supporting them to learn it well. As facilitators of learning, we model mathematical thinking and reasoning as well as support and promote creative thinking and risk-taking in finding and explaining solutions.

We use a range of assessments and analyze outcomes to map students' progress and plan appropriate future learning experiences. Students take mid-unit assessments and summative assessments. Teachers use mid-unit formative assessments to make immediate adjustments to the math curriculum, as summative assessments provide data on standards not mastered. Teachers use that data to develop secondary benchmarks, which are taught in small group. In an effort to improve the mathematical skills of our striving math students, strategic interventions and appropriate assistance is provided. We chose to utilize small group instruction to provide an environment that maximizes learning opportunities.

We recognize that numbers are the foundation of mathematics and students must learn and acquire instant recall of the single-digit number facts for addition and multiplication and the related facts for subtraction and division. Our students have access to many adaptive technology programs such as IXL and Kahn Academy that assist not only with that but offering students individualized instructional tracks for their mathematical development. For our students above grade level, math skills are enhanced through available technologies and the opportunity to explore and apply mathematics across key learning areas and beyond the school setting.

1c. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Don Estridge follows the School District of Palm Beach County's scope and sequence as well as covering the following content in 8th-grade Science: Nature of Science, Structure, and Properties of Matter, Changes in Matter, Matter and Energy Transformations, the Earth-Moon-Sun System, the Solar System, the Universe, Space Exploration, Human Growth and Development, and 6th and 7th-grade Benchmark Review. The Science team at Don Estridge generally follows a version of the 5 E model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate). We implement a multi-faceted approach incorporating hands-on, virtual labs, online text, current events articles related to our content, model reading strategies to support reading comprehension in science and utilize academic review games.

Science assessments are conducted using formative assessments through daily review questions via a Google form, through multiple choice assessments in their online text, and using the smart board for presentation and markup using test-taking strategies. We use district assessments for summative assessments and conduct reflection activities after each summative assessment to check for understanding. Constant review of data and evaluation of local assessment keeps teachers aware of the student's learning needs. Additionally, we coordinate pull-out tutorials to remediate students who are in danger of not reaching proficiency based on their diagnostic data. We evaluate data to identify students to be included in our tutorial program for specific science content areas. By using all of the available data and targeted approach, we are able to identify students who need and will most benefit from our tutorial program.

Our goal for Science is to keep students engaged through hands-on activities to increase their comprehension of science concepts. Technology is integrated with the science curriculum through Smart Boards, docs, sheets, slides, and virtual Physics Education Technology (pHet) labs. This allows students to use an inquiry-based learning approach where they ask questions and think critically.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Don Estridge High Tech Middle Schools engage students through its curriculum by incorporating the social studies Next Generation Standards. Aligning state standards prepares students for statewide assessment while promoting their individual growth. At DEHTMS the type of social studies courses available varies by grade. Students in 6th grade take World History, 7th grade takes Civics, and grade 8 takes United States History. The level of difficulty of the courses is regular, advanced, accelerated, and Cambridge Program (this is in the order of difficulty). The key driver for instruction and student placement is data. Teachers at

DEHTMS use assessment data from tests, quizzes, projects, Socratic Seminars, and exit tickets which consist of high-order questions/analyses to assess students' performance. DEHTMS prides itself in Technology integration in all subjects. Students have access to all textbooks online as well as other interactive digital resources.

Our most engaging online resources include iCivics, BrainPop, ABC-CLIO Research Database, and NearPod. Each student has a Chromebook, provided by the school, to access Google Classroom and other creative sites such as Google Slides and Google Sites. Students can also use Kami (an online tool for editing online documents) and students are able to justify their thinking. Giving students time to justify their thinking promotes critical thinking which students need to think outside of the box. Students take notes on primary resources and then use question formulation techniques to help retain new information. DEHTMS social studies department meets weekly to discuss student data and construct ways to implement vertical and horizontal alignment for each grade level. At DEHTMS we call them professional learning committees (PLCS) to allow teachers time to be creative alongside planning. Teachers at DEHTMS use content literacy strategies in social studies using dialectical journals where students identify the important pieces of the texts and then elaborate on their importance. This strategy aligns with reinforcing reading strategies to produce more proficient students.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

