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Mission Statement of Austin Preparatory School

To inspire hearts to unite, minds to inquire, and hands to serve.

Philosophy

We attempt to base the life and work of the school and our relationships with one another on the Great Commandment and the pursuit of the Augustinian characteristics of *veritas*, *unitas*, and *caritas*, or truth, unity, and love.

We believe that all teachers and administrators share responsibility for students’ formation through their direct instruction, through the example of their daily behavior, language and demeanor, and through their support of students’ participation in the spiritual life of the school.

As community has always been at the core of Catholic religious experience, so, too, all interactions that proceed from school life should reaffirm all members’ sense of belonging, regardless of their age, role or responsibilities. Steady growth in the understanding and appreciation of this principle of community is one of the most important focuses of our approach to education. As students mature, we attempt to extend this sense of community to the larger society and to all of its people.

It is within the context of our mission and philosophy that we state the following educational goals:

A. To provide for our students a curriculum that embraces the totality of the person: intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, aesthetic, and physical.

B. To challenge all students to achieve their maximum potential according to the gifts God has given them.

C. To guide the students and help them to prepare for further education, for their work in life, and for service to society.

D. To help students develop a morally aware and independent mind so that they are capable of thinking and judging in accordance with logical and ethical reasoning.

E. To develop students’ characters so that they will act as people of principle and integrity.

F. To offer a Catholic environment that respects all religious traditions, encourages the practice of faith, and gives students a basis for spiritual reflection throughout their lives.

G. To lead students to appreciate the challenges and opportunities of living in a democratic society and prepare them to participate intelligently in its government.

H. To prepare students for the challenges of living in a global culture and to develop in them an appreciation of the values and contributions of all cultures and a respect for differences of perspective and belief.
Curriculum Description

The Middle School at Austin Preparatory School is firmly rooted in our mission to inspire hearts to unite, minds to inquire, and hands to serve. These tenets of our mission correlate to the core Augustinian charism that animate our community: veritas, unitas, and caritas, or truth, unity, and love.

Middle School (Grades 6-8) sets the context and climate for learning. The primary purpose of the Middle School experience is to discover and enliven the special talents and skills within each student. All students take Theology, English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, and either Latin or Mandarin in grades 6 and 7, and French, Latin, Mandarin, or Spanish in grade 8, as well as electives in Art and Design. Students participate in the spiritual life of the school through campus ministry and are afforded the opportunity to pursue passions in athletics, the arts, volunteerism, and student life.

The Middle School program develops study and thinking skills appropriate to the diverse intellectual disciplines and to the young person’s developmental abilities. Classes stimulate curiosity, encourage innovation, and sustain a passion for learning through hands-on experiences in classes. Over time, students develop greater independence by becoming self-directed and responsible, and are afforded choice and voice in their academic program. As advisory, classroom, and middle school communities, Austin celebrates persistence, determination, originality, individuality, and excellence. Austin recognizes the significance of ongoing self-improvement and self-actualization and facilitates this awareness and development in and out of the classroom. Middle School students progress towards the ideal that scholarship, spirituality, and character are inseparable attributes of who they are.

With the fundamental belief that Middle School learners have the deep aspiration to harness their intrinsic potential and experience success, the Austin Preparatory Middle School program engages a student’s mind and ennobles their heart. The program is designed to help students acquire skills and dispositions to become resourceful problem solvers and provide opportunities to put learning into action. Moreover, this educational commitment assists students develop the essential scholastic foundation to flourish in high school, to achieve personal success, and to contribute to our diverse and ever-changing world. In this process, our program anchors, challenges, and nurtures students in their development as scholars, athletes, artists, leaders, servants, and seekers.

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

Our middle school Theology department is committed to Catholic education. In keeping with the Augustinian charisms of veritas, unitas, and caritas, our aim is to transform both heart and mind. Our academic curriculum supports the discovery of truth, the unveiling of community, and Christ’s call to be His hands and His heart in the world through dynamic, interactive classroom lessons and personal and communal experience.

The Theology Department, in concert with our Chaplain and Campus Ministry Program, enriches students’ spiritual life through understanding and participation in the Holy Mass with opportunities to study and receive the sacraments, attend retreats, and complete service projects.

Course: Introduction to the Sacred Scriptures
Course Number: 1010
Grade: 6

This course centers on how God made Himself known through Divine Revelation and through the patriarchs of His chosen people Israel. Students will actively follow the formation of the old covenant
and the new covenant established by Jesus by learning how to navigate the various books of both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. The stories of our ancestors in faith will come alive through scripture readings, role play, creative writing, recorded dialogues, and focused web quests. Historical and cultural connections to the ancient and classical worlds will be made with interdisciplinary units in Social Studies and English.

Our rich Catholic heritage and discussion of the sacraments will be explored throughout the liturgical year, covering All Saints, Advent, Christmas, Lent, the Triduum, Easter, the Ascension, and Ordinary Time. Sacred art, art projects, seasonally appropriate songs and visits to the chapel will engage young learners and share with them the values of our Augustinian mission.

Discussion of various types of prayer and occasional guided meditations will aid in the steps to developing an awareness of and growth in spiritual development. Each class will commence with prayer and with the opportunity to offer personal intentions, in the spirit of Truth, Unity, and Love.

Through the Campus Ministry Program, students will volunteer in their local communities and share their experiences with one another. This ongoing connection between the theological lessons that they are considering in class and encountering in their personal life is one of the many steps encouraged in establishing an understanding and appreciation of a sense of responsibility to the greater community beyond Austin.

Course: Living as Disciples of Christ
Course Number: 1020
Grade: 7

This class is designed to educate students’ minds and nourish their hearts. Emphasis is placed on the theme of living a life of faith. Supported by a positive learning community, students are encouraged to deepen awareness and clarify their understanding of their individual spiritual journey. This class ensures that students gain knowledge of the process of learning itself. Woven throughout the curriculum, “learning how to learn” is a key facet of this course. Through projects, multimedia presentation, lectures, and hands-on activities, students will expand their proficiency as developing scholars. As they increase understanding of their individual learning styles, study skills and test preparation, in addition to note taking and public speaking, students advance in their capacity for future academic success.

Perhaps most importantly, students cultivate their sense of compassion as they make connections from personal experience with the Gospel message. Understanding of the Good News of Jesus Christ and the application of fundamental teachings of the Catholic faith are developed through student reflection and group sharing. Students gain a deeper appreciation for the rich tapestry of the Church’s teachings through examining the Scripture and relating its Truths to their lives and the world around them. Students mature in their awareness of the moral life as they study the 10 Commandments and teachings put forth by the Magisterium. This course seeks to provide the environment for students to continue the work of forming their character as they build the foundation for a fulfilling life of meaning and purpose.
Course: Living as Members of the Church  
Course Number: 1030  
Grade: 8

The course presents the Church from her beginning at Pentecost through her history, encompassing her teachings, doctrines and everything included in the Deposit of Faith. It presents the mission of the Church, entrusted to her by Jesus, as the responsibility of all baptized Catholics.

