

U.S. Department of Education
2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Diedre L. Neal

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

Official School Name Alice Deal Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3815 Fort Drive NW

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Washington DC 20016-1870
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County District Of Columbia

Telephone (202) 939-2010

Fax (202) 282-1116

Web site/URL

https://www.alicedealmiddleschool.org/

E-mail diedre.neal@k12.dc.gov

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.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Lewis Ferebee

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail lewis.ferebee@k12.dc.gov

District Name District Of Columbia Public Schools District Tel. (202) 442-5885

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.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Ms. Ruth Wattenberg

(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.

Date _____

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

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, write N/A in the space.*

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 2019 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 includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
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. 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.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 79 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 12 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 21 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 112 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	243	235	478
7	255	249	504
8	251	273	524
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	749	757	1506

*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 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5 % Asian
 - 28 % Black or African American
 - 16 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 47 % White
 - 4 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 6%

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

N/A

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, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	42
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	45
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	87
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	1558
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5%
71 Total number ELL

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

Amharic, Arabic, Farsi, French, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14%
Total number students who qualify: 212

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
142 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>13</u> Autism | <u>9</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>36</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>78</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>3</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	9
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	86
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	32
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	24

11. 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 17:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	95%	94%	95%	95%	94%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **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 2018.

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%

14. 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.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Alice Deal Middle School inspires excellence, curiosity, and compassion through intellectual and social engagement.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Although Alice Deal Middle School is located in upper Northwest, DC in a very quiet area, its history is a clamorous one that extends far beyond the picturesque town in which it is situated. Alice Deal Middle School, the first Junior High School in Washington, DC, was built in 1930, before segregation. Deal is named for Alice Deal, the school's first principal. The school was carefully placed in front of the Reno School, where, at that time, African American students obtained their education. At that time, Deal had 100 students and the Reno School had 12. The students at Alice Deal and those in the Reno School did not talk, learn or coexist in the same space. Throughout the years, Deal has been led by a few select principals whose longevity in their positions proves their commitment to great educational work. In January 2015, Deal underwent a major renovation and was connected to the Reno School to accommodate its high demand and growing student enrollment.

Over recent years, the school's leadership has changed, and student enrollment has gradually increased from the select few, privileged students of decades ago, to a diverse group of 1,500 students today. African American students attend Deal. Hispanic students attend Deal. Caucasian students attend Deal. Asian students attend Deal. These students sit together at lunch and play together at recess. They learn together. They are best friends. Everyday, Deal educates the children of congressmen and the children of those below the poverty line - all in the same classrooms and with an equal amount of care and compassion. Deal is a place for everyone, no matter their home language, background or socioeconomic status. Our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students find comfort in knowing that they can come to school each day and not be subjected to bullying, intimidation and slurs. Deal is a safe space where all students are empowered to be themselves without fear.

Deal Middle School maintains its athletic reputation by allowing all students to tryout and earn a spot on our coveted teams. Our students play several sports, including - but not limited to - archery, basketball, cheerleading, football, ice hockey, lacrosse, softball, and track.

Deal's success would not be possible without the unwavering support of our Community Association. This group of parents has been an integral part of ensuring that all members are welcomed and engaged through countless initiatives and activities. We maintain open communication with our community through Weekly Newsletters and an "All Are Welcome" Policy. We also host events such as block parties, live auctions, and musicals.

Although Deal offers a myriad of athletic options, it believes in educating the whole child, providing multiple options and opportunities for academic success. The rigorous IB Curriculum options meet students where they are and allow them to apply what they have learned through real-world experiences. For example, when students enroll at Deal, they select a world language course: Chinese, French, Spanish or Spanish Humanities. The students remain in these courses for their entire three years at Deal, and in 8th grade, they travel to China, France, Guatemala or Costa Rica. This not only provides students with the opportunity to broaden their horizons, but also provides a chance to travel abroad for students who would otherwise not have the ability.

