Curriculum Overview

At Keystone, we inspire bright and motivated students with challenging coursework while supporting them academically and emotionally, and rounding out their education with creative endeavors, athletics, community service and leadership building to produce young people who are ready to achieve excellence in their chosen fields, with the ability to inspire and change the world.

When students complete their educational experience at Keystone, they are ready for the next phase of their education and success in life.

Little School of Keystone

Keystone’s preschool provides a warm, nurturing environment designed to meet the needs and interests of young children. The school, separate from the “big Keystone,” consists of four classrooms for children ages 3 and 4, which contain carefully planned learning centers where each child can pursue, investigate, and explore activities that promote their creative interests.

The curriculum promotes a fun, positive, and rewarding educational experience with unique enrichment programs and monthly thematic units.
In Keystone's K-4 Lower School, children embark on their educational adventure as we strive to nurture their emotional, social, and intellectual development.

Our accelerated academic program is aligned across subjects and builds upon itself over the years, with high standards and benchmarks established for each grade level and an integrated approach to technology. While our academic program is challenging, our teaching approach celebrates the joys of childhood with an eye on developmental stages and includes learning through play and experiences outside of the traditional classroom.

The overall goals for kindergarten through second grade are to establish strong foundations of conceptual understanding of academic skills development and that will enable students to build upon future learning experiences successfully. Even in the early years, we assist students in becoming independent learners and workers. Students practice positive group dynamic relations and conflict resolution skills as they learn to successfully transition, work in groups, and be respectful of themselves and their peers.

In reading/language arts, students write across all content areas and begin the journey as writers through Writer’s Workshop. They progress from learning core words and recognizing spelling patterns in kindergarten to Junior Great Books in second grade. Math studies progress from addition/subtraction and telling time to computation, multiplication facts, two-dimensional geometry and three-digit arithmetic. Social studies begin with placing children in the context of their families and communities and broadens to explore the world, while advancing to map skills and an introduction to economics. Science progresses from units such as the five senses and exploring the solar system in kindergarten to exploring the water cycle and creating simple machines in second grade.

Third and fourth grades bring deeper and more abstract connections to previously mastered concepts and skills, with the aim of developing greater independence as learners and the ability to resolve conflicts and work cooperatively.

In third grade, students participate in Science Fair for the first time, while they begin cursive writing, extended novel studies, writing poetry and a Writer’s Workshop that explores narrative writing, informative writing and persuasive writing. In math, they build on their knowledge with units that include multiplying three-digit numbers by two-digit numbers, exploring geometric concepts of lines of symmetry and angles and equivalent fractions. Social studies focuses on Texas, with units on the regions of the state, native tribes, the Spanish missions in San Antonio, the Texas Revolution, Texas as a nation and a state, life in Texas during the Civil War and Reconstruction, Texas during World War II, the Civil Rights Movement and Texas in the 21st century.

Fourth grade shifts to project-based learning, and much of which takes place in groups, as they take on more skills of note-taking, researching, summarizing and using charts and graphs. This year emphasizes the history of the United States. In social studies, units examine the First Americans of the Southwest, the Northwest coast, the Arctic, the Plains and the Eastern woodlands, exploration and early settlement; the colonization of the Americas, and the American Revolution. In math, students learn number operations, problem solving, measurement, fractions, geometry, decimals, probability, robotics, coding and the whole-brain approach of Hands-On Algebra. In science, students analyze and interpret data, plan and carry out investigations and engage in argument from evidence in units that include the human body, botany, engineering and weather/climate.

Lower School Specials
Throughout Lower School, students supplement their academic work with enrichment opportunities that include theater, music, Spanish, studio art, library and physical education. Keystone also recognizes the need for unstructured play with young children, and so all lower school students have recess time daily.
Middle School

Middle School offers increased academic challenges that correspond to developmental changes. Our expert teachers balance nurture and rigor for our middle school students; as students mature and begin to navigate more complex social interactions with their peers, they face increased expectations from teachers and parents. It’s a time when many things are shifting and changing for them, and at Keystone we seek to support and guide them as they grow. Through challenge and with support, students begin to develop increasing independence and responsibility, growing into sophisticated thinkers and leaders who are ready for the demands and freedom of high school, college, and beyond.

In fifth and sixth grade, students receive a measure of independence with consistency in routine. Students have the same core academic teachers departmentally through both the fifth and the sixth grade, and are taught organizational and study skills within the classes themselves. In seventh and eighth grade, academic expectations continue to increase. In addition to the core classes of English, history, math, and science, students are able to choose from semester-long electives including visual art, debate, theater, photography, musical performance, and a Leadership class. Seventh grade students take a semester of French in preparation for choosing between French 1 and Spanish 1 as their eighth grade language.