In understanding the increasing intellectual and social development of the adolescent student, the 8th grade course has several distinct goals.

An important goal is to provide a path to faith exploration by allowing students to study, research, analyze, compare/contrast, discuss and debate the tenets of Christianity within the framework of the Catholic doctrine. With the assistance of an ever increasing knowledge and technology database, and the guidance of seasoned faculty, this journey should be enriching and fulfilling.

Another goal is to build within the student a more developed appreciation and understanding of the Catholic perspective through the Augustinian Charisms. For example, the charism of unitas critically links the idea of community from the text to the students' perception of the role they play in the microcosm (family, school) and macrocosm (town/city, state/country) of a faith-filled existence. The charism of caritas is explored through independent community service and the students' guided writing of a capstone reflection on their Christian service in Middle School.

In setting a desirable and reasonable target of advancing the intellect of the eighth grade learner, the curriculum uses a USCCB approved text, Bible (NAB), and various annotated manuscripts and handouts, online source material, videos and other material in a focused progression for the year. By incorporating a blending of doctrine, facts, and truths learned with an increasing awareness of conscience, actions, and consequences, students evolve to a higher level of thought with the reward of advanced skills in oral and written expression.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Middle school English instruction is student-centric. Middle school learners begin their Austin journeys with varied talents, interests, and areas for growth. Therefore, English instruction is differentiated as teachers using appropriate literature, leverage technology to deliver lessons in vocabulary and grammar that are relevant and immediately useful to each learner. This approach is research-based and is shown to improve student performance on reading and writing tasks. These tasks provide students authentic opportunities to apply vocabulary and grammar skills within their own reading and writing. Small class sizes allow teachers for work with each student and develop an individualized plan for growth in the language arts.

Student readers select literature from a variety of titles as they deepen their appreciation for a given genre or widen their perspective by choosing a new one. Students participate in literature circles which allow them to collaborate while further developing a love for literature. In small groups, students receive instruction focused on essential reading skills. Readers then apply new concepts in their literature circle meetings. Lessons help readers infer, predict, evaluate, and connect literature to themselves, their community, and their world. Recognizing the value of choice in the curriculum, teachers supplement whole class readings with individual and small group reading opportunities.
Throughout the Language Arts program, students learn the traits of excellent writing and practice the steps of the writing process. Student writers produce work for an authentic audience whenever possible, writing posts for the classroom blog and drafting poems to be published in the Middle School Literary Magazine. In the middle school English classroom, students are constantly involved in collaboration, communication, and presentation throughout the writing process. This pedagogy of student-driven excellence allows learners to practice the skills they will need to be successful leaders in the 21st century.

Middle school learners are welcomed into our community with thematic literature selections focusing on the mission and values of Austin Preparatory School. Each year, teachers provide students with reading that challenges them and makes them think about one of the Augustinian charisms: caritas, veritas, and unitas.

**Course: Sixth Grade English**  
**Course Number: 2010**  
**Grade: 6**

As sixth graders begin their Austin journey, they will be welcomed with literature selections focused on the Augustinian charism of caritas. Students will read a collection of poetry, prose, plays and novels by well-known classical and contemporary authors. The students will develop an understanding of the elements of plot, theme, characterization, conflict, point of view, foreshadowing, and irony. They will be encouraged to use the reading of this literature as a source of motivation for the writing of short stories, essays, myths, and poems. They will be taught to use a variety of strategies to decode, understand, and use new words they encounter in literature.

The sixth grade team of teachers works closely to support learners by modeling collaboration and interdisciplinary learning. The team recognizes that students are on a journey. Each learner is seen as an individual starting out on their path which needs to be tailored to suit each strength and area for growth. Students study new words using technologies that allow teachers to individualize lists depending on student readiness. Grammar is not taught in isolation, but instead lessons are integrated into writing concepts and reinforced using a tool that personalizes lessons based on writing performance.

**Course: Seventh Grade English**  
**Course Number: 2020**  
**Grade: 7**

Seventh-graders seek the truth in their literature study focus on the theme of veritas. The reading selections will encourage them to think critically about truth and ask themselves and each other important questions about the nature of our world, our community, and our future.

Middle school readers are asked to think critically about the writer’s audience and purpose. Middle school students have an acute sense of justice and fairness. Understanding multiple competing perspectives is a part of developing that understanding. The literature will produce personal responses and feelings that can be channeled into expressive writing.
Course: Eighth Grade English  
Course Number: 2030  
Grade: 8

Eighth graders delve into theme-based literature examining the Augustinian value of *unitas*. Authors read include S.E. Hinton, Thornton Wilder, Shakespeare, Ray Bradbury, and Robert Frost. Eighth graders investigate the true importance of collaboration, inclusive choices, and respecting the contributions of all community members. Eighth grade readers learn that while reading and writing can be solitary activities, collaboration is also needed in these areas in order to excel. Whether evaluating the complexities of a poem or classic short story or participating in the peer review process, the English middle school classroom is a place where *unitas* is seen and fostered daily. This project-based curriculum allows students to truly experience community, as they strive to improve their reading and writing skills and grow as a community of learners together.

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

The understanding and appreciation of our past is an integral part of the young learning experience. The History Department, following the footsteps of Augustine, seeks to take our Middle School students along their journey through the past, offering students an engaging, hands-on experience that focuses on the student rather than the teacher. Students will become archeologists, journalists, broadcasters, historians, and travelers. Through immersive experiences in the ancient world, appreciation of art and architecture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, local travel while studying Colonial American History and the Revolution, and a detailed study of the American Government culminating in a trip to Washington, D.C., students become young historians. They will work together to master the skills of historical study: cartography, document analysis, interpretation of sources, comparison, and contextualization, and change over time.

The History Department reflects the Augustinian Value of *unitas* through rich intercurricular units in all three grades working closely with the Languages, Art and Design, English, Mathematics, and Theology Departments. Our commitment to *veritas* is displayed through our commitment to uncovering the truth about the past and reflecting on its role in the present and potential future. Finally, the Department is focused on *caritas* through its unwavering commitment to student-centered learning in all three years of the Middle School Journey.

Course: Becoming Historians  
Course Number: 3010  
Grade: 6

This exciting course that encourages and explores young learners’ curiosity and inquisitive nature is an introduction to important social studies skills and concepts. They delve into the core of how and why civilizations emerge, thrive, and eventually falter. The course aligns strongly with sixth graders' Theology and English Language Arts curriculum, emphasizing to students how their subjects are connected.

