



2020-2021 Profile for Thomas Jefferson School

Program Highlights

- **CORE CURRICULUM:** The program focuses on key college-prep areas (English, math, ancient and modern languages, science, social studies, and fine arts) with few electives. It is among the most challenging programs nationally.
- **COURSE LOAD:** Students take five academic courses per year in grades 11 and 12 (six in grades 7 through 10), including two one-semester fine-arts courses.
- **WORKLOAD AND AUTONOMY:** Seminar-style classes center on discussion, debate, problem solving, not lecture. Students bear responsibility for serious daily assignments with much autonomy in the use of afternoon and evening time for academic work and activities.
- **AP COURSES:** A typical student graduating in 2021 is limited to seven AP classes, all of which are required: two in grade 10, two in grade 11, and three in grade 12; students accelerated in math take an additional AP class. AP is the only level for English, science, and social studies courses in grades 11 and 12. Taking the AP exam is optional as of 2020.
- **ENGLISH:** Required every year, English classes are built around reading and discussing classic and modern literature: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, philosophy, drama (including two plays by Shakespeare every year). A year-round daily writing program builds composition and self-editing skills.
- **FINE ARTS:** Students are required to take two semester-long fine-arts electives each year in the visual or performing arts.
- **LANGUAGES:** Students take a six-year sequence of world languages, both classical and modern: Latin in grades 7 and 8 and both Ancient Greek and French or Italian in high school. The two-year modern-language sequence is equivalent to college-level introductory and intermediate courses.
- **MATH:** Math is required every year, starting with Algebra 1 in grade 7 and going through AP Calculus BC or AP Statistics. A student advanced in math may complete the math sequence with an AP math course in an earlier year.
- **SCIENCE:** All students take one or more AP lab sciences. These are preceded by a sequence of accelerated introductory courses in major scientific areas: chemistry, biology, and physics.
- **SOCIAL STUDIES:** All students follow a two-year Humanities curriculum in middle school, followed by Modern World History grade 9 and AP U.S. Government & Politics in grade 10. AP U.S. History is required for U.S. citizens in 12th grade. AP electives include either AP Economics or AP Comparative Government (offered in alternating years) in grades 11 or 12.

Contact

Karen L. Fairbank,
Director of College Counseling
Email: kfairbank@tjs.org
Tel.: +1 314.635.2360
Fax: +1 314.843.3527
Website: www.TJS.org

At a Glance

CEEB Code: 263105

School type: Independent, co-ed, boarding and day; grades 7-12; academically rigorous, classical core liberal-arts curriculum

School size: 75 students, 13 full-time faculty; 1 adjunct faculty

Size of graduating class: 18

Percentage of graduating class attending a four-year college: 100

Percentage of students receiving