

2024/2025 J-LEAP REPORT



By Kanaho Mochida

Kearny High School

Kearny, NJ

Hello. I'm Kanaho Mochida and I am teaching Japanese at Kearny High School in New Jersey. It has been 4 months since I started teaching Japanese here with my Lead teacher (LT) Seth Davis Sensei. My work and life in the U.S, is both exciting, and every day is enjoyable.

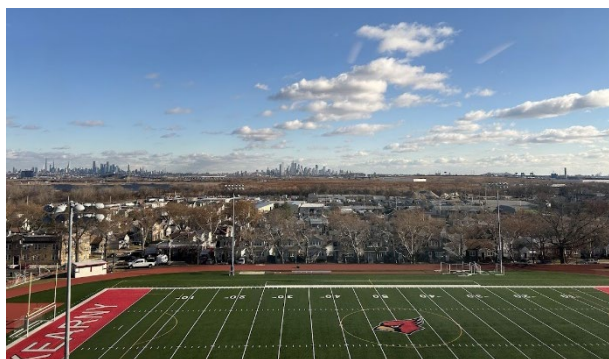
New Jersey

When I was assigned to Kearney High School in New Jersey, my first thought was “New Jersey? Where is that?” I didn't know anything about New Jersey at that time. When I checked a map, I realized that it's on the eastern side of the U.S., and my first impression was “it's really far from Japan.”

On July, I moved to this state and met a lot of people and experienced a lot of new things. Although I've only been here for about six months, now when I hear “New Jersey,” I think of the wonderful people I met here, the foods, the beautiful nature, and so much more.

Kearny High School

Kearny High School, where I am teaching Japanese right now, was established 1923, so this school has a history of 100 years. It has about 1800 students from 9th to 12th grades. Among the students, about 80 of them are taking Japanese language. This school is located near the city of New York, and from the school, we can see the skyline of Manhattan. The view from the library is especially amazing, and whenever I want to take a break, I often go there to enjoy the view.



This school has many students with Latin American roots, and students from various backgrounds come together here. Most of the students here speak Spanish or Portuguese in

addition to English. You can hear various languages here, so in our Japanese classroom, there is a sign that says, “Please do not speak other languages,” rather than “Please do not speak English.” We use this sign during “Japanese only” activities.



Students take a 40-minute Japanese class every day. Most of the student study Japanese for the first time when they enter this high school. They are very friendly and make a real effort to communicate in Japanese. I am always energized by these bright and cheerful students. However, even though they study Japanese, not many students will have opportunity to visit Japan during their four years of high school. So, one of my goals for two years in J-LEAP is to “Bring Japan into this School.” Over the next two years, I want to create activities that will help students feel closer to Japan, even though it’s far away from New Jersey.

My Lead Teacher

I am teaching Japanese with my LT, Seth Davis Sensei. He has worked at Kearny High School for over 20 years now, and he is a very wonderful teacher, so I am learning a lot from him. He has a lot of experience as a Japanese teacher, but he always listens to my ideas and is open-minded to them. He encourages me to try new things by saying “It sounds interesting, let’s give it a try,” and constantly thinks about how I can grow as a teacher. Also, he is very skilled at creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom, and as the lessons progress, I feel like the class is becoming more like a family. Thanks to him, I can enjoy and relax during every class.

My Daily Life

I live about an hour’s drive from Kearny High School with my host mother and two adorable cats. I can’t talk about my life in the U.S. without mentioning this family. My host mother is a very warm-hearted person who has supported me from the beginning of my life here. Whenever I face any problems, she always gives me great advice. She also treats me like a member of her family, and because of that, I have been able to live here without feeling lonely or homesick. She took me to the beaches in New Jersey during this summer, and in fall, she taught me how to make Jack-o’-lanterns. I was



able to join the family gathering for Thanksgiving and had a wonderful time. In winter, we went to buy a Christmas tree and decorated it together. I had seen aspects of American cultures like these in movies and TV shows but experiencing it firsthand has allowed me to learn more about America, and I'm very happy about it.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to the people who have supported me to ensure that my life in New Jersey is successful. Living in the U.S. is not easy. Things that I could easily do alone in Japan are often challenging here, as I don't know English and cultures well. During those times, I always needed help. I am truly grateful to the people who have always helped and supported me. My life now in here is incredibly enjoyable and fulfilling. I will continue to do my best in J-LEAP program.