Students engage in many cooperative learning activities, experiential exercises, and unique hands-on projects. They design and participate in a scaled archaeological dig from the Roman Empire and develop a "museum" of Ancient Egyptian artifacts. Students become cartographers through an in-depth study on world geography. The Ancient Diaries Project uses creative historical writing as an outlet to identify and analyze how and why people change over time. Students also have the opportunity to explore the Fertile Crescent, Ancient Greece, Ancient India, and the Byzantine Empire.
Course: Comparative Cultures
Course Number: 3020
Grade: 7

This course offers abundant opportunities for exploration within historical studies, with students diving deep into important skills and concepts. The seventh graders engage in unique quarter-long projects such as the medieval Europe news broadcasts and the Medieval Chinese Culture presentations. The course will continue to emphasize cooperative and creative project-based learning while furthering the essential skills of primary source document analysis, historical research, comparing and contrasting, and presentation. Students also probe such intriguing topics as Mesoamerica, early North America, Medieval Europe, a full study of Ancient and Medieval China, and the Age of Exploration and Colonialism - all of which lends itself well to studies in comparing and contrasting cultures. Perhaps most exciting of all, students begin to make thoughtful connections between the history they're learning and real current events happening around the globe.

Course: Citizen-Scholars: Civics
Course Number: 3030
Grade: 8

The course launches into an introduction of government in general, followed by a more in-depth exploration of American Government and its roots in the American Revolution. Learners engage in activities such as making a board game that explains how a bill becomes a law and holding their own town meeting. This civics and government-based study culminates in the annual eighth grade trip to Washington D.C. Next, students will study how economic systems influence our country and our own decisions. Finally, students will analyze the historical backgrounds of the major world religions. Projects outside of class range from designing a Facebook page for a political figure to interviewing someone they know about a historical event they witnessed. With a developing understanding of the world of politics, government, and religion, students will be able to have frequent discussions about global current events.

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS

The study of Mathematics is more than providing questions and answers to our students. Therefore, our aim is to offer students a place to explore the engaging subject of mathematics and to discover their individual interests, passions and talents. While we begin with vocabulary building, copying and learning examples and note-taking, our central focus is to provide student-centered learning through the generation and implementation of subject-specific and cross-curricular exercises, activities and projects that appeal to individual learning styles. We show them how to make sense of information and themselves, and we guide and support them in their intellectual and academic endeavors. We want our students to begin thinking about thinking, acquiring a knowledge of how and when to use strategies for problem solving, while simultaneously sharpening their organizational, computational, and communication skills. Soon they will generate their own questions, seek answers and measure their mathematical mastery as they confidently apply it in their classroom and everyday experiences.

Although each course has different concepts, our teaching methods are consistent throughout the middle school program. The understanding of the mathematical concepts is attained through individual and small group work, cross curricula projects, board work, and videos and daily drills for competency. Problem strategies are discussed throughout the year as well as note taking and assessment strategies. Technology is an integral part of the curriculum as well via the iPad, online homework, and spreadsheets.
We strive to have our students placed in the appropriate level. Our students are placed in the course that best suits their current knowledge base. Austin Preparatory School takes pride in being flexible in providing placement opportunities within the middle school mathematics program so that our students are prepared for entering our high school curriculum. Students of superior academic ability may be tracked a grade level higher and may access Upper School course offerings. The following diagram is a flowchart of our most commonly followed curriculum paths.

Course: Grade 6 Mathematics  
Course Number: 4010  
Grade: 6

This course aims to give students an understanding and confidence in mathematical practices that will prepare them as they start their journey in our middle school math curriculum. Emphasis is on ratios and rates, operations with decimals, fractions and integers, including an introduction to negative numbers. Algebraic topics are introduced with the study of expressions and equations. At the end of the year the students use their skills in specific topic areas such as statistical thinking and geometry.
**Course: Advanced Grade 6 Mathematics**  
**Course Number:** 4020  
**Grade:** 6

This advanced course gives students an introduction to the basic concepts of Pre-Algebra. Students entering this level are expected to have previously mastered topics such as number properties, one step equations and fractions. Students are introduced to signed numbers and to the concept of a variable. Emphasis is placed on writing and solving algebraic expressions, equations, and linear equations. Exploration of the concepts of Geometry, Probability and Data Analysis are also continued.

**Prerequisite:** This course is assigned to students of superior ability and achievement in mathematics. Placement is done with the following requirements: A average in 5th grade mathematics, strong teacher recommendations, superior test scoring, and a passing grade on Austin Prep Placement Exam.

**Course: Grade 7 Mathematics**  
**Course Number:** 4030  
**Grade:** 7

This course gives students an introduction to the basic concepts of Pre-Algebra. Students are introduced to signed numbers and to the concept of a variable. Skills such as rates, ratios, proportions and percent are solidified. Emphasis is placed on writing and solving algebraic expressions, equations, and rational numbers. Exploration of the concepts of Geometry, Probability and Data Analysis are also continued. Seventh grade students also begin their introduction to using math for real-life skills. Multiple projects are included in this course that include topics such as budgeting, analyzing nutritional data, sports data and profit/loss sheets.

**Course: Grade 7 Pre-Algebra**  
**Course Number:** 4040  
**Grade:** 7

Students in this course begin their formal study of algebraic expressions and linear equations. They will write and use linear equations, linear functions, and system of equations to represent, analyze, and solve problems. Students begin their formal study of functions as well. They will explain the concept and uses of functions and describe functions in different representations (graphical, tabular, algebraic). Geometric concepts of congruency and similarity through exploration and transformation are investigated. Students will explain the Pythagorean Theorem, its converse and why it holds, and apply it to solve problems. Grade 7 students also begin their introduction to using math for real-life skills. Multiple projects are included in this course covering topics such as budgeting, analyzing nutritional data, sports data and profit/loss sheets.

**Prerequisite:** This course is assigned to students of superior ability and achievement in mathematics. Placement is done with the following requirements: A- average in 6th grade advanced mathematics and strong teacher recommendations. Incoming students must also have superior test scoring and a passing grade on Austin Prep placement exam.
Course: Grade 8 Pre-Algebra  
Course Number: 4050  
Grade: 8

Students in this course begin their formal study of algebraic expressions and linear equations. They will write and use linear equations, linear functions, and system of equations to represent, analyze, and solve problems. Students begin their formal study of functions as well. They will explain the concept and uses of functions and describe functions in different representations (graphical, tabular, algebraic). Geometric concepts of congruency and similarity through exploration and transformation are investigated. Students will explain the Pythagorean Theorem, its converse and why it holds, and apply it to solve problems.