Deal has positively evolved since the exclusionary, segregated space from years ago. Deal is now led by an African American principal who understands that with all of Deal's success, there still exists an achievement gap and uses this information to empower teachers to instruct our students through an "equity and access lens". The principal worked as an assistant principal for ten years prior to becoming principal of Deal Middle School and ensures, every day, that Deal is a place where students of all races and backgrounds, classes and ethnicities, can learn together in classrooms with teachers who look like them, understand them, support them and love them. In 1984, Deal was selected one of the top 200 schools in the country. Today, Deal maintains its reputation of being one of the most sought after middle schools - by families and teachers alike. Deal's mantra, which our students, community and friends embody and recite everyday is: Here We Grow!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

The English Language Arts Department at Alice Deal integrates the principles and objectives of the IB Middle Years Program with the Common Core State Standards. Each unit is organized around a unifying theme, an anchor text, and a set of core focal standards and all units are continuously revised through reflective, data-driven professional learning communities. Working with instructional coaches, each grade-level team norms expectations for summative assessments, analyzes students' progress through formative assessments, and plans differentiated instructional experiences based on best practices and student learning data.

Literacy skill instruction is aligned across the department both vertically and horizontally. Drawing on the work of Judith Hochman (*The Writing Revolution*) and Doug Lemov (*Reading Reconsidered*), teachers provide explicit instruction in sentence-, paragraph-, and essay-level writing. Students have frequent opportunities to write and speak about the texts they read, answering text-dependent questions and refining both their comprehension and interpretative skills. Students often read and write in class. Instruction is driven by both quantitative and qualitative data, and we strive to help students take ownership of their data. All students receive a Data Snapshot at the beginning of each year that captures their recent scores on Reading Inventory and PARCC, and they update this document and reflect upon their progress at interim assessment points including midyear Reading Inventory and PARCC-aligned unit assessments written by the Achievement Network (ANets).

Close to one quarter of our students are in ELA classes co-taught by members of the special education or ELL department, and special educators are integrated with ELA's collaborative planning process to support differentiated Tier 1 Instruction. Students whose RI, PARCC, or ANet data suggest that they are reading or writing below grade level receive additional Tier 2 and Tier 3 support through reading classes, Saturday Academy, and technology-based interventions like Reading Plus.

1b. Mathematics:

Alice Deal Middle School has a robust mathematics department. At the sixth, seventh and eighth grade levels, we take a tiered approach in which students are placed in mathematics courses with the appropriate rigor. Each fall, after analyzing diagnostic data from i-Ready (an online adaptive tool), eligible students are given the opportunity to take advanced courses or are provided with a math support class that assists them in acquiring the content knowledge and strategies to perform at or above grade level. In addition to Common Core Math 6, Math 7 and Math 8, we also offer Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II. The goal of having each of these courses is to ensure that students are challenged based on their current understanding, encouraged to push themselves to achieve new levels of understanding, and to develop an appreciation of the beauty of mathematics. To ensure the learning standards are met, general education mathematics teachers and their special education co-teachers meet in grade level cohorts to deep dive into the standards and collaboratively plan units, assessments and lessons with the guidance of instructional coaches. Teachers also participate in weekly professional development with their grade level mathematics instructional coach to develop each their individual craft. During these meetings, teachers learn pedagogical strategies, share best practices and analyze students' data in order to make instructional decisions that foster student achievement. As an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB MYP) school, we create units using Great Minds Eureka Mathematics as a guide, which become the building blocks to sequentially lead students to master their course curriculum. Moreover, our assessments and learning experiences are aligned to the IB MYP criterion of Knowing and Understanding, Investigating Patterns, Communicating or Applying mathematics in real-life contexts. Throughout the year, our students also take district designed interim assessments and the final summative assessment, PARCC. From these data points, teachers plan differentiated tasks, small group instruction and re-teach lessons to push every student toward mastery of content. Additionally,

learning opportunities (Saturday school and after school math clubs) are extended to students outside of the regular school day. In the summer, eligible students are invited to a math acceleration program.

1c. Science:

