



FORT SETTLEMENT MIDDLE SCHOOL · 2025-26

Digital Design Club

Founded, taught, branded, and run by **Aariv Patel**. A sixteen-meeting design program for students in grades 6 through 8.

And a proposal to build the same program at Dulles High School.



AARIV PATEL

71

applications received, grades 6-8

16

meetings held, August to March

167

slides written, across 14 presentations

100%

of surveyed students would recommend the club

PREPARED FOR DULLES HIGH SCHOOL · AUGUST 2026



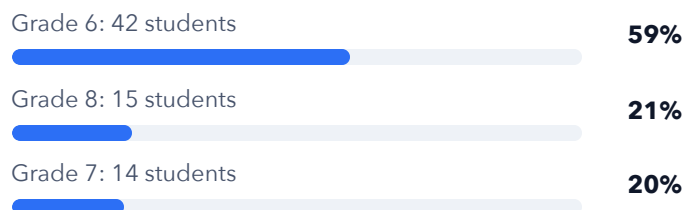
I wanted a design club at my school, so I built one.

In the summer before eighth grade I wrote a proposal for a digital design club, found a teacher willing to sponsor it, and started recruiting. I designed the logo, the poster, and the interest-meeting presentation myself.

Seventy-one students applied. Most of them were sixth graders, and thirty-four of the seventy-one had never used a design tool before or described themselves as beginners. That shaped everything about how I taught it: every workshop had to start from zero and still give the experienced students something to chase.

We met every other Wednesday from 4:15 to 5:15 in Room 317, sixteen times between August and March, ending with a final project and a showcase. **Between 20 and 25 students came consistently**, all the way through to the March showcase.

WHO APPLIED

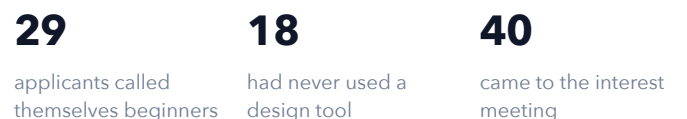


Base: 71 applications. Applications are not the same as enrolled members or attendance, and this portfolio does not treat them as such.

WHAT APPLICANTS SAID THEY WANTED TO LEARN



The recruitment poster I designed and posted around the school. The sign-up QR code and short link have been removed from this copy.



All figures out of 71 applications. Self-reported on the application form.



Sixteen meetings, built to stack.

Each unit assumed only what the previous one taught. Students learned to see design first, then to make it, then to build a brand and put that brand on a website. I wrote and delivered fourteen presentations across the year, 167 slides in all.

1 • FOUNDATIONS Aug-Sep	SEEING DESIGN	4 • BRAND & INTERFACE Jan-Feb	CANVA → FIGMA
Aug 27	Interest Meeting: overview, projects, Q&A	Jan 14	Logo Branding: logos, color systems, style guides
Sep 3	Intro to Digital Design: composition, color, type	Jan 28	Figma Basics: banners, buttons, hero images
Sep 17	Design Deep Dive: hierarchy, grids, export, accessibility	Feb 11	Creating a Website on Figma: fictional product launch
2 • CANVA Oct	MAKING IT	5 • FINAL PROJECT Feb-Mar	STUDENT CHOICE
Oct 1	Canva Basics: core tools, layouts, templates	Feb 25	Kickoff: four briefs released with the rubric
Oct 22	Advanced Canva Tools: effects, brand kits	Mar 4	Work Day: build time and one-to-one help
Oct 29	Social Media Graphics: sizing, hooks, thumbnails	Mar 11	Judging & Feedback: peer review against the rubric
3 • IMAGE EDITING Nov-Dec	PHOTOPEA	Mar 25	Showcase: final presentations and wrap-up
Nov 12	Photopea Basics: retouching, adjustments, cutouts	The through-line Students invented a product, built its brand in Canva in January, then designed that same product's website in Figma in February. One idea carried across two tools, so the second half of the year was never a fresh start.	
Dec 3	Advanced Photopea: clone stamp, clipping masks		
Dec 17	Winter Theme Challenge: timed design sprint		

FSMS Digital Design Club

2025–2026 • Every other Wednesday • 4:15–5:15 PM

Faculty Advisor: Mr. Talton Edmond

Room 317

The top of the calendar I published to members, setting out the meeting day, time, advisor, and room for the whole year before the first session.