Course: Grade 8 Algebra 1  
Course Number: 4060  
Grade: 8

Students in this course will complete their journey of mastering basic algebra skills. The course is fast paced and designed to prepare the students academically and emotionally for the rigors of our honors high school math program. Emphasis is on building a solid foundation of algebra skills such as solving systems of equations, using linear equations, introduction of functions, and exponents. Intermediate algebra skills such as factoring and exploring quadratic equations are learned through drill and exploration. Additional technological skills are added in the course with the use of a graphing calculator which is required for this course.

Prerequisite: This course is assigned to students of superior ability and achievement in mathematics (B or above average in 073 or a similar Pre-Algebra course) and with approval of the 073 instructor and the Department Chair. Incoming students must also have superior test scoring and a passing grade on Austin Prep placement exam.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE

Through the Austin student’s middle school years, we ignite a passion for STEM. From the outset each student is provided with highly interactive, hands-on, group activities built around STEM concepts. Within the framework of a strong core knowledge base, each activity is designed to emphasize collaborative learning, critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, creativity, globalization and effective experimental design. Through these activities students grow in confidence and curiosity while gaining critical 21st Century skills. Students will have technology based experiences embedded throughout their MS science experience.

Please Note: In an effort to remain current with topical scientific issues the activities included in the following descriptions are subject to change.

Course: Introduction to Science  
Course Number: 5010  
Grade: 6

Designed to nurture a student’s curiosity of the natural world, Introduction to Science places a strong emphasis on developing skills for success in middle school and beyond. Students will begin to cultivate skills in:
• Engineering: Through designing and building a model of a hurricane-proof house that will then be stress tested
• Public Speaking: By giving an oral presentation on an animal
• Predicting: When developing a hypothesis before running an experiment
• Designing an Experiment: Via architecting a fair way to determine how many licks it takes to get to the center of a Tootsie Pop
• Taking Accurate Measurements: Through calculating the density of an object using a triple beam balance and displacement of water
• Collaboration with Peers: By running many experiments in teams of two to four students
• Performing Basic Online Research: Using iPads to gather information to construct an informative brochure on an animal group of the student's choice
• Constructing & Interpreting Tables and Graphs: Using data from several experiments conducted throughout the year
• Reading and Drawing Maps: By turning a walk of the Austin Prep Campus into an interesting and colorful map
• Calculating Averages and Percentages: From the data gathered through performing experiments
• Major science topics include: Atmosphere & Weather, Light & Vision, Sound & Hearing, Animals, and Ecology & Environmental Science

**Course: Life and Space Science**  
**Course Number: 5020**  
**Grade: 7**

Designed to introduce students to biological and astronomical sciences, Life and Space Science places a strong emphasis on enhancing the skills developed in sixth grade and introducing new skills that will be useful for high school and beyond. Students will continue to cultivate skills in:

• Engineering: Through building and testing rockets; designing and building a skeleton, strong enough to hold up a laboratory coat, using only newspaper; and designing and building homes that could safely shelter humans on Mars
• Public Speaking: By giving several oral presentations on several topics including any organism of their choice
• Designing and Conducting Experiments: Through several hands-on labs throughout the year
• Foundations in Microscopy: By utilizing microscopy to examine their own cheek cells as well as several preserved specimens
• Collaboration with Peers: By running experiments in teams of two to four students
• Debating: By debating the 1969 Moon Landing with the high school astronomy class

• Long-Term Data Collection: By tracking foliage changes over autumn, in collaboration with a Harvard University project
• Performing Basic Online Research: Using iPads to gather information to construct an informative brochure on a human body organ system of the student’s choice
• Constructing and Interpreting Tables and Graphs: Through conducting several experiments throughout the year
• Calculating Averages and Percentages: From the data gathered through performing experiments
• Creating: By inventing a bacterium and a virus, including their names, qualities, discovery story, and disease properties
• Major science topics include: Cells and Heredity, The Human Body, Diversity of Life, Space Science
**Course: Physical Science**  
**Course Number: 5030**  
**Grade: 8**

Designed for the student to establish a foundation in Chemistry and Physics, Physical Science, Grade 8 develops skills that will be used in higher education and in life. Students will begin to understand and be confident in the following skills:

- Engineering/Creating: Through the building of a large-scale Periodic Table
- Public Speaking: By reading, expressing opinions and explaining answers in class
- Designing an Experiment: Completing liquid and irregular object density labs
- Taking Accurate Measurements: By the use of triple beam balances, graduated cylinders, metric rulers; conversion of metric system
- Collaboration with Peers: By working on experiments in groups of two, three, or four students; classroom work in groups of similar numbers
- Performing Online Research: Using iPads to gather information on specific scientists for a PowerPoint presentation; Periodic Table facts on elements; the “Element Song”
- Constructing and Interpreting Table and Graphs: By experimentation and classroom work with Chemistry and Physics
- Calculating Averages and Percentages: Analyzing data from experiments and everyday science classroom needs
- Math Skills: By performing basic skills in division, multiplication, addition and subtraction of whole numbers, fractions and decimals
- Major science topics include: Chemistry, Physics, Forces, & Energy

**DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE**

Our goal in the Language Department is proficiency in both the language and culture of other people, even perhaps at another time in history. Austin students typically study one language and its culture in depth. Our introductory courses in modern languages begin with a communications approach, stressing listening and speaking skills. Our approach in the classical languages is one of reading proficiency, with an emphasis upon fluency and historical appreciation.

Second language acquisition is best achieved while students are at middle-school ages because learning a world language develops their skills in communication and expression. Thematic whole-class projects incorporating iPad technology not only practice presentation and public-speaking skills but also instill genuine confidence and spur creativity for use in later life. From the Greek Olympics to the Chinese New Year, world events are studied and practiced in class to provide a cultural foundation that we compare and contrast with our own faith and beliefs.

Global travel awakens the senses — and mind — to different cultures and experiences. From climbing the worn steps of Rome’s Colosseum to practicing tai chi with Shanghai locals, unforgettable memories become priceless souvenirs. Opportunities for school trips allow Middle School students to experience these life-changing journeys alongside the most passionate and qualified teachers.

The following diagram is a flowchart of student language progression, and the choices open to them, depending on what year they begin at Austin Prep.
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<th>Students entering in Grade 6</th>
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<td>MS Mandarin I</td>
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<td>Seventh Grade Year</td>
<td>Classics II</td>
<td>MS Mandarin 2</td>
<td>Classics</td>
<td>MS Mandarin I</td>
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<td>Eighth Grade Year</td>
<td>Latin II or French I, Spanish I or Mandarin I</td>
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<td>Latin II OR French I, Spanish I or Mandarin I</td>
<td>US Mandarin I OR French I, Latin I, Mandarin I or Spanish I</td>
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Requirements: All sixth and seventh grade students take our developmental Classics or Mandarin course. Students must remain with that language through the end of their seventh grade year. All eighth grade students participate in our Upper School Language program and will select from French, Latin, Mandarin, or Spanish. Students are required to take three years as an Upper School student. Eighth grade language classes may include Upper School students as classmates.