At Alice Deal Middle School, the science curriculum is focused on building investment in science and helping students apply their scientific knowledge to real world contexts. In sixth grade, curricular content is focused on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Earth Science standards and on the fundamentals of experimental best practices and foundational design. Throughout the year students complete five-unit studies: Experimental Design, Space Systems, Earth's Processes, Weather and Climate, and Resources, and Human Impact. The year begins with experimental design and the focus continues as students work increasingly to design their own experiments (with teacher given variables or guidance) and draft their conclusions, with an emphasis on graphing and providing evidence. In seventh grade, curricular content is focused on the NGSS Life Science standards and reinforces experimental design. Throughout the year students complete units of study that include: Inquiry and Microscopy, The Cell, The Human Body, Evolution, and Genetics. Labs transition toward student independence and design -- including cellular design labs and presentations, with an emphasis on collecting data and drafting data-based conclusions and redesigns. In seventh grade, students use a digital textbook to help build and strengthen key core knowledge. In eighth grade, units include alternate energy, electricity, forces, waves, and introductory chemistry. Also in eighth grade, labs are primarily design focused; students are given and must apply their content knowledge to create a product or solution (i.e. design a soundproof box, design a car with safety features that protect an egg). In 8th grade students regularly use the University of Colorado's Phet application to apply their knowledge and to solve real world application problems. Across all three grades standards are assessed on differentiated assessments in the form of: multiple choice and short answer tests, design projects, and lab reports and presentations. Each science team meets weekly to analyze student assessment data, revising future lessons to include key content, redesigning the lessons for the following year, and selecting students for whom reteaching is necessary.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Deal's "World Geography & Cultures" curriculum takes students around the world using the five themes of geography to investigate people and places of Earth. Students engage a variety of texts including political, physical and thematic maps as well as atlases, photographs, current events articles, news video clips, and more to explore the interaction between human and physical processes that have shaped Earth's surface over time. Each unit includes a regional exploration of physical and cultural geography, as well as an in-depth case study of a particular global theme (e.g. economics, movement of people & goods, population growth, etc.) that is closely related to that part of the world. Units are aligned to the DCPS social studies grade-level standards and summative assessments are aligned to the IB MYP Year One Objectives and Criteria Rubrics. Deal's World History and Geography Curriculum focuses on the Ancient World, which examines the development of specific cultures from 4.5 million years ago to approximately 450 C.E. The course begins by examining the technological developments by humans and how agriculture promoted the formation of complex societies. The course analyzes ancient civilizations that formed along the world's major rivers using the historical construct of analyzing a civilization through the systems it develops (geography, politics, social structure, religion, economics, technology, and information), and examines which of these systems were most influential in shaping each of the civilizations studied, as well as the legacy each civilization left behind. Throughout these courses, students develop their skills as historians through direct instruction, investigation of primary sources (both written and visual), Socratic seminars, and analytical writing. Both lessons and assessments are differentiated for student skills and interests. Units are aligned to the DCPS social studies grade-level standards and summative assessments are aligned to the IB MYP Year Three Objectives & Criteria Rubrics.

1e. For secondary schools:

Alice Deal Middle School has a robust International Baccalaureate curriculum that supports academic and social engagement. Students also have the opportunity to take accelerated mathematics courses, as well as a

myriad of language options. Our academic program is one that supports students in meeting their educational, social, and personal goals.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Deal Middle School implements the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program which provides a conceptual framework for teaching and learning through a global lens. The Middle Years Program requires students to take courses in a world language, physical and health education, the arts, and design during all three years of the program. Interdisciplinary units are a growing focus at Deal as teachers across grade levels find common threads in their content. The only students excluded from these course offerings are those who require additional support in math and reading.

Deal's arts program offers both visual arts and general music. Students in grade six take nine weeks of each arts course, while seventh graders receive a semester of music, and eighth graders a semester of visual art. The visual arts program encompasses a range of two-dimensional and three-dimensional techniques, and includes the study of famous classical and contemporary artists. Our music program is designed to introduce the fundamentals through the use of technology and instruments. Students also study popular forms of music like hip hop and movie sound tracks. Recently, a band class was created for students who have advanced skills and talent. In addition to our daily curriculum, our teachers offer chorus, band, and orchestra as a before-school activity.

Students at Deal take one semester of physical health and education each year. Our units for each year have a range of individual sports, team sports, and health units that are age-appropriate. Units are tailored to student interests and allow for each grade level to discover what it means to be physically fit and emotionally well. Sixth grade students particularly enjoy the hygiene unit in which they create a television ad for a hygiene product. Seventh graders show off their best in the dance and archery units. Eighth graders explore nutrition needs and hunger through the Place Matters unit.

Our world language program is one of the best in the city with eighth graders consistently scoring higher on the STAndards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) assessment than tenth graders in the district. Students select Chinese, French, Spanish, or Advanced Spanish at the sixth grade level and maintain the study of the same language through eighth grade. Teachers partner to develop units that focus on the same topics and concepts for each grade level that is tailored to the unique skills required for each language. We intentionally plan the articulation of content knowledge and skills across grade levels which are evident in our unit plans and assessments. At Deal, language acquisition is about speaking, writing, reading, and comprehending relevant, real-world sources.

