

Executive Summary

Freestyle Academy of Communication Arts and Technology

Program

- An award winning, project-based, interdisciplinary program for juniors and seniors in the Mountain View-Los Altos Union High School District (MVLA).
- Opened August 2006 with state-of-the-art web, audio, graphics, film, and writing studios.
- Students develop communication and technical skills using industry standard applications such as Photoshop, Illustrator, Dreamweaver, Flash, Final Cut Pro, and Pro Tools.
- Students receive graduation credit for English, Design, and an elective; students attend their regular high school for all other credits.
- View student work at <http://www.freestyle.mvla.net>

District Overview

- Two comprehensive high schools in Los Altos and Mountain View and several alternative programs.
- Created Freestyle as an alternative program to engage a diverse student population.
- Student population is 3,683 students - 55% are Caucasian and 45% are students of color.
- Dramatic increases in the number of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students (SED), Special Education students, and students requiring Resource Specialists in the past five years.

What is unique about Freestyle?

- Engages students with a personalized curriculum that taps into their creativity and interests.
- Project-based curriculum with four projects: Self-Portrait, Narrative, Documentary, and Experimental.
- Projects emphasize a foundation in 21st century skills such as digital age literacy, inventive thinking, effective communication, high productivity, and risk taking.
- Students use the latest technology to become producers, not just consumers, of media.
- Project-based learning helps students become strong presenters, project managers, collaborative workers, and creative problem solvers.
- Smaller class sizes allow for greater teacher-student interaction.
- Interdisciplinary curriculum helps students develop, expand, and integrate their ideas at a much deeper level than previously experienced.
- Multimedia outcomes for each project include websites, animation, prints, posters, films, and audio podcasts.

Benefits

- Students learn and practice real-world skills such as collaboration, project management, creativity, and experience social and civic engagement.
- Students master state-of-the-art multimedia technology and industry standard applications.
- Students apply academic and technical skills in projects that benefit their community.
- Students work with outside mentors and produce multimedia products for local companies such as Google, Sun Microsystems, the Qigong Institute, Just Read!, The Challenge Team, El Camino Hospital, and the Mountain View Police Department.
- Students focus their message and writing in a way that has impact and changing effect in their community.
- Student work is seen and heard by peers and professionals in the community.
- Students gain academic credit toward high school graduation and college applications.

Endorsements

- City of Mountain View provides funding as did the California Department of Education through a secondary schools grant for \$200,000 (2006-2007).
- Microsoft sponsorship through event hosting, software donations, funding, and IISME teacher fellowship (2005).
- Adobe software donations and Community Action Grant.
- HP equipment grant.

Awards and Recognition

- Rambus/KCI Innovation Award winner, 2007
- Bluecoat Art Showcase – 3rd place overall best high school art department, 2007
- San Jose Magazine, September 2007 issue, Leo Florendo Educator of the Year for MVLA

Industry and Community Partners

- Provide student projects, mentors, speakers, and field trips.
- Provide donations to help maintain Freestyle's professional working environment.
- Includes Adobe, Microsoft, HP, Google, Transvideo Studios, Cisco, Dolby Labs, Sony, AOL/Netscape, Kaiser Permanente, and Shoreline Amphitheater/Bill Graham Presents.

Advisory Council

- Semi-annual reviews with industry, community, and educational partners to ensure connections and relevance to the economic engines of Silicon Valley and community giving guidelines.
- Members include Microsoft, Adobe, Apple, Transvideo, Bill Graham Presents/Shoreline Amphitheater, KMVT Community Television, Foothill College, Creation Ground Media, G.L. Ross, Inc., and industry consultants.

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