Course: Classics I
Course Number: 6010
Grade: 6

This course for sixth graders introduces them to cultural aspects of the ancient Classical world, especially Greco-Roman mythology, daily life in the Roman Empire, and the Latin language. A variety of developmentally appropriate activities, role-playing, and projects keeps students engaged, often in conjunction with other subjects, especially Social Studies and English. The course presumes no previous experience in another language. Latin is taught as a reading based course, and also as a living language, both spoken and sung. Grammar concepts will be reviewed.

Course: Classics II
Course Number: 6020
Grade: 7

This course solidifies the student’s foundation in language skills development. The course focuses on the Roman Empire as experienced in the province of Britannia, the ancient warfare, the clash of the cultures and the policy of Romanization. The second semester looks at Egypt with emphasis on the multicultural Roman Empire. Collaboration with other subjects continues, as students expand their acquaintance with the foundational texts of the world literature. Dramatizing the stories of Greek heroes such as Perseus and Hercules is a winter project involving Art and Technology. Other interdisciplinary projects include an anatomy unit and the World Tour project.
**Course: Classics**  
**Course Number: 6030**  
**Grade: 7**  

This is an introductory course in the Latin language and the culture and civilization of Ancient Rome. The course assumes no previous experience in another language. The goal of this one-year program is to consolidate and reinforce the student’s development in English language skills, build a background in classical civilization, and train the student for success in grade 8 language study. The same reading-based approach is used.

**Course: Latin 1 CP, Latin 1 H**  
**Course Number: 6101, 6102**  
**Grade: 8**  

This is a modern introductory course in reading Classical Latin elected by new eighth graders. The course stresses consolidation of English language skills, development of the student’s ability to read Latin stories of particular interest, and experience with the history and civilization of Ancient Rome. No previous Language experience is presumed.

**Course: Latin 2 CP, Latin 2 H**  
**Course Number: 6111, 6112**  
**Grade: 8**  

This course is a continuation of Latin 1 and includes units on Theatre and Roman Comedy, the Roman Army and the military strategy of ancient armies. Development of English vocabulary and ancient history continue to be stressed. Students master most of Latin grammar and refine their skills in reading and translation.  
**Prerequisites:** 075, 175, 275, 513, or 514.

**Course: Middle School Mandarin 1**  
**Course Number: 6040**  
**Grade: 6, 7**  

This is an introductory course in the modern Mandarin (Chinese) language, with an emphasis on speaking and listening skills, and early development of reading and writing abilities.

The class strives for the following goals:  
- Mastery of the Chinese phonetic system (pinyin)  
- Understanding of essential vocabulary (simplified)  
- Literacy involving beginning level sentence structures and the construction of commonly used Chinese grammar  
- Familiarity with aspects of Chinese culture and history

Interactive iPad apps, classroom gameplay and storytelling practice is designed to develop and reinforce learning. In addition to language work, the course will serve as an introduction to the culture of the Mandarin speaking world. The course assumes no previous or little Mandarin language experience.
Course: Middle School Mandarin 2  
Course Number: 6050  
Grade: 7

This class is a continuation of Mandarin 1, with an emphasis on speaking and listening along with further development of reading and writing abilities.

The class strives for the following goals:
- Further understanding of essential vocabulary
- Literacy involving sentence structures and the constructions of more complex Chinese grammar
- Familiarity with aspects of Chinese culture and history

Interactive iPad practice, classroom gameplay and story reading/telling is designed to develop and reinforce learning. The course will further introduce Chinese reading and writing abilities. The course assumes one year or previous experience in the Mandarin language.

Course: Mandarin 1 CP, Mandarin 1 H  
Course Number: 6501, 6502  
Grade: 8

This is an accelerated introductory course in the modern Mandarin (Chinese) language, with an emphasis on speaking and listening skills, and early development of reading and writing abilities.

The class strives for the following goals:
- Mastery of the Chinese phonetic system (pinyin)
- Understanding of essential vocabulary (simplified)
- Literacy involving basic sentence structures and the construction of commonly used Chinese grammar
- Familiarity with aspects of Chinese culture and history

Interactive iPad apps, classroom gameplay and storytelling practice is designed to develop and reinforce learning. In addition to language work, the course will serve as an introduction to the culture of the Mandarin speaking world. The course assumes no previous or little Mandarin language experience.

Mandarin 2 CP, Mandarin 2 H  
Course Number 6511, 6512  
Grade 8

This class is a continuation of Mandarin 1, with an emphasis on speaking and listening along with further development of reading and writing abilities.

The class strives for the following goals:
- Further understanding of essential vocabulary
- Literacy involving sentence structures and the constructions of more complex Chinese grammar
- Familiarity with aspects of Chinese culture and history
Interactive iPad practice, classroom gameplay, and story reading/telling are designed and used to develop and reinforce learning. The course will further introduce Chinese culture and history. The course assumes one year or previous experience in the Mandarin language.

**Prerequisites:** 752, 753 or both 756 and 751

**Course: French 1 CP, French 1 H**
**Course Number:** 6301, 6302
**Grade:** 8

This is a communication-based introduction to the French language, spoken globally in over forty-three countries around the world. With emphasis on the speaking and listening skills, students are engaged in developing pronunciation and comprehension skills from the start with the use of an interactive digital text, providing ample audio and video practice for use both in and out of the classroom. Numerous supplemental language learning websites energize the class and motivate students to appreciate the beauty of French and promote a positive class atmosphere. Confidence is fostered through paired classroom conversational activities, role-playing, and basic paragraph writing in collaboration with peers. Various facets of French culture are explored, including food, art, music, and the celebration of customs in Francophone nations and on major holidays. Historical connections are referenced with France and the United States, and with our nearby French-speaking neighbor, Canada. Learning of the close linguistic connection between French and English provides a continuing extra bonus in vocabulary building. The course presumes no previous French or Language experience.

**Course: Spanish 1 CP, Spanish 1 H**
**Course Number:** 6201, 6202
**Grade:** 8

Students will develop an understanding of the Spanish language at a beginner’s pace with an emphasis on effective communication skills in speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Students explore the language including the formal and informal forms of address through a variety of dialogue exercises. Students access a robust digital text that allows access to program-related audio, video, websites, and supplementary practice. Teacher-guided instructional game-based learning platforms or interactive classroom activities are often used in the classroom. The students explore cultural topics with special attention given to the celebration of holidays such as the Day of the Dead and Christmas. Students also learn about the Spanish conquistadors, and the Maya, Aztec, and Incan civilizations.

