Deering High School
Learning Without Borders
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For our city to continue to thrive in the years ahead, we must ensure that our young people are prepared for the rapidly changing world they are inheriting. At Deering High School, we aim to provide our students with a world-class education that expands their horizons far beyond the classroom.

Like all schools across the country, Deering was established to serve an industrial economy and a much simpler society. In order to bring it “up to code” for the new economy and a more complex global society, we have been “remodeling” the Deering High school experience for the 21st century. We are thrilled about all of the new opportunities available to our students, and invite you to join us on what promises to be a stimulating and eye-opening educational journey!

Going Global

An exciting new affiliation is at the core of our remodeling efforts. Deering High School is one of 35 schools in the United States that belong to the International Studies Schools Network (ISSN), a national network of public schools that works to ensure that each and every student possesses “Global Competence”—the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to succeed in and contribute to a global environment.

Almost every major issue we face as human beings--from global warming to terrorism--has an international dimension. Technology now lets us communicate easily with people across the world. And immigration patterns are creating communities that are more diverse than ever before. Simply put, success in the 21st century requires deep content knowledge about other cultures, as well as the ability to interact well with individuals from varied backgrounds.

At the same time, the nature of work is changing dramatically. Few jobs today require just simple arithmetic or manual labor. As more routine jobs can be done by computer or outsourced to cheaper labor markets, the economic advantage will go to those students who can communicate well, analyze and solve problems, recognize patterns, and interact well with many different kinds of people.

At Deering High School, we prepare our students for these new realities. Our affiliation with the ISSN network gives our teachers and students access to many new tools and to classroom practices that are showing promise in communities across the country. Our diverse community also provides all students with authentic experiences to practice what it means to live in a global village.

Research shows that the ISSN model has higher graduation rates and academic achievement than other schools with similar profiles. Deering is the first school in New England to join the ISSN network. This affiliation and its well-developed framework form the foundation of our change efforts.

As with any new effort, start-up funding is vitally important. We are grateful to be the beneficiaries of a large, multi-year grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, the largest private foundation in New England dedicated exclusively to education. The grant enables us to remodel the Deering High School experience more quickly and effectively.
What we try to instill in all of our students is that they have power to make a difference in the world, and it begins with them—they can make a difference in their own lives, in our school, in our community and throughout the world.

Ira Walz, Principal

Established: 1874
Number of students: 1022
Number of countries of origin: 54 countries, 27 languages

Highlights: opportunities for international travel; student exchanges and service learning experiences with sister cities and partner schools; home of PPS’s Functional Life Skills program; winner of 23 State athletic titles in the first decade of the century; state chess champions; award-winning drama program; enrichment and Honors classes; highest number of Advanced Placement (AP) courses in the city; Academic Decathlon; Multimedia Technology Department, dozens of clubs, including competitive team robotics; partnership with Jobs for Maine Graduates; early college opportunities

A Sampling of Electives:

Famous Alumni: Congressman Tom Allen; Actresses Linda Lavin, Anna Kendrick, and Andrea Martin; Writers Annie Proulx, Edward Whittemore, Heidi Julavits and Robert Griffin; Professional Baseball Players Ryan Flaherty and Ryan Reid; former Maine Governor Nathaniel Mervin Haskell
**WHAT IS GLOBAL COMPETENCE?**

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the Asia Society, the parent organization of ISSN, have defined global competence as the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance. The following graphic model lays out the specific competencies we help students develop.
Partnerships with a Global Twist

Through the Center for Global Humanities at the University of New England (UNE), Deering students attend lectures by international experts and get information from UNE students who have traveled abroad. The program also allows teachers the opportunity to work with UNE professors on various topics. Eventually, Deering students may have opportunities to attend UNE classes for college credit and participate in the school’s international travel programs. The Center is just a block away from the school.

We also have partnerships with the University of Maine Law School, The Center for International Educational Exchange (CIEE) and Lee International, a private company/consultant in Southern Maine. These organizations are responsible for bringing the Justice for Women Lecture Series to Southern Maine. Each year they bring a person of prominence who is working on women’s issues around the world. In the past they brought 2011 Nobel Laureate Leymah Gbowee of Liberia. This year, Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission Chair Dr. Sima Samar will speak to several classes at Deering and participate in a facilitated discussion with 300 students about how education and healthcare can be tools for social justice work.

Freshman Collaborative

Another aspect of our remodeling effort is the Freshman Collaborative. Research and experience tell us that the transition from middle school to high school is a critical passage for students and their families. In a larger environment, with a larger student body, more challenging work, and a more complex schedule, incoming freshmen need a strong support system to hold them during this period of adjustment. Research shows that students who thrive in 9th grade are more likely to have a successful high school experience.