Social emotional learning is embedded in each class and taught specifically through our daily advisory period. Deal implements Second Step for all grade levels to teach social emotional skills. The Middle Years Program also employs social emotional learning and executive functioning skills as a component of each unit taught in all curriculum areas. This allows for students to use their skills within the content area.

As a school community, we have been committed to creating systems that equitably prepare all our students for the opportunities of today and beyond. To that end, our teachers incorporate technology to provide differentiated and personalized learning; to incorporate real-world, authentic learning; and to engage our students. To support this goal, students and staff members are able to access our wireless network with their personal devices (laptops, netbooks, tablets, smart phones, etc.) during the school day. We are currently piloting the Modern Classroom Pilot (MCP). The MCP aims to empower every student through meaningful integration of technology into the curriculum, with a social-emotional lens. Moreover, the program drives better learning outcomes, fosters 21st Century Learning Skills, and encourages collaboration and creativity. The pilot has provided a 7000 Series Interactive SMART Panel with mobile stand, a class set of laptops, and ongoing professional development.

3. Special Populations:

We fundamentally believe that all students should have access to the general education curriculum. Therefore, all students at Deal have the opportunity to learn and grow in an inclusion model where instruction is provided largely in a general education setting, with varying supports and services provided to our special student populations at all academic levels. Specialized instruction and out-of-general education supports are provided as needed to a smaller percentage of our student population.

Deal prioritizes the needs of our special populations first and foremost through strategic scheduling that precedes the placement of our general education population into teams and classes. Students with disabilities are also thoughtfully matched with case managers who they are most likely to connect with on a social-emotional level. With the input and recommendations of case managers, and most importantly, review of each student's IEP and numerous sources of data, students receive their services and support through a mixture of class placements, including co-taught inclusion classes for core content areas (English, Math, Science, and Social Studies), in English or Math resource classes, reading intervention courses, math support classes, or language support classes - if a student is dually classified as a student with a disability and as a language learner. Special educators ensure that students receive accommodations for assessments, review data, monitor progress, and help tailor and differentiate instruction in both general education, and out-of-general education courses to help students meet their individual academic goals. Special education teachers also have the opportunity to strengthen their instructional skills and share their expertise by co-planning daily lessons and unit plans with their general education co-instructors on a weekly basis under the guidance and facilitation of instructional coaches. Our special education coordinator, who manages the special education department, ensures that all staff members are not only in compliance with implementing each student's IEP with fidelity, but also, along with the rest of administration and instructional coaches, consistently reinforces our school's goals around equity and access.

Our students are diverse in every aspect, and therefore many of them have unique needs when it comes to accessing curriculum - especially our non- and limited English proficient speaking students. For this reason, we have created a similar inclusion and pull-out model for our English Learners (EL) at all levels and backgrounds. There are a variety of factors that impact language acquisition, and we collect and review their data to determine class placement and support needs. This data includes students' Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) scores, reading and math diagnostic scores, district and national level assessment scores, native languages, countries of origin, and feeder schools if they are ELs born in the US. We have designated teams of teachers at each grade level who are primarily working both with English proficient and English Learners in the general education setting through a sheltered instruction model, with co-teaching support of EL teachers across content areas in English, History/Geography, Math, and Science. We have content experts with EL teaching backgrounds who support newcomers in social studies and science, while our EL instructors and coaches also work with our ELs in math support, or English language development support classes based on academic needs.

Our teachers go above and beyond not only in class, but also outside of class hours during lunch-time tutoring, after-school tutoring, and Saturday Stars academy to work with students in these subgroups to help close the achievement gap. However, it is between our school hours of 8:45 am and 3:15 pm that we do the most to close the gap, and this can be attributed to our inclusion model which supports our mission of students being intellectually and socially engaged. One of the most beautiful things at Deal is that students are often seen helping each other, no matter their differences in ability, language, race, or any other factor that - in another setting that didn't embrace students' diverse abilities, cultures, and linguistic backgrounds as much as we do - might otherwise separate them.