Students are placed in classes starting in 6th grade according to their academic capabilities. DEHTMS has a great master scheduling system in place that is tailored to place students according to their individual learning strengths. In order to prepare students to be lifelong learners and promote college readiness, Don Estridge offers Cambridge International and pre-AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education) classes. Starting from 6th-grade students have the opportunity to partake in pre-college readiness courses such as Pre-Advanced International Certificate of Education (Pre-AICE) or Cambridge. AICE is used internationally to enhance students reading potential. As students continue through programs such as AICE and Cambridge through high school, students are provided with the opportunity to receive an advanced diploma as well as college credits. DEHTMS begins with starting students who are beyond proficient with subjects such as reading and math with Pre-AICE/Cambridge. Once those students enter high school, students will continue to withstand the rigor of the instruction.

Don Estridge offers electives such as digital discoveries and computer fundamentals. Students in 6th grade can be enrolled in Information & Communication Technologies where students are introduced to the various Google Platforms and learn how to operate them. In 7th and 8th grades students are enrolled in Digital Discoveries and Computer Fundamentals to advance their technical skills. Once students have completed the course students may obtain Industry, Web Foundations Associate, HTML, and CSS Microsoft Certifications, as well as High School Credit. With these certifications, students can pursue careers as IT (Information Technology) professionals, business professionals, healthcare professionals, legal professionals, marketing professionals, and graphic artists. At Don Estridge, students have a variety of paths to choose from in order to strengthen their talents prior to entering high school and the workforce.

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

In our two-dimensional art classes students can be found analyzing and critiquing different works of art through writing that helps students think critically by thinking about and explaining what they are looking at and how it may have come to be. Additionally, students are playing with, exploring, and mastering different materials which allows students a framework for processing new information and figuring out how to use it

in new and different ways that can be transferable to other contexts. Our instructional team provides a safe, calming environment with large tables that seat a group allows students to learn and explore in collaboration with their peers.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Our Physical Education courses provide students with not only an outlet from their academics but continually challenge students to develop healthier lifestyles as well as develop their physical fitness. Physical education is more than just participation in sports and games. It is an opportunity for students to learn about wellness, cooperation, emotional and social development, to assist students in making healthy choices that contribute to long-term healthy living. One way our PE teacher supports students in wellness is through a unit of inquiry around the transdisciplinary theme of who we are. Students gain health and fitness awareness through physical exercise and by monitoring their progress with a workout journal.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

We offer Foreign Language courses in the form of Exploratory Spanish as well as Spanish 1. Spanish 1 is a high school course that 8th-grade students are eligible to take for high school credit. These courses allow students to learn Spanish in a fun and exciting way. According to the latest Census from the Federal Government, 23.9% of people in Palm Beach County are Hispanic. Our Spanish classes are setting students up for success in a diverse community by teaching them the basics and challenging them to listen, speak and read Spanish at an early age.

2d. Technology/library/media

Currently, we are proud to offer 10 different technology courses for students of all grades. 6th through 8th grade students are able to take Robotics (award-winning) where they are exposed to the engineering basics of engineering and can build on these skills in intermediate and advanced courses. Our technology department engages and teaches students valuable skills for a digital world. Students gain experience with powerful programs like Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator in our Artistic Technology course. Our Computer Fundamentals courses are structured around the CIW (Coloring the World) Web Foundations series. In these classes, students learn key skills on how to apply technology to cloud-based services in the business world, how to code using Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) as well as learning to configure computer networks. Branding and Social Media teaches students the basics on how to be successful on Social Media and how to advertise and promote brands through another digital frontier. Our media specialist is instrumental in teaching our students internet safety, covering topics such as stranger danger on the internet, keeping information private, determining the appropriateness of a website, and how to be a responsible digital citizen.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

We offer some other elective courses that are not typical of a middle school, Speech and Debate. In this class, students learn storytelling from multiple levels. Students learn the basics of public speaking and then move toward a more debate-centered format. This class moves on to focus on photography and cinema lessons that highlight effective storytelling through different mediums. Self-esteem is a pillar in Speech and Debate which allows students to become confident in their speaking techniques while moving toward forming proper arguments.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

