KEARNY HIGH SCHOOL OF DIGITAL MEDIA & DESIGN

Teachers as Coaches, Not Repositories of Knowledge

Our teachers share a common belief that all students are capable of meeting state academic performance standards.

Principal Cheryl Hibbeln

SCHOOL INFO:

Location: San Diego, CA
Type: District
Focus: Digital Media
Network: ConnectEd/Linked Learning

Linked Learning brings together rigorous academics, technical education and work-based learning to provide real-world experiences that allow students to develop relationships with teachers, community and business mentors, all focused around college and career success goals.
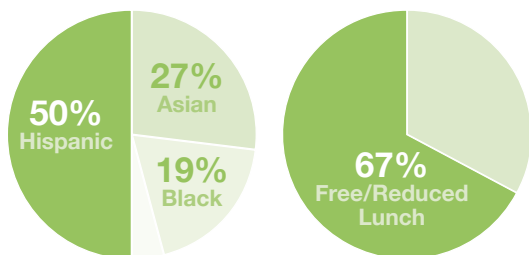
BY THE NUMBERS:

Date Opened: 1941/2004
Grades Served: 9-12
Enrollment: 447
Teachers: 19
Students Demographics:

50% Hispanic
27% Asian
19% Black

67% Free/Reduced Lunch

What is Deeper Learning?

Deeper Learning teaches students to master core academic content, think critically, solve complex problems, work collaboratively, communicate effectively, direct their own learning, and develop an academic mindset.

In 2004, the staff of Kearny High School created the Kearny Educational Complex—four small autonomous high schools, each with a different industry theme: Digital Media and Design (DMD); International Business; Science, Connections and Technology; The Stanley E. Foster Construction Technology Academy.

These four schools have adopted a student-centered approach to teaching, teacher collaboration through common prep planning periods, and a focus on engagement through real world Project-Based Learning which have all contributed to an overall rise in student achievement.

The development of an academic mindset, the belief in one's academic abilities and persistence in the face of obstacles, can be a significant challenge for Kearny's students, many of whom come into high school at well below normal expectations for their grade level. Principal Cheryl Hibbeln and her staff tackle this issue through an intentional multi-grade approach, and common instructional expectations. "Our teachers share a common belief that all students are capable of meeting state academic performance standards, and they hold students accountable to those standards," she said.

DMD emphasizes Debbie Meier's book, *Habits of Mind*—significance, perspective, evidence, connection, supposition—combined with skill building and high expectations to help students develop an academic mindset.

Students at DMD are Expected to Demonstrate:

- Critical thinking by comprehensively exploring issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.
- Creative thinking by working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation divergent thinking, and risk taking.
- A thorough understanding and use of the production process as they create high level media based projects and other complex assignments.
- Civic engagement by promoting the improvement of the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.
- Personal, cultural, and academic preparation for college and other postsecondary opportunities through the self-authorship of a personalized and appropriate four-year plan.

GETTING SMART
Think. Learn. Innovate.

GettingSmart.com
Deeperlearning4all.org

**Kearny High School
of Digital Media & Design**
7651 Wellington Street
San Diego, CA 92111
www.sandi.net/kearnydmd

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING AT ITS BEST

The mission at DMD is to develop exemplary communication skills in students through authentic, media-based experiences in an environment of high academic and social expectations. In that pursuit, DMD emphasizes Project-Based Learning which encourages the transfer and application of knowledge obtained in the classroom to the interdisciplinary projects students must complete each year. These projects integrate elements from each of their core courses and "require students to make connections between multiple subjects and a real-world problem," said Principal Hibbeln.

These projects, and the essential questions that underlie their creation and completion, help students address the complex issues that face both local and global communities. Each grade focuses on a different issue:

- **Freshmen**: Students research how human attitudes and choices affect sustainability and environmental issues in the local San Diego region and propose a "Plan for Change" to the San Diego City Council.

- **Sophomores**: Students investigate supporting sustainable global population growth through the creation of an informational public service announcement and a website that is assessed and approved by their client.

- **Juniors**: In the fall, students prepare print and media campaigns for the Surfrider Foundation, a group dedicated to the enjoyment and projection of the world's oceans, waves and beaches. In the spring, students participate in the Green Students Youth Forum for the City of San Diego's Environmental Department and San Diego Gas & Electric. During the project, students research the impact of their choices on issues of social and environmental justice, and meet with local officials to learn more about issues such as climate change, energy efficiency, and "green" career paths.

The completed work must be vetted and approved by the outside organization for which it was created—the client. This gives students real world experience as they communicate and collaborate with each other and other stakeholders in their effort to satisfy the client. And sometimes they have to go back and make changes or even start over, just as they would if they were being paid for their digital media and design expertise.

In addition to traditional forms of assessment such as exams, essays, presentations, lab reports, research papers, and the like, Hibbeln said students must use academic and industry standards to develop outcomes that demonstrate high level content mastery and serve the needs/demands of their client.

One of the school's goals is the development of critical thinking skills. In support of that progress, students are given questions to grapple with in class. In addition, they are specifically taught analysis and evaluation skills. Their projects are designed to promote multiple perspectives, solutions, and outcomes, with all conclusions being supported by evidence. "All students must defend their competency in critical thinking at the end of each school year, and progress is measured against grade level rubrics," said Hibbeln.

Students are also required to develop the strong interpersonal communications skills that are required in the DMD industry, which relies heavily on teamwork to create completed projects. "Although the digital media classes are the hub for this collaborative work, collaborative work on grade level projects takes place in all core classes as well. Math, science, English language arts, and social studies classes include student collaboration as a portion of each lesson. To ensure that students are supported in teams, teachers share a common prep to plan, assess, and implement coordinated and appropriate strategies," Hibbeln said.