**DEPARTMENT OF ART and DESIGN**

Middle School students are curious and inquisitive learners with active imaginations and keen senses of wonder; to that end, the offerings in the Department of Art and Design tap into these inclinations and provide students with the opportunity to think critically and creatively. Most importantly, these offerings provide students with more than a vocabulary for speaking about technology and the arts; they provide a project- or production-based curriculum and opportunities for students to integrate with the faces and spaces of those fields.

Students will have the opportunity to pursue their passions by having a choice and voice in their electives. The Austin Journey, through the Department of Art and Design is one of excitement, enrichment, and celebration of our students’ emerging gifts; join us on a journey of instruction and inspiration!
The courses listed here are proposed for the 2018-2019 school year and are subject to change. The courses Broadway Bound, Digital Storytelling, Technology in Sports, and Robotics II are not scheduled to run in 2018-2019. All courses are one semester in length unless otherwise noted. Courses may run in the fall, spring, or in both semesters depending on the full academic schedule and/or content of the class.

Course: Explorations in Art
Course Number: 7010
Grade: 6, 7, 8

This course introduces students to the basic concepts, terminology, and techniques of visual art. The process of art-making in an open and collaborative atmosphere encourages critical thinking and develops creative problem-solving skills in our students. Classes also have the opportunity to interact with the faces and spaces of the artistic community in the form of traveling to art museums and/or galleries, and having working artists visit the classroom. All of the activities lay the groundwork for future study and appreciation of the visual arts. Artwork created in class may later hang in the Murphy Art Gallery and/or be published in-house (website, e-news, school newspaper or magazine).

Course: Digital Art
Course Number: 7020
Grade: 6, 7, 8

NEW FOR 2018-2019 Middle School students will explore the Elements of Art using iPads as a basis for creation. Digital art will be studied through a variety of apps, and critical thinking skills will be exercised as students solve creative problems through the use of technology. Apps that are explored may include Brushes, Sketchbook Express, iMotion and Do Ink. A sketchbook is required for this course.

Course: Let’s Dance!
Course Number: 7030
Grade: 6, 7, 8
Notation: Fall Semester Only

Students enrolled in this class will review the basics of dance, including positions and terminology of jazz, tap, ballet and contemporary as they prepare for their roles in our school's annual performance of The Nutcracker Suite. This fast-paced class will have students moving both inside and outside the classroom - not only will students learn, improvise, and create choreography for their performance, but they will travel to studios and theaters to meet dancers, choreographers, costumers, and crew to deepen their understanding of this art form.

Course: Divine Dance
Course Number: 7040
Grade: 6, 7, 8
Notation: Spring Semester Only

NEW FOR 2018-2019 Dance, as an art form, is about expression and communication. How did the earliest dancers find their divine inspiration? This course is structured around the study of dance history, cultural and social influences on the dance world, and researching choreographers, dance companies such as the Royal Academy of Dancing and the Vaganova Ballet Academy, and current events in dance. All students will participate in various talent showcases throughout the second semester, including the Austie Awards, the Spring Dance performance, and various liturgies including the Stations of the Cross.
Course: Stage to Screen: the Hollywood Musical  
Course Number: 7050  
Grade: 6, 7, 8  
Notation: Spring Semester Only

NEW FOR 2018-2019 What does it take to become a professional dancer? And how does a professional dancer take their gifts from the stage to the screen? This semester takes a close look at the Great White Way and the silver screen; how is dance represented on Broadway and in movies? Dancers will study the work of Broadway greats and screen stars like Bob Fosse, Busby Berkeley, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, and Gene Kelly. Dancers will perform their capstone choreography projects in the Spring Dance Show.

Course: Drama Fest: Acting  
Course Number: 7060  
Grade: 6, 7, 8  
Notation: Spring Semester Only

This course focuses on many of the aspects of Theater Arts, including a brief history of theater and the onstage (performance) aspects of theater. Students learn movement, vocal control and characterization skills through fun drama games and improv exercises. Students participate in various activities that may include plays, pantomime, short scenes, monologues, improvisation, makeup application, props and costume design. This class focuses on presenting a 40-minute play at the Massachusetts Drama Festival Competition for Middle Schools in the spring. All members of the class are cast in the production; as such, students will have some out-of-class, after-school mandatory rehearsals in the month leading up to the production as well as the full day of the Festival.

Course: Drama Fest: Technical Theater  
Course Number: 7070  
Grade: 6, 7, 8  
Notation: Spring Semester Only

Students seeking to learn more about the technical side of theater have the opportunity to explore how directors, designers, and producers take a show from the page to the stage. Students read scripts and have class discussions and projects envisioning sets, costumes, and props. Students interact with creative professionals from regional and national touring companies who offer guest lessons on campus, and see the design elements of a show first-hand with field trips to the workshops of these theatrical artisans. Students act as the design think tank and stage crew for Austin Prep’s Middle School entry into the Massachusetts Drama Festival Competition in the spring; as such, students will have some out-of-class, after-school mandatory rehearsals in the month leading up to the production, as well as be committed to attend the full day of the Festival.

Course: Journey into Drama  
Course Number: 7080  
Grade: 6, 7, 8  
Notation: Fall Semester Only

This course focuses on many of the aspects of Theater Arts, including a brief history of theater and the onstage (performance) aspects of theater. Students learn movement, vocal control and characterization skills through fun drama games and improv exercises. Students participate in various activities that may
include plays, pantomime, short scenes, monologues, improvisation, makeup application, props and costume design. The class culminates in an evening of monologues, short scenes, or a one-act play.

**Course: Technical Theater**  
**Course Number: 7090**  
**Grade: 6, 7, 8**  
**Notation: Fall Semester Only**

Students seeking to learn more about the technical side of theater have the opportunity to explore how directors, designers, and producers take a show from the page to the stage. Students read scripts and have class discussions and projects envisioning sets, costumes, and props. Students interact with creative professionals from regional and national touring companies who offer guest lessons on campus and see the design elements of a show first-hand with field trips to the workshops of these theatrical artisans.

**Course: Spotlight on Music!**  
**Course Number: 7110**  
**Grades: 6, 7, 8**

**NEW FOR 2018-2019** This course promotes successful music appreciation as students explore and build foundational skills. Topics may include music history, culture, theory, composers, and the basic elements of musical composition.

**Course: Austin Beginner Band**  
**Course Number: 7631**  
**Grades: 6, 7, 8**  
**Notation: Full-year course**

This is a performance-based elective for middle school students interested in learning how to play a band instrument. Instrument options include: flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone/baritone horn and drums. Students learn how to read basic music notation and rhythmic patterns as well as proper care and tuning of their instrument. As each student’s skills progress, students have the opportunity to perform with the Austin Band. The Austin Band performs throughout the school year at various events such as: Lessons and Carols, Community Meetings, Pep Rallies, the annual Spring Concert, and more.