When students at DEHTMS score below grade level, we review the students' assessment data across all content areas DEHTMS puts the focus on increasing reading scores to assist with closing the achievement gap. Students scoring in the low 25 often lack reading comprehension or perform a level 1 on the reading state test. DEHTMS requires that students who scores a level 1 or 2 will be placed into intensive reading to work on comprehension, fluency, and phonic skills if needed. Students partake in Instructional Rotations

that meet their learning needs. Students are assessed periodically to monitor growth and implement the intervention. To further meet the needs of all learners, small group instruction is utilized in conjunction with differentiation in core content areas. Class sizes in inclusion reading and math classes are significantly lower than advanced and accelerated classes to allow for more interaction between student and teacher. These lower-class sizes also help to facilitate a powerful small group rotation that ensures the needs of all learners are met in a timely manner. Tutorial is offered and advertised to all students but mainly those who struggle academically in math, reading, and/or science. These sessions are before school and after school to help bridge the gap in student achievement. Reading Plus is a remediation tool employed throughout the English department. Students are assigned a specific number of lessons to complete each week. Science uses various strategies to meet the needs of all learners including teaching effective test-taking strategies that are demonstrated by students on all assessments. Students may also be pulled out of an elective class for more remediation in science if needed. These extra science sessions have proved extremely beneficial as our science achievement level is 87 % proficient.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Don Estridge High Tech Middle School is one of the top performers in student achievement in the school district of Palm Beach County. Teachers work tirelessly inside and outside of the classroom to ensure student success. Teachers are often attending Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as well as other professional development courses to continue to improve and best meet students' needs. All students are allowed/encouraged to join extracurricular activities such as our award-winning Math and Robotics club as well as our Academics game team. Our Robotics team placed 55th out of 36,000 at the World Robotics Competition in April of 2022 and has taken home the prestigious THINK Award. Furthermore, our Math Competition team won first place for 7th and 8th grades and the 61st Annual Palm Beach County Math Championships.

3c. Students with disabilities:

At Don Estridge, our Exceptional Student Education (ESE) department is consistently monitoring student progress in all classes based on teacher feedback, observations from ESE support staff and facilitators as well as parent communication. Through these methods of communication, our teachers and staff formulate and execute individual education plans for each student in our ESE population to best tailor and fit their specific needs to ensure their academic and social-emotional success. In teacher Professional Learning Communities (PLC) each team/department works to tailor their instruction to scaffold and differentiate in ways that reach students of all academic levels. ESE support facilitators are integral to supporting our ESE population and are regularly present in core classrooms monitoring and assisting students with their accommodations. Teachers are routinely examining student performance on district assessments and meeting with ESE support staff to assist those low-performing students in the general education classroom as well as in small group instruction. A support facilitation model is used to provide students with various teaching styles within the same classroom. Often, a small group of ESE students will be pulled out to another classroom limiting distractions, allowing students to have a more focused lesson with one of our ESE facilitators. Don Estridge works tirelessly to ensure that the needs of all learners are met. All teachers are provided copies of Individualized Education Programs as well as 504 plans and meet bi-weekly for parent/teacher conferences for struggling students. The academic success of all students at our school is our top priority and is an area we take great pride in.

3d. English Language Learners:

At Don Estridge, we currently have 65 students that qualify as English Language Learners in our ESOL program. Students are enrolled in general education classrooms and receive accommodations to ensure a level playing field as they continue their learning and grasp of the English language. ELLs are tested yearly to monitor their progress. These scores are made available to teachers which helps construct a curriculum based on their needs.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Engaging students at Don Estridge consists of multiple steps to success. Don Estridge has a Positive Behavior Support team (PBS) who assists with rewarding desired behavior to the students that attend Don Estridge. DEHTMS' behavior management motto is "Dragons are F.I.E.R.C.E.". The acronym F.I.E.R.C.E stands for friendly, independent, empathetic, responsible, courageous, and enthusiastic. Teachers at DEHTMS use F.I.E.R.C.E points to reward students for positive behavior. The F.I.E.R.C.E points talk up at the end of the quarter; and, students, who received the most F.I.E.R.C.E points by grade levels, are able to enter a drawing at the end of the quarter. Students have the opportunity to win fantastic prizes. Students may win airpods, Don Estridge swag bags (bags of clothes with the school's logo), and gift cards to name a few.

At Don Estridge, we also provide countless opportunities for students to engage in activities that interest them. Our school promotes a learner-centered approach where all students can express themselves by participating in various instructional activities and clubs such as the American Sign Language club, SAVE Promise club, Green Dragon Recycling, PRISM, Black Student Union, and National Junior Honor Society. These clubs are student driven and allow students to build in-depth relationships with their peers and teachers. Students get to work on a common goal or desire with others.