THE OPERATING SYSTEM BEHIND IT

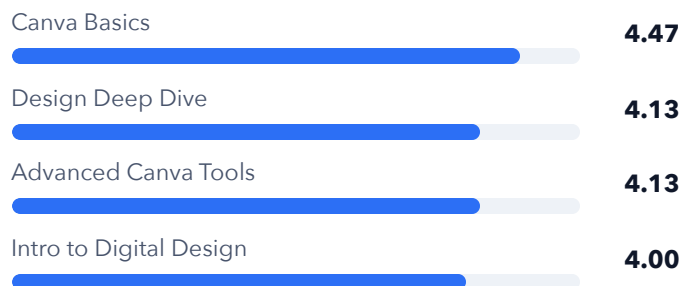
- The **whole year was scheduled and published up front**, so students and parents knew every date from the start
- A **Schoology group** held the lesson materials, resources, and assignments
- **Permission slips** collected and tracked before students took part
- I took **attendance at every meeting**, and ran a **survey after each quarter**



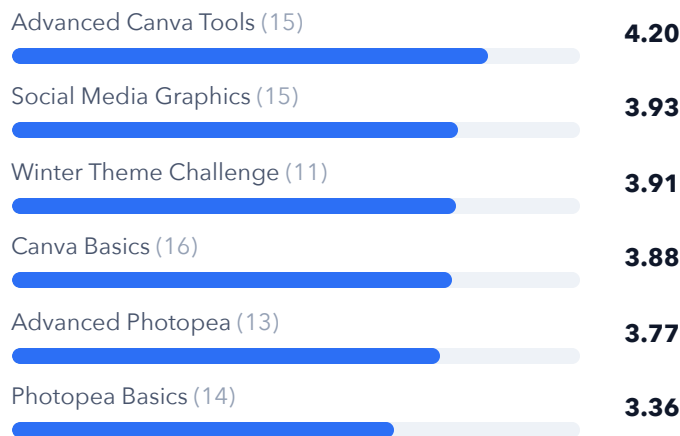
I surveyed my students three times, and changed the club after each one.

Every number below shows how many people answered. I ran a survey after each quarter and one at the end of the year, and I used the results to change what I taught.

QUARTER 1 WORKSHOPS (15 RESPONSES)



QUARTER 2 WORKSHOPS (11 TO 16 RESPONSES EACH)



Average rating out of 5. Response counts in parentheses; students rated only the meetings they attended.

END OF YEAR (17 RESPONSES)

100% would recommend the club to a friend	100% felt ready or somewhat ready for the final project
4.06 enjoyment of meetings, out of 5	4.47 highest-rated workshop, Canva Basics

What I did with the answers

Students asked for more hands-on time in every session, and they asked for it in all three surveys. So I added a dedicated work day, wrote four project briefs they could choose between, and built the year I am proposing for Dulles around **two tools taught in depth** rather than three taught quickly.

WHAT STUDENTS ASKED FOR

- **More build time:** raised in all three surveys
- **More hands-on time** in every session
- **More examples** before customising
- **More partner and team options**
- **Figma next:** chosen by 13 of 16 in Quarter 2

HOW THE YEAR MOVED

7.25/10 → 100%

Would recommend the club. An average of 7.25 out of 10 in Quarter 2, then every respondent saying yes at year end.

15 → 16 → 17

Students answering each survey. Participation grew every quarter.

20-25 each meeting

Attendance held steady from the first workshop to the March showcase.

Method: three anonymous surveys; the same students may have answered more than one, so counts cannot be added into a student total.



What I actually did.

Mr. Edmond was our faculty sponsor and held supervision and approval authority; the club could not have existed without him. Within that, these were mine.