Alice Deal Middle School staff and teachers go above and beyond to meet the needs of all our diverse learners. About 10% of our population are special education students with learning differences such as ADHD, Learning Disabilities, Autism, or Emotional Disturbance. Our special education students receive supports through their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and this may include social-emotional supports from Social Workers, speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, or counseling in addition to specialized instruction with a Special Education Teacher.

We believe in the inclusion model of teaching, meaning that all special education students are instructed in their least restrictive environment and are provided with as many opportunities as possible to be exposed to the general education setting. For our special education students, who are often two grade levels behind or more, instruction is scaffolded to meet students at their current level of academic knowledge, while providing them with exposure and access to the same grade level Common Core State Standards as their peers. More specifically, teachers modify the process by which students learn material by using multi-modal teaching through visuals and models, graphic organizers, and more frequent repetition of basic skills. Teachers also modify the content for students (e.g. providing leveled texts, alternate texts, audio versions of content) and alter the method by which students demonstrate understanding and mastery with hands-on learning activities.

Instructional methods such as small group instruction, parallel teaching, or station teaching are used to teach varying levels of students simultaneously. In these models, students are grouped by understanding of their skills, strengths, and challenges. Furthermore, teachers use interventions to target reading and math deficits with specific interventions such as Read180, Fountas & Pinnell, Lexia PowerUp, Do The Math NOW!, and others.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Although Deal has a staff of more than 150 adults and a student population that exceeds 1,500, it is a caring community that motivates its students and celebrates its diversity by creating a safe space where all students feel valued, protected and connected. Our teachers ensure that every day, students are actively engaged in the learning environment by providing multiple opportunities for students to foster their curiosities, demonstrate their comprehension, and work collectively with their peers to reach measurable goals. Students are provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery on assignments, including lunchtime and after school tutoring, as well as several opportunities to work with teachers to edit assignments and improve their overall grades. Through Deal's data-driven approach to student achievement, students visit Deal on weekends to work one on one with select staff members to increase their test stamina and fluency to ensure growth on PARCC. Our advisory period, which is an extension of homeroom, provides students with 30 minutes of mindfulness and fosters their social emotional growth through moments of silent reflection. Each lesson is specifically designed to support students in the areas of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision making, and relationship skills. Each teacher at Deal serves as a club sponsor for more than 100 student created clubs – from Harry Potter to No Place for Hate to Girls on the Run – all of which encourage students to tap into their individual talents and interests with the teachers who make them feel most comfortable. Teachers and students are partners in our school's success, working together in the best interest of all of our children. One of Deal's greatest assets is its teachers, who work together to celebrate each other through Staff Member of the Month celebrations, National Day Celebrations and Random Acts of Kindness. The administrative team provides teachers with daily shout outs and tokens of appreciation that highlight the tireless dedication they show our students each day. During professional development days, teachers have the option to meditate, read, play volleyball, make music and even rock climb.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Just like some of our students, many of our immigrant families have struggled with navigating systems in the US, including schooling, and it can be even more difficult if they are have zero to limited English proficiency. Our goal at Deal is to ensure that all families are engaged. At the most basic level, we provide documents in parents'/guardians' native language, and provide interpretation services via phone or in-person as needed for school-based events including orientation, family/community gatherings, or parent-teacher conferences.

Parents/guardians are more likely to be engaged when there is intentional outreach coupled with the opportunity to simply access information and attend events that work around their family and work obligations. Our school's EL coordinator has developed relationships and personally established communication with each of our English Learners' parents/guardians via email, phone calls, texts, and/or in-person meetings. Immediate access to a school staff member who accommodates a language need and preferred method of communication has dramatically increased our parental involvement within our English Learner student community, and as a result, has positively impacted their academic performance.

This past year parents played an integral role in our Middle Years Program evaluation visit. They spoke knowledgeably about our curricular practices, policies, and areas for growth as a schoolwide community. Each grade level hosts parent workshops as needed. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled at least three times throughout the year. We also host Talking Across the Lines which highlights race, class and culture in education in the District of Columbia and beyond.