Our freshmen are located in their own wing of the school. Eight teachers from several content areas (Social Studies, Math, English Language Arts and Science), along with a team of educators from Special Education, English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL), Art, Social Workers, Guidance Councilors and a Literacy and Numeracy Coach work exclusively with the freshman class to ensure a smooth transition. Freshman focus on developing their academic skills, their perseverance, and their global competence. At the end of the year, they present a project about what they’ve learned and how they’ve grown during the year. This year, the Freshman Collaborative is working on a project that incorporates all four core subjects and art. Students are investigating the importance of water to people across the globe, especially in developing countries where water is scarce.

“I feel like everything is starting to get more interconnected and teachers are putting things into a more global focus instead of a narrow-minded local focus.”

Student, Taryn Brennan, Senior
The Deering Curriculum

The Deering curriculum is intended to support deep learning and connections across subject areas. It meets state standards and contains all of the intellectual subjects that are found in a comprehensive high school: English Language Arts; Math, Science and Technology; Social Studies and History, Fine Arts, Physical Education and numerous electives.

Recently, we expanded our world language offerings to include Arabic and Mandarin, two languages that are in high demand in the global economy. In fact, we integrate international content into all of our subject areas, so that students obtain a broader vision of the world and their place within it.

“For example, our graduates understand:

» Mathematics as a universal way to make sense of the world and solve complex problems.

» Scientific concepts, such as how to engage in scientific reasoning and how to apply scientific inquiry to uncover possible solutions to global problems.

» The geography of natural and man-made phenomena and how they influence cultural development as well as historical and contemporary world events.

» The history of major world events, utilizing their understanding to analyze and interpret contemporary world issues.

» The arts and literature as lenses through which to view nature, society, and culture, as well as to express ideas and emotions.

But content is only part of the picture. The skills students develop, the habits of mind they form, and the relationships they build are all part of redesigning the educational experience at Deering.

“For example, our graduates possess the following:

» Literacy for the 21st century, including proficiency in reading, writing, viewing, listening, and speaking in English and in other world languages.

» Creative and complex thinking and problem solving skills by researching, analyzing, and producing viable solutions to problems with no known or single right answer.

» The ability to manage one’s own learning by identifying options, evaluating opportunities, and organizing experiences that will enable a student to live competently in a global society.

» Digital media and technology savvy to access and evaluate information from around the world and effectively communicate, synthesize, and create new knowledge.

» Healthy decision making that enhances physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

Mohamed Nur, Junior

“I’ve learned so much about the conflicts in South Sudan and conflicts around the world that I wouldn’t necessarily have heard about. It really broadened my horizons about the rest of the world.”

Jolie Usanase

“The teacher didn’t think for us, we had to figure out how to learn independently.”
To help students build their global awareness over time, we have created an intentional sequence of experiences. In 10th grade, students participate in Model United Nations, a national conference in which students participate as delegates to various United Nation Committees. They research and formulate political positions based on the actual policies of the countries they represent, engage in debates, make public presentations, and work collaboratively.

In 11th grade, students begin to travel to other countries, through exchange programs, service learning projects, and other structured travel opportunities within and outside of the United States. They may visit Portland’s sister city, Shinagawa, in Japan, or our partner schools in other parts of the world. In 12th grade, students participate in a Senior Capstone Project, resulting in a “digital portfolio that demonstrates global competence attained during all four years of high school. Students often research a significant global issue and then experience that issue in real-time, by volunteering or spending time with experts or others who know the issue inside out. An important aspect of the Senior Capstone is a personal essay in which students reflect on their experiences.

The Deering Coaching Program

One of the most important predictors of future success is the consistent presence of at least one non-parent adult in a young person’s life. With this in mind, we have created the Deering Coaching (DC) Program, in which groups of 12-16 students are randomly assigned to one teacher. These groups meet once a week for a half-hour and stay together through all four years of high school. We hope that DC is every student’s home away from home. Together, the teacher and students build a sense of community. DC is also an effective way to make sure that every student is getting the support and supervision they need when they need it. Each year in DC has a slightly different focus, based on students’ developmental and educational needs as they progress from one grade to the next.
**Portland Public Schools’ (PPS) Vision:**
All learners will be fully prepared to participate and succeed in a diverse and ever-changing world.

**PPS Mission:**
The Portland Public Schools are responsible for ensuring a challenging, relevant, and joyful education that empowers every learner to make a difference in the world. We build relationships among families, educators, and the community to promote the healthy development and academic achievement of every learner.