

Miami Herald

Want your son or daughter to be prepared for a tech job? Tech-focused high school coming to Miami

BY ROB WILE

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Miami Mayor Francis Suarez and Miami Dade College President Madeline Pumariega announced a new charter school focused on technology education. DEBORAH RODRIGUEZ.

A free, [tech-oriented charter high school](#) is coming to Miami that will allow students to complete their high school diploma while earning an associate's degree from Miami Dade College.

The program is slated to start this August with as many as 200 freshmen enrolled through an initial \$2 million investment from the state.

Who will actually end up running the school housed, for now on the college's downtown Wolfson campus, has yet to be determined. The city soon will put out a request for proposal for a private-sector "operator" of the school, Miami Mayor Francis Suarez said at a press conference Tuesday.

Students will be dual-enrolled in the high school and the college, with MDC faculty serving as some of the instructors. [Graduates will be certified in cybersecurity, cloud computing or data analytics.](#)

Other admissions information, such as how students will be selected for the tech high school, [will be finalized once an operator is selected.](#)

The tech training announcement comes as Suarez confronts an emerging challenge, having raised the city's tech profile to new heights: How to prompt innovative firms, especially ones newer to Miami, to [increase the rate at which they're meeting hiring goals](#) — and ensuring that they're [hiring native Miamians](#). Also, as Miami's housing prices and overall cost of living have sharply increased, the budding tech sector is viewed as an industry giving residents a chance to earn enough to afford to live in Miami-Dade County.

"When we talk about how we democratize opportunity for all Miamians, how we make sure every single Miamian born in this city can partake of the high-paying jobs we're creating in this Miami movement, it always comes down to one thing: education," Suarez said Tuesday.

Madeline Pumariega, president of Miami Dade College, said MDC would work with its technology hiring partners, like Google and Facebook, now known as Meta, to help place graduates in jobs.

"We know that in this movement and momentum, there's only one thing that can stop the flywheel, and that's talent," Pumariega said.

Temante Leary, an instructional designer and program manager at Microsoft, the founder of Miami-based Black Men Talk Tech entrepreneurship group, and a father of four, said he welcomed the news.

"I'm looking at, potentially, a new opportunity to immerse my children in tech and give them an opportunity to work at a Microsoft, or become a founder like me," Leary said. "To be able to have a place where they can use their talents, and have the access to education and a curriculum and to technology that I didn't. ... I think it's a really positive development."

The tech high school eventually could expand into a kindergarten through twelfth grade program, Suarez said. He called Miami-Dade County Public Schools "magnificent," but he wanted to "hack the system a bit" by having the city team with the college to get the tech education effort going.

“And I started thinking about how could we get involved in one of the most important components of the development of young people and what allows them to take advantage of this incredible moment we have in front of us. We thought: We have to call Madeline (president of Miami Dade College).”

Initial news of Tuesday’s announcement was hailed on social media by prominent members of [Miami’s tech community, especially ones recently transplanted to the city.](#)

“A great reason to move to Miami ASAP,” Founders Fund General Partner Keith Rabois said on Twitter.



“What an amazing project,” said Alex Alpert, founder and CEO of Shyft, a moving and relocation software group based in San Francisco.



Alex Alpert
@AlexanderAlpert



What an amazing project 🙌👏



Nancy Dahlberg ✓ @ndahlberg

NEW: MDC, City of Miami will create a 'Miami Tech Charter School' starting with middle & high school students and eventually K-12. Students will graduate with a free associate's degree in a tech field from @MDCollege refreshmiami.com/mdc-city-of-mi... @venturemiami @francissuarez #Miamitech

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