In addition, students have access to counseling and mental health professionals to help them push through days or times that may not be easy for them. Students can request to speak to a counselor or a mental health professional at any time. Students are encouraged to see their grade-level counselor or mental health professional whenever the need arises. The students appreciate it when we these professionals constantly check in on them and assist with them meeting any academic goals.

Students are mostly engaged in the student PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association). Student PTSA organizes student-only events monthly where students may have a donut day, cookies with coco, and pizza lunches. Students love being part of student PTSA at Don Estridge because it involves various opportunities for them to learn and interact with their peers. Lastly, Don Estridge works on keeping students engaged by building on their input. Students take school effective questionnaires (SEQs) year to provide feedback for Don Estridge climate and culture.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Don Estridge High Tech Middle School goes above and beyond to engage families and communities. Don Estridge has found the most success in working with families via the Parent Teacher Student Association, also known as PTSA. The PSTA consists of parents who volunteer their time freely to support students and staff throughout the school year. At Don Estridge, we have different parts of PTSA, this one highlights our current parent volunteers who go above and beyond to provide an inclusive school climate. PTSA assists with organizing staff treats, fundraisers, spirit week, school dances, and more. Our PTSA is like no other and goes above and beyond to consistently recruit more parent and community volunteers to support students' success and school improvement. Don Estridge and the PTSA often plan events together to create a warm welcoming environment throughout the school. This could be as simple as disturbing candy grams to raising funds to add more filtered water bottles where students can refill them. PTSA consists of parents, teachers, and students who help sponsor activities to increase student engagement. One event hosted by the PTSA was the science bowl. During the science bowl students and parents performed science experiments that made them understand some of the science curriculum taught at Don Estridge High Tech Middle School. In addition, Don Estridge and the PTSA go above and beyond to promote their business partners front and center on the PTSA webpage to show gratitude for community partnerships.

Don Estridge has a School Advisory Council, also known as SAC, which meets once a month to consists of staff, community members, students, administrators, business partners, and parents. The goal of SAC is to assist in building a welcoming school community. The goal of SAC is to provide collaborative partnering to address student and community matters. SAC members promote good listening, encouragement, celebration,

and the significance of building lasting relationships. SAC consists of at least 51% of parents/community members who do not work for the school district. DEHTMS SAC has been trained in how to make decisions with our school faculty. This is beneficial for our school because everyone is able to work towards the school budget and school improvement plans cohesively. SAC promotes equity by achieving racial, ethnic, and economic representation of the school community. Implementing fairness on the School Advisory Council is how the team is able to make the foremost decisions for the school and the students we serve.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

At Don Estridge, we have created an inclusive learning environment where teachers plan and collaborate on the best instructional practices. We collaborate with teachers by incorporating shared decision-making. The decisions we make at Don Estridge not only affects the students but the staff as well. Our teachers are front and center with our students every day so their thoughts count. Don Estridge has implemented an Employee Building Council (EBC) where students can have their voices heard. Teachers have a drop box where they can drop suggestions or concerns anonymously to be discussed during the EBC meetings. The EBC meets every month and acts as a representative to communicate with school leaders about school-related concerns such as, but not limited to student dress code, academic expectations, and master board development for teachers and admin. All teachers are welcome to these meetings as the EBC leader addresses the concerns and unites to devise solutions.

Furthermore, staff at our schoolwork collaboratively with professional development leaders to equip teachers and staff with the necessary tools to address learning challenges. Professional development at Don Estridge is customized to meet the needs of the teachers and staff. At Don Estridge, we call this a professional learning committee (PLC). Teachers work jointly to assess data and propose learning strategies deemed appropriate for student achievement. Teachers also share digital learning resources that keep students engaged while also recommending unique ways to incorporate technology into the classrooms. PLC leaders promote district standards and integration of technology when teaching.

Through a single school culture, leaders' mentor new teachers through the Educator Support Program (ESP). The ESP program is designed to support teachers who are new to teaching and teachers that are new to Don Estridge, regardless of their teaching experience. In the ESP program, teachers receive mentors that can help maneuver them through the school year. A mentor is assigned to give advice, observe, support, and coach the new teacher when necessary at the professional level.