**Course: Austin Band**  
**Course Number: 7641**  
**Grades: 6, 7, 8**  
**Notation: Full-year course**

This is a performance-based elective for students who are interested in performing and improving their instrumental skills while being a member of the Austin Band. The full band is comprised of (but not limited to) standard instrumentation: woodwinds, brass, percussion, piano, keyboards, rhythm guitar and bass guitar. In addition, the full band rehearses twice weekly after school. The band performs throughout the school year at various events such as: Lessons & Carols, Community Meetings, Pep Rallies, the annual Spring Concert, and more. Previous experience on a band instrument and/or reading of music is preferred.
Course: Electronic Keyboard Lab  
Course Number: 7651  
Grades: 6, 7, 8

This is a non-performance based semester elective for students interested in learning basic keyboard/piano skills. Students learn proper fingering patterns, the basis of note reading in treble and bass clefs, and how to read and decode basic rhythmic patterns, all while learning traditional as well as popular song stylings. Students also explore areas of music theory and composition and their relationship to their work. Students, if they desire, have the opportunity to participate in the Austin Band program. There is no prerequisite for this elective.

Course: Guitar Workshop  
Course Number: 7661  
Grades: 6, 7, 8

This is a non-performance based semester elective for students interested in learning how to play the guitar. From beginner to advanced, students develop guitar skills in a variety of styles and techniques. Topics include standard/alternative tuning, note/chordal reading, tablature, chord diagrams, and identification of notes on the fingerboard. Students learn how to accompany themselves on traditional as well as popular music styles and much more! Students must provide their own guitar (acoustic or electric) for this elective. Students, if they desire, have the opportunity to participate in the Austin Band program. There is no prerequisite for this elective.

Course: Austin Chorus  
Course Number: 7621  
Grades: 6, 7, 8  
Notation: Full-year course

The Austin Chorus enriches all school Masses and Prayer Services with a wide variety of contemporary and traditional sacred music. It also performs several non-religious concerts on and off-campus, including Homecoming, Austin Open House, the Town of Reading Festival of Lights, Lessons and Carols, and the annual Spring Concert. Solo opportunities are available throughout the year, and musical repertoire covers a wide variety of styles – from classical to the 21st century. This course requires no previous formal vocal training. Students learn proper breath support, vocal technique, diction, how to sing in harmony, and the basic concepts of music theory. Students enrolled in this course are expected to actively sing during all classes and attend after-school rehearsals on Tuesday and Friday afternoons. All performances of the Chorus during the school year are considered part of this course.

Note: This is a year-long class and will include Upper School students as classmates. Students enrolled in Chorus will take this course both first and second semester.

Course: Topics in Art History  
Course Number: 7120  
Grades: 6, 7, 8

NEW THEME FOR 2018-2019 This year’s theme for Topics in Art History is “Marvelous Monarchs.” With princes as patrons, arts celebrate power, personality, and pride in the kingdom. Students will explore the history of the British monarchy and the fascinating occupants of the throne from the lens of artists, musicians, and architects. Students will encounter various forms of art from ballads to
balustrades, tapestries to tiaras, and Shakespeare to shields as they build a writing portfolio and their very own museum-style exhibit on art and monarchy.

**Course: Topics in Technology**  
**Course Number:** 7130  
**Grades:** 6, 7, 8

NEW for 2018-2019. This year’s theme for Topics in Technology is “Explorers and Adventurers.” Planet Earth is a beautiful, living creature - we call it home, but there is so much about our majestic planet the remains a mystery. For generations, explorers and adventurers have harnessed the power of technology and channeled their curiosity to learn more about our world and our place within it. Our semester will mirror a mountain climb. In base camp, students will prepare for our ascent by strengthening their research, technological, and observational skills. On our climb, students will work together to examine the evolution of technology and the stories of some of history's greatest explorers and adventurers. As we reach the summit and set our sights on the next peak on the horizon, students will think critically and creatively about the frontiers that await the next generations of explorers: the deep sea and outer space. Get ready to start exploring - and never stop!

**Course: Robotics I**  
**Course Number:** 7100  
**Grade:** 7, 8

Designed to foster imagination and teamwork, Robotics places a strong emphasis on developing critical thinking and problem solving skills through project-based learning for success in all aspects in school and beyond. Students begin to cultivate skills in:

- **Science:** Look at the diversity of life on this planet that moves. Look at the diversity of solutions to the problem of locomotion! How is it done in so many different ways without wheels? Take on this challenge and invent a way for your robot move without the aid of rolling wheels.
- **Technology:** Through learning how to program on the LEGO® Mindstorms® platform. You can have your robot see the color red and say “red,” or teach your robot to play music and dance!
- **Engineering:** Through designing and building numerous robots to complete various tasks. Build an animal for the robotic zoo. It can be a land animal, a sea creature, an insect, a bird — it does not have to be an animal that is traditionally found in a zoo.
- **Art:** By getting creative! Attach markers to your robot and program it to create a masterpiece!
- **Mathematics:** By relationships between wheel radius, diameter, circumference, revolutions and distance to get your robot to move across the room.

*Students wishing to take Robotics II must first take Robotics I.*

**ADVISORY**

At Austin Prep, we believe that having a close relationship with an adult, as well as a personal connection to the greater school community, will foster growth and development both cognitively and emotionally. Each Middle School student belongs to an advisory group - a small group of mixed grades - that meets regularly. The advisory group serves many purposes including connecting students with others in different grades, offering an opportunity for community and following a guided curriculum focusing on goal setting, self-reflection, and spiritual and emotional development. The role of the advisor is to help students navigate middle school and self-advocate when they need help. A student advocate and cheerleader, advisors become mentors and confidants for their advisees as they follow them through eighth grade. As a first line of communication for parents, advisors often facilitate conversations
between students and faculty. Parents are also encouraged to use their child’s advisor as a liaison to gather and disseminate information about academics as well as social matters. Having multiple adults in the community know and understand the “whole child” makes a significant difference in healthy adolescent development and academic success.

**CAMPUS MINISTRY**

Middle School students are inquisitive and imaginative learners who have the capacity to understand much about themselves through immersive learning experiences. The Campus Ministry Office’s many and varied invitations to deepen students’ relationship with God and encounter Him are rooted in the Traditions of the Church and conducted in the spirit of Saint Augustine in that they invite students to have “restless hearts” as they journey towards the Truth.

**Retreats**

In the words of our patron, St. Augustine, “The deeper our faith, the stronger our hope, the greater our desire, the larger will be our capacity to receive the gift, which is very great indeed” (Letter 130). Grade-level retreats provide our school community with an invitation to spend a day in reflection and conversation with God and engaged in interactive exercises with their classmates. Each retreat provides students the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the Augustinian charisms of Veritas, Unitas, Caritas as they impact their daily lives and as lived experiences.

