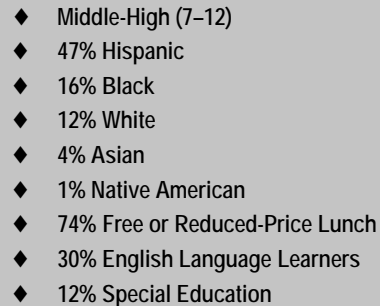


## Kearny High School of International Business

7651 Wellington Street  
San Diego, CA 92111  
Principal: Ana Diaz-Booz

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Kearny High School of International Business (SIB) is one of four autonomous high schools on the Kearny High Educational Complex campus in San Diego, California. In 2004, Kearny High was subdivided into four small high schools as part of the Gates Foundation high school reform effort. Since its beginning, Kearny SIB has prided itself on providing a personalized academic environment for its diverse student body. Students are hand-scheduled with advisors to ensure that the courses they take are appropriate for each individual and will prepare them for college. Each student is required to take at least one college course at nearby Mesa Community College and many graduate with more than 30 college credits.

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- ◆ Middle-High (7-12)
  - ◆ 47% Hispanic
  - ◆ 16% Black
  - ◆ 12% White
  - ◆ 4% Asian
  - ◆ 1% Native American
  - ◆ 74% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
  - ◆ 30% English Language Learners
  - ◆ 12% Special Education

### A Focus on Academics

The staff at Kearny SIB are focused on students' success; their unofficial motto is, "We'll do whatever it takes for you to be successful." For instance, the staff worked together to redesign the sequence of mathematics courses to better address the needs of struggling math students so they can reach the higher-level classes, like pre-calculus or statistics. About 89% of Kearny SIB students complete California's A-G college preparatory track and several AP courses are offered, such as AP Art History and AP Chemistry. The district has also contracted with i-High to offer AP Psychology and AP Spanish online.

Because most ninth graders are reading below grade level, and 30% of students are English learners, content classes are literacy based and multiple supports are offered for struggling students. Kearny SIB has two literacy coaches that work with content teachers to assist them in infusing literacy into their curriculum. They also have a reading intervention program called SLIC, Strategies for Independent Literacy Across the Curriculum, which is funded by a Department of Education Striving Readers grant. SLIC instructors work with ninth and tenth graders to assist them with skills and strategies for reading grade-level academic texts and content area reading and writing. In addition, there is an early morning Literacy Lounge for student drop-ins before school.

### Multiple Sources of Data to Assist Students

Kearny SIB staff consider a range of student assessments when their students enter in ninth grade and throughout their years at the school. They use this information to help students catch up to grade level. They review:

- District benchmark assessments

- California Standards Test (CST)
- California English Language Development Test (CELDT)
- Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) (pre- and post-tests given in ninth and tenth grade)
- Mesa College assessment (administered sophomore and junior year)
- California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) (students have a practice test in ninth grade, support classes and mid-year practice in tenth grade, and spring tenth grade testing)

Each student is assigned to an advisory class where they review these scores with their advisor and are encouraged to compete with themselves to improve. Principal Ana Diaz-Booz observes, “I can’t tell you how many kids have told me ‘Nobody has ever talked to me about my state test scores.’” Content area teachers are also given students’ test results so they can determine how to target their instruction. Support is offered with elective classes, after-school tutoring, and CAHSEE and SAT boot camps for test preparation on weekends.

### **Fostering College and Career Aspirations**

A 21st Century grant helps to support more than 30 clubs on campus, half of which are academic clubs. The science club, a collaboration among the school’s science teachers, is one of the most popular, with hands-on opportunities for exploration. The science club also introduces students to various fields in science, increasing their awareness of possible career choices.

The AP club facilitates tours of college campuses, parent nights providing information on scholarships and college preparation, as well as study groups for AP classes. Once a month, students are introduced to a different AP teacher on campus and have the opportunity to engage in an activity from that AP course.

The AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) club is offered to students grades 9–12. This club coaches students in preparing for and applying to college with academic advising, academic support, test preparation, scholarship applications, FAFSA assistance, and organizational and interview skills. Students must meet certain criteria to become a part of the AVID program, which is designed to help students who have not performed well academically and are very often the first in their families to go to college.

### **A Record of Success**

In their spring semester, about 80% of the Kearny SIB seniors attend Mesa College full-time, which addresses “senioritis” and helps to transition students to life on a college campus. About 98% of all graduates go on to a two- or four-year college. These colleges include top tier private institutions as well as the University of California and California State Universities. About 90–95% of students complete the FAFSA forms and in 2009, six Kearny SIB students won Dell Scholarships.

Since 2008, the business class has tracked college retention statistics and reports that 94% of Kearny SIB graduates are still in college. They also learned that many of the

small number of graduates that weren't still in college were engaged in efforts to find funding to return.

The Kearny SIB staff are proud of their close-knit community and the culture of academic achievement that pervades the school. Literacy coach Beth Smith puts it this way: "The students know their strengths and weaknesses academically, they can talk with you and say things like, 'I really struggle with writing, I really struggle with talking about how I solved a math problem.' They can use academic language to talk about their learning. It's a culture of support, it's a culture of learning, and it's an academic culture."