Lastly, administrators go above and beyond to get teacher feedback through needs-assessment surveys. At the beginning of the year, teachers complete the Self-Assessment Survey, where teachers give their feedback on the prior school year so that administrator can assess any necessary changes that need to be made. The administrative team analyzes the data and presents possible changes to the staff to make final recommendations.

4. School Leadership:

Our school leadership team is comprised of the principal, three assistant principals, three school counselors, ESE contact (provides input on the needs our ESE students), a magnet coordinator, a behavioral health professional, IT coordinator, and a school resource officer. As a leadership team, we strive to lead by inspiration and example, rather than authority. We are visionary, and collaborative, and foster growth in our staff. Our responsibility as leaders is to paint a clear picture of the vision required for the organization and to work collaboratively with the staff towards developing a shared vision. We perceive change as an opportunity to grow and necessary to improve instructional quality and student achievement.

The number one focus of our leadership team at Don Estridge is that we are instructional leaders. Our job is to provide resources and support to teachers and students. We mentor teachers as they embark on new instructional practices and curriculum. Staff members find that we are very approachable and informal in many respects, but that we hold high expectations for the work that we do. We feel people perform at their best if they know that we believe in them and care about them. As school leaders, we strive to be objective

and reflective observers. Some of our time is spent resolving conflicts and enforcing rules. We lead by example to provide structure and still promote creativity and imagination. We encourage our teachers not to simply accept what has always been done, but to question what is best for our students and school. We strive to be a positive influence on the Don Estridge community by demonstrating integrity, fairness, flexibility, and professionalism.

Day to day, we affect students in a positive manner. We are a visible presence in the hallways and classrooms, making ourselves available to students. They are very comfortable approaching us to discuss their concerns. We offer the best resources we know, human resources. We support our struggling learners by personally providing small group instruction. This personal connection between administrators and kids makes a huge difference in student achievement.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Don Estridge High Tech Middle School promotes equitable student access to a rigorous academic program by establishing objective selection criteria based on academic performance in classes and on standardized tests in combination with teacher recommendations and parent requests. All students regardless of demographics, or learning abilities, and exceptionalities receive the same high-quality standard of instruction but are given extra support through their courses. Exceptional Student Education provides, supports, and monitors services for students with disabilities. The mission of the Exceptional Student Education and English for Speakers of Other Languages Departments are to ensure students with disabilities receive appropriate educational services leading to increased student achievement and successful post-school outcomes. Students from various demographics are also receiving culturally inclusive teaching which includes but are not limited to women's studies and rights, African American literature, and Hispanic and Haitian heritages. With the assistance of technology, students celebrate the similarities and differences of all races and demographics. Peer tutoring and our 1-1 chrome book ratio allow for study inside and outside the classroom.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

There are many strategies that we use at Don Estridge that lead to our success but the one practice that sets us apart from other schools, is meeting the social emotional needs of our students by building relationships with each student and their families. Building a relationship with students is the most powerful tool in our teaching toolkit, not the material teaching resources but the human connection.

At Don Estridge, we understand that students cannot do their best learning if their emotional needs are not being met. We make it our number one priority to develop an emotional connection with each student. This starts during the summer when teachers receive the list of students who will be in their class. Teachers personally call each household to introduce themselves and invite parents to our How to Train Your Dragon event for incoming sixth graders during the summer before starting school.

Of the utmost importance, our students must feel personally connected to at least one adult on our campus, a trusted individual who the student can turn to at any point in the day. Our students live stressful lives outside of school as well as deal with daily stressors inside of school. It is imperative that students feel emotionally supported, heard, and understood. Once we meet the emotional needs of our students, we can work on the academic needs of our students. We tell our parents that first, we work on students' emotional needs and then we meet their academic needs, but before student achievement happens, there must be a relationship of trust between student and teacher.

One way we have made building relationships a priority at Don Estridge is by creating groups and organizations that students can personally identify with. From interscholastic athletic teams to our Black Student Union and LGBTQ+ clubs it is not unusual, to see staff members having lunch with students. Teachers are often found sitting outside in our courtyard garden area talking. Band, Drama, and Art all offer students the opportunity to have lunch in their classrooms. These are just a few of the ways we strive to build relationships with our students. In the end, it is not the textbook or workbook used that made a difference in student achievement, but the strong relationships developed that made all the difference at Don Estridge High Tech Middle.