The Retreat consists of attendance at Mass, a prayerful time of reflection, guest speakers, and participation in a wide variety of activities designed to underscore the growth and development of each student’s individual spirituality and self-awareness, relationship with God, and his/her social relationships.

**Mass and Sacraments**

All-school Masses are celebrated throughout the school year on Holy Days of Obligation and other important occasions in the life of Austin Prep. Middle School students are invited to participate in all the Masses through the ministries of music (Austin Chorus), lectors, and the Offertory Procession.

Grade-level Masses spaced throughout the year promote opportunities for students to celebrate the faith and pray together as a class.

Mass is also offered in the Chapel during announced times every week. The entire school community is invited to attend. Our beloved dead and other special intentions are remembered at these Masses.

The school’s Chaplain Priest also offers opportunities throughout the year for students to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Spiritual Counseling**

Middle School students are on a journey of self-discovery. In Saint Augustine’s writings, he asks “You aspire to great things?” and instructs “Begin with the little ones.” Each step students take advances their understanding of God and of themselves. Spiritual counseling provides students with an opportunity to process their life’s journey with a trusted confidante. Students are naturally interested in exploring a deeper understanding of themselves, their relationships with others, and the morals and values that...
guide their lives. Coping with life challenges can also be difficult. Students sometimes find it helpful and comforting to seek the support of a trusted, trained adult in conversations about the circumstances of their lives within the context of faith.

Prayer Services

Middle School Prayer Services are held in observance of various events in the Church Year. The services complement student learning about the liturgical calendar in their Theology classes and provide an opportunity for students to live and experience the faith life of the Church. Prayer services are designed specifically with the Middle School students in mind. They are appropriate to their age and to their spiritual experience. Middle School students are invited to participate as lectors and occasionally offer the Reflection.

Morning Exercises and End of the Day Prayer

Every school day begins with Morning Exercises. Middle School students, along with Upper School students, have the opportunity to lead the school community by reading the Morning Prayer, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, announcing the schedule for the day, and leading the school in prayer at the end of each school day.

Community Service

Austin’s Mission Statement recognizes the importance of preparing our students to lead lives of service to others in the spirit of Jesus Christ. In our Augustinian tradition, community service is an experience to live the charism of caritas (love). To quote Saint Augustine, “What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.” Service in one’s community encourages students to open their minds to the experiences of others and provides them with an opportunity to use their talents and skills in the service of others.

Each year, students are asked to perform a requisite number of service hours. As they complete their Middle School journey, students write a reflection paper capturing their thoughts about the entirety of their ministry as servant-leaders. In addition to providing students with an opportunity to live their faith, service builds leadership capacity and empathy, dispositions that align well with the social-emotional development of Middle School age-students.

COUNSELING CENTER

The Counseling Center at Austin Prep offers a variety of support services to help students navigate the middle school years. We understand that school life is full, not just of studies, but of social and emotional experiences. Middle School is a crucial developmental time when adolescents garner important academic as well as social-emotional skills. Attention is paid to transition times throughout a student’s middle school career including entering as a new student as well as moving onto the next grade level. New Student Orientation before school opens helps students acclimate to a new physical space as well as meet faculty and peers.

The Middle School counselor meets individually throughout the school year with each student on both a scheduled and as needed basis. The student’s advisor is the primary resource for students; however, the counselor is also available to help facilitate relationships between students and their teachers and families and to work with the advisor in coordinating support for students struggling academically.
A Counseling Department curriculum is implemented through seminar-style classes during the school year across grade levels. The counselor visits each grade in small class groupings throughout the year. Seminar topics include time management, stress, digital citizenship, decision-making, interpersonal relationships, communication skills, and identity development. Students will learn to identify positive ways to promote mental health as well as healthy relationships with both peers and adults. Significant time is spent engaging students in conversations about anti-bullying efforts which include learning how to be an upstander, building self-esteem, appreciating diversity, developing empathy, and understanding others' perspective.

Parents will have the opportunity to meet with the counselor as well. Throughout the year, parent education workshops will be presented to help parents access resources in order to understand and explore the different ages and stages of Middle School. The Middle School counselor collaborates with the Health and Wellness Counselor who is also a resource for Middle School students.

**CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The academic skills attained in Middle School build a foundation for a student’s academic career. Study skills, test taking, critical thinking and problem-solving are important tools we hope students will work to develop and master. At Austin Prep we recognize that our Middle Schoolers have individualized and varied learning styles. The CTL (Center for Teaching and Learning) offers support to students who require additional academic assistance by providing a quiet study hall, professional development for faculty on learning differences, and by helping faculty to make the curriculum accessible for students with diverse learning profiles.

**STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

Diverse and plentiful offerings in the student activities program allow students to deepen bonds within our community, discover new interests, practice life skills, and dive further into an area of passion.

Cougar Block is a period during the day that gives students the opportunity to participate in clubs during the academic day. Clubs are a space for students to pursue activities of interest with like-minded students, and take risks in trying something new. Middle School students are required to sign up for 3 clubs or activities each week. Students are guided to pursue both academic-oriented clubs as well as other clubs that are extracurricular in nature. Some examples are humanity-based clubs like arts & crafts, a literary magazine, and middle school dance; clubs that promote teamwork and physical fitness such as basketball and mini hockey; and leadership organizations like National Junior Honor Society and Middle School Student Council. It is Austin’s belief that co-curricular offerings help to educate the whole person.

Through the activity program, Middle School students have the opportunity to collaborate with others, grow an idea from inception to evaluation, market, work on public speaking, and developing many different interests and talents that extend far beyond the classroom. These programs are crucial to the holistic formation of our students and are an opportunity to put our mission into action.

For more information, students and families are encouraged to visit the Student Life page of the Austin Prep website. If a student discovers that he or she does not see a club offering that he or she would like to participate in, then that student has the ability to start a new club. Just this past year alone, students have formed their own clubs that have been incorporated into our program; recent additions include: Ultimate Frisbee, Coding Club, and Model UN.
ATHLETICS

Austin Prep’s athletic programs have a long tradition of success. Austin Prep student athletes understand that though they are associated with a specific sport, they are part of something much larger and more important – the Austin Prep Community.

Participation in an athletic program as a Middle School student promotes an active, healthy lifestyle, provides opportunities to form friendships, and teaches students the skills and strategy of sport. Every coach is committed to the development of our student-athletes, ensuring they succeed not only as athletes, but as young adults. Sport provides a forum in which students learn teamwork, commitment, integrity and responsibility. Austin’s athletic programs seek to develop student-athletes who are selfless teammates, possess an unparalleled work ethic, consistently display the highest levels of sportsmanship, and are dedicated to a common goal.

While participation on an Austin athletic team is not required, it is strongly encouraged.