

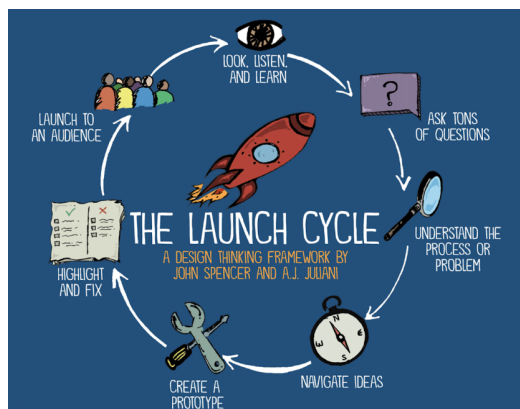
MAKING WAVES AT DCS



New LAUNCH Class Sparks Collaboration and Innovation Among Y5-2nd Grade Students

At a Board of Education meeting last May, a new Dexter Early Elementary Complex (DEEC) special course entitled LAUNCH was approved by Trustees for the 2022-2023 school year. After spending the summer fleshing out the program, then leading staff through a fun, hands-on miniature golf-themed professional development session, the DEEC “launched” the LAUNCH class for their first group of students in September.

LAUNCH is a “Design Thinking” specials class where students get the most out of the creative process by collaborating on hand-on group projects. Design thinking is used in a variety of professions and settings, and this student-friendly model uses the LAUNCH cycle as detailed below:



The LAUNCH Cycle:

Look, listen and learn;

Ask tons of questions;

Understand the process or problem;

Navigate ideas;

Create a prototype;

Highlight and fix.

In a first for the DEEC, the LAUNCH special is co-taught by teachers Mel Joling and Kristen Linn; classes of 40-50 students meet once a week for sixty minutes throughout the year. For this first lesson, Joling & Linn used the book, “The Most Magnificent Thing” by Ashley Spires as the basis of their hands-on project. In the story, a little girl works to make a carrier for her dog so she can take him for a ride on her scooter. Using trial and error, getting angry, giving up, then starting again, she perseveres and gets it “just right.”

After reading this book together, students in the LAUNCH class worked in small groups to create their own carrier for a stuffed animal. Each group had a Beanie Baby, and used the LAUNCH process to create a carrier that would safely hold their team’s animal during transport. The culmination of the project was a gallery walk where students viewed each group’s work, talking about the similarities and differences between the carriers.



At the October 24th Board meeting, Joling, Linn, and Stidham shared [a video](#) of the students' journey, highlighting each segment of the LAUNCH process in their own words. Trustees were delighted by the video and the success of the program. They complimented the addition of the gallery walk to the program, and commented on how great it is to see this class grow from concept to actual practice. Stidham echoed their sentiments, giving credit to Joling and Linn for their hard work creating an engaging and innovative class. "Kids are excited," Stidham said, "they can't wait for LAUNCH day!"

The DEEC hopes to have students present their creations in person at a future Board meeting.

[LAUNCH BOE presentation video](#)

Making Waves – New LAUNCH Class Sparks Collaboration and Innovation Among Y5-2nd Grade Students

DEEC staff working through the LAUNCH process to create a functioning miniature golf course.