3. Professional Development:

With the goal of providing sheltered instruction for our Level 1-4 English Learners, many of our general education and EL teachers are participating in a year-long graduate course housed at our school to learn strategies from a nationally renowned research-based model known as the Sheltered Instruction

Observation Protocol (SIOP). In this course, teachers are learning, applying, and practicing strategies to scaffold instructions for ELs and other diverse learners to increase participation and output in the classroom as it connects to content knowledge and academic language development. Deal teachers participate in DCPS professional development, in-house workshops, and content-related workshops hosted by the International Baccalaureate and other teacher organizations. Our in-house professional development activities include DCPS LEAP trainings for English and Math teachers, mindfulness trainings for the full staff, and instructional strategy workshops based on our data findings. This school year, teachers read "The Talent Code" as a staff to discover the mechanisms behind deep learning and how to apply those concepts as we develop our students and ourselves as learners. This workshop was facilitated by our principal, who employed a variety of teaching strategies for the faculty to model.

4. School Leadership:

At Deal, our leadership philosophy is rooted in our strong commitment to academic achievement for all students. To that end, we have developed clear structures and protocols to support inclusive and distributive leadership teams (Academic Leadership and Response to Intervention) that provide a multi-tiered system of support to address our achievement gap.

Our Academic Leadership Team is comprised of the principal, assistant principals, academic coaches, and teacher leaders who ensure there is instructional coherence in grade-level content areas. Additionally, the ALT focuses on addressing the disparity in academic performance between groups of students at our school. The ALT reviews achievement data throughout the year in order to analyze trends and identify specific students in need of support. We are intentional around disaggregating students' data by race, gender, language and socioeconomic status throughout the year in order to effectively meet our district's policy of creating and implementing a Comprehensive School Plan.

The ALT's work includes identifying and developing Tier 2 and Tier 3 Intervention, including after-school and Saturday programs to support ELA and Math. Additionally, the ALT focuses on raising student achievement through universal and targeted family engagement. A few of the examples of how this team ensures that policies, programs, relationships, and resources focus on student achievement are:

Development of a Summer Math Acceleration Program that focuses on providing opportunities for students of color to be prepared for advanced level math courses; making PD decisions based on specific student gaps and needs (coaching and peer observations); and hosting events for parents/guardians that specifically address the needs of neediest students/students farthest from opportunity.

Our RTI Team is comprised of a grade-level administrator, teachers, counselors, social workers, and the RTI coordinator and ensures that we are meeting the diverse needs of all our students by using data-driven decisions to improve student learning. Our RTI teams meet bi-weekly to review data and implement interventions. In addition to progress monitoring, the RTI Teams work with intentionality around strengthening relationships between students and teachers by developing a detailed understanding of each student's academic and social-emotional needs. A few of the examples of how this team ensures that policies, programs, relationships, and resources focus on student achievement are: Restructuring planning periods to focus on data and looking at student work; planning, implementing, and monitoring whole-school Tier I Intervention (The Hochman Method).

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

When stakeholders describe the most influential aspect of our school, they often share that the variety of activities, clubs, events and sports during and after school connect students with their passions and the greater Deal community. Our best, most influential practice is taking a holistic approach to supporting students, and finding their passions often fuels students' interest in academics and engagement in the school community. To support this initiative, all non-teaching staff are paired with a Homeroom Teacher and co-lead social-emotional learning activities four times per week. On Wednesdays during Activity Period, all staff leads activities such as basketball, knitting, ultimate frisbee, and photography, among others.

Additionally, every adult in our school building sponsors at least one club or activity throughout the school year. Opportunities to see students in cooking club, on the wrestling team, making origami, running 5ks, creating films, playing ice hockey, discussing the stock market, singing, or practicing mindfulness are all chances to see students display confidence, happiness and joy in ways they may not experience in the classroom. In addition to clubs and activities, we hold a musical performance at each grade level and a Shakespearean play each school year. Each year, we also host student-led, teacher-supported events about equity and access called Talking Across the Lines. We also invite the community to our winter and spring choral events, as well as our ensemble concerts. Opportunities like these permit teachers to share their passions with students and allow families to see their students grow and express joy in other areas of interest.

Our community is incredibly supportive of these practices that engage the whole student. Teachers regularly attend activities and games during the evenings and weekends to support our students outside of the general classroom environment. What we have found is that this practice builds relationships and connections beyond in the classroom. While students may not feel connected to learning about Ancient Mesopotamian Civilizations or balancing two-step equations, they are connected to their teachers who cheered for them at their biggest game the night before. That relationship extends learning beyond interest in the subject to a mutual understanding of students' and teachers' passions. This holistic approach improves students' outcomes in the classroom.