FOUNDING & OPERATIONS

- **Proposed the club** and recruited a faculty sponsor
- Served as **President and Student Lead**: the titles used in the advisor letter and on the club permission slip
- Built the **recruitment campaign**: poster, sign-up, interest meeting
- Planned and published the **sixteen-meeting calendar**
- Ran the **Schoology group**, materials, and assignment posting
- Handled the **permission slip** and member communication
- Wrote and analysed **three student surveys**

DESIGN & BRAND

- Designed the **club logo** and full visual identity
- Designed the **recruitment poster**, calendar, and Schoology cover
- Built the **branding briefs** and example brands used in workshops
- Built the **Figma webpage template** students worked from

TEACHING

- Wrote **fourteen presentations**, 167 slides in all
- **Led every meeting** and taught the live demonstrations
- Built the **recreation exercises** students practised on
- Designed the **four final-project briefs** and the shared scorecard
- Ran the **peer judging session** and the end-of-year showcase

	4	3	2	1
Instant Impact	Grabs attention instantly. The message is obvious.	Clear message. Minor clutter.	Somewhat clear, but focus is split.	Hard to tell what it's about.
Consistency	Spacing, fonts, and colors stay consistent everywhere.	Mostly consistent. A few mismatches.	Several inconsistencies (sizes, spacing, colors).	Random styles. Nothing matches.
Polish	Clean alignment, sharp edges, looks finished.	Mostly clean. Small alignment issues.	Messy in places. Needs cleanup.	Rushed/unreadable/unfinished.
Originality	Fresh idea + clear personal style.	Good idea with some unique choices.	Basic concept. Feels template-based.	Copied/unfinished concept.

The scorecard I wrote for the final project. Four criteria (Instant Impact, Consistency, Polish, Originality), each scored 1 to 4, so students knew exactly what they were being judged on before they started.

WHERE EACH CLAIM COMES FROM

President and Student Lead	The signed advisor recommendation letter, and the club permission slip issued to families
Curriculum and teaching	Fourteen presentation files and the published sixteen-meeting calendar
Student demand and response	The application responses and three separate anonymous survey response sets
Final project and assessment	Four written project briefs and the shared design scorecard
Identity and materials	The logo, poster, calendar, Schoology cover, branding briefs, and Figma template



They told me what they wanted. I changed the program.

A survey is only worth running if something happens afterwards. Each of these changes is visible in the published calendar and in the materials I built.

STUDENTS SAID

Asked what they wanted to learn next, **13 of 16** chose Figma, more than every other option combined.



SO I

Added **two Figma workshops** to the spring calendar: Figma Basics on 28 January, and Creating a Website on Figma on 11 February.

STUDENTS SAID

The most repeated request across all three surveys was **more time to build** and shorter demonstrations.



SO I

Scheduled a dedicated **Work Day** on 4 March with no new content, just build time and one-to-one help.

STUDENTS SAID

They wanted **more choice** and more chances to work with a partner rather than follow one fixed exercise.



SO I

Built **four different final-project briefs** (website prototype, brand kit, poster campaign, or product mockup), all scored on one shared rubric so the choice stayed fair.

STUDENTS SAID

They wanted **more worked examples** to follow before being asked to design something of their own.

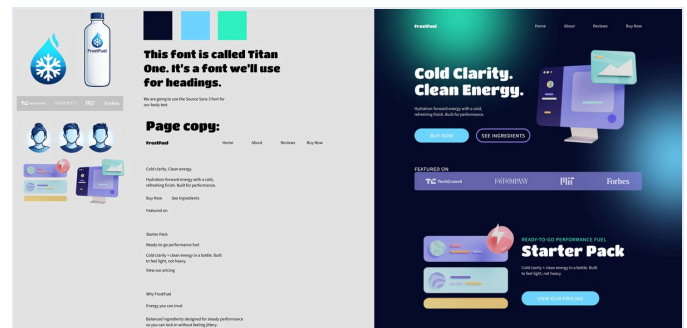


SO I

Built **recreation exercises** for the workshops, so every student had a finished piece to rebuild step by step before designing their own version.