Outdoor Education

Our Outdoor Education program begins in fifth grade, with a one night overnight trip to a local camp where students participate in teambuilding and orienteering activities; the program expands each year in duration and intensity, with students traveling to Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming for a four night tent-camping trip in their eighth grade year. Trips in sixth and seventh grade include low and high rope element challenges and study of ecology and geography, alongside activities that promote team-work, leadership, and camaraderie.

Athletics and PE

Our athletic program allows for team sports to have their practices during the school day in PE classes; students can choose to be a part of volleyball, soccer, basketball, softball and track teams depending on their grade. Our PE department’s focus is to promote daily movement, healthy choices, and sportsmanship, with lifelong fitness as a goal.

Advisory

Students foster their social and emotional learning through an advisory program that provides time for our students to develop supportive and caring relationships with our teachers, and bond with a constructive group of friends. Advisory works in concert with Keystone’s academic purposes, as it provides a time and place where our students’ non-academic needs can be met.

Course Offerings

Fifth Grade: Math, Science, English, History, PE, Visual Art, Theater, Music, Computer, Spanish

Sixth Grade: Pre-Algebra, Science, English, Geography, PE, Visual Art, Theater, Music, Computer, Spanish

Seventh Grade: Algebra 1, Science, English, History, PE, French, Theater, Music, Public Speaking, Digital Design

Eighth Grade: Geometry, Science, English, History, Spanish 1 or French 1, PE
Keystone's Upper School offers an accelerated college preparatory program with roots in the liberal arts tradition, experiential outdoor learning and a collaborative student culture. Led by excellent teachers, students hone strong writing and critical thinking skills throughout a rigorous core curriculum and through engagement with the AP program, graduating seniors earn between 12-30 hours of college credit. These foundations, partnered with student opportunities to increasingly specialize their interests through extensive electives and extracurricular programs, lead to a program where students can explore, engage and excel.

Standard curriculum (required courses)

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<th>9th grade</th>
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<th>12th grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>English 9</td>
<td>English 10</td>
<td>AP English Language</td>
<td>AP English Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>World History</td>
<td>AP European History</td>
<td>AP US History</td>
<td>Political Science &amp; Civics</td>
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<td>Algebra 2</td>
<td>AP Statistics</td>
<td>Pre-calculus</td>
<td>Elective 1</td>
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<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Required science elective</td>
<td>Elective 2</td>
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<td>French 2/Spanish 2</td>
<td>French 3/Spanish 3</td>
<td>Elective 2</td>
<td>Elective 3</td>
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<td>Wellness Course</td>
<td>Required arts elective</td>
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Electives offered include Anatomy and Physiology, AP Bio, AP Calculus, AP Chemistry, AP Computer Science, AP Environmental Science, AP French, AP Physics, AP Spanish 4 and 5, Economics, International Relations, Modern Global Issues: China and Physics. Art electives offered include 2D design, 3D Design, Creative Writing, Digital Media, Drawing, Film Studies, Modern Acting and Theater Appreciation.

Arts and athletics opportunities: While Keystone is rightfully known for its academic excellence, our students also shine outside of the classroom. The Upper School stages two theater productions annually, has an award-winning literary magazine and provides students outlets for their talents through quarterly open mike nights called Stone Souls. Sports include girls’ volleyball, coed soccer, girls’ and boys’ basketball, tennis, softball and baseball.

Academic Competitions: Keystone has historically been the top performing school in local and statewide Science Fair competitions, often sending students to national and international competitions. Our Academic World Quest team has qualified for their national competition for 8 straight years and was the best in the nation in 2016. Our Model UN students regularly win local conference awards and our 3-year-old Upper School Robotics program has already qualified to compete at the state level.

Leadership, community service and ethical growth opportunities: Academic talents don’t serve their full potential for positive impact unless possessed by a well-rounded, caring individual. Keystone’s Upper School students achieve their remarkable results due to their commitment to maintaining a culture of lifting each other up, respecting differences and honoring free inquiry. Our students’ ethical and leadership development matures through organizations as diverse as Student Council, Foreign Language Club, Model United Nations and the National Honor Society. Service opportunities abound through dedicated service days, leadership of school wide celebrations and volunteering at local institutions like the San Antonio Food Bank and the Battered Women and Children’s Shelter. Our extensive advisory and counseling program gives students the information and life skills needed to make wise decisions around human sexuality, their online media presence and harmful substances.

There is no place like Keystone. We take curious, motivated students, provide them valuable academic training, foster their interpersonal talents and inspire a concern for themselves and their world. It is no wonder that when coupled with a thorough and caring college counseling program, our students successfully compete for admission to the nation’s top colleges and universities and thrive while there.