THE FOUR FINAL-PROJECT BRIEFS

- OPTION A** A working **2-3 page website prototype** in Figma with clickable navigation
- OPTION B** A complete **brand kit**: logo set, palette with hex codes, font pairing, two mockups
- OPTION C** A **poster campaign** in print and matching digital format
- OPTION D** A realistic **product mockup ad** with a warped, blended label

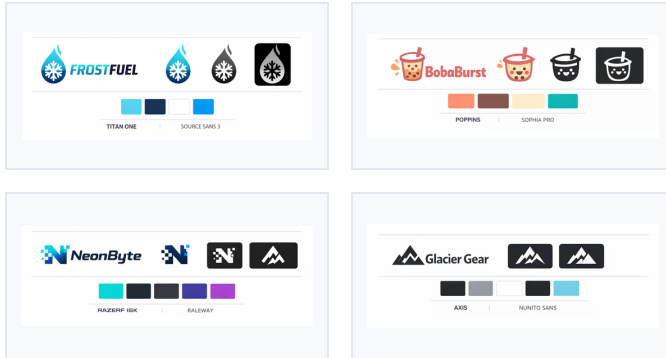


The Figma webpage template I built for the February workshop, using FrostFuel, one of the example brands I created for the branding unit. Students designed a site for a product they had branded themselves a month earlier.



The materials behind the claims.

EXAMPLE BRANDS I BUILT FOR THE BRANDING UNIT



Four fictional brands I designed, each with its own written design brief, so students had realistic clients to work for.

SCHOOL RECOGNITION

The club was given **its own dedicated page in the Fort Settlement Middle School yearbook**. That is the school's own record that it ran and mattered.



The yearbook page, cropped to the section showing me teaching a Figma layout lesson. Photographs of other students on the original page are not reproduced here.

ADVISOR ENDORSEMENT

"I am honored to write this letter of recommendation for one of the most outstanding student leaders I have had the privilege to work with... As the sponsor of the Digital Design Club at Fort Settlement Middle School, I had the opportunity to observe Aariv Patel serve as President, and I can confidently say that [he] set the standard for what student leadership should look like."

"[He was] not only responsible for starting and leading meetings, but [he] also ensured that each session was purposeful, engaging, and well-structured. His ability to plan, communicate clearly with peers, and execute ideas effectively made a significant impact on the success of the club."

Talton Edmond Sr., CTE Instructor and Digital Design Club Advisor, Fort Settlement Middle School · May 2026

Excerpted from the signed recommendation letter. Square brackets mark pronouns and connecting words adjusted for readability; nothing else has been altered. Contact details have been removed. The complete letter is published at aariv.studio/recommendation.pdf.

What I would add at Dulles

I took attendance at every meeting, and 20 to 25 students came consistently across the year. The evidence of what they learned is the work itself and what they told me in the surveys. **A short skills check at the start and end of the year is the one thing I would add**, so the club can show exactly how far each student moved.



I'd like to do it again at Dulles, and do it better.

The program below is written, tested and ready to run. I need a faculty sponsor and the club application form, and I can take it from there.

THE PROGRAM

WHEN	Every other week after school, 60 minutes
WHO	Grades 9-12, all skill levels, no experience needed
TOOLS	Canva and Figma only. Both free in a browser, both free for education
ARC	Brand a product in Canva, then design its website in Figma
COST	\$0 in software and materials
ENDS	A final project judged on a shared rubric, then a showcase

WHAT'S DIFFERENT FROM LAST YEAR

- **Two tools instead of three**, with more time on each
- **More build time** in every session, which is what students asked for most
- **Attendance and completion recorded** from the first meeting
- Every session **written and shared with the sponsor** before it runs

IF THIS MOVES FORWARD

STEP 1

A **faculty sponsor** identified, and the club application form

STEP 2

The application **submitted and approved**, a room and a day confirmed

STEP 3

Recruitment, an **interest meeting**, sign-ups, permission slips

STEP 4

First session, then **every other week** through the year

What I'd need from Dulles

- A **faculty sponsor** in the room, holding supervision and approval authority
- A room with student devices, every other week after dismissal
- The school's standard club approval and any required forms

What I bring

- The **full curriculum**, already written and already taught once
- Every lesson shared with the sponsor **before** the session
- The identity, briefs, templates, rubric, and survey system in this document, plus a **quarterly written report**

What the club gives back

Once members are trained, the club can take on real design work for the school: posters for other clubs, event graphics, logos, social artwork. Students build portfolio pieces for a real audience instead of practice files, and Dulles gets the work. Every brief still goes to the sponsor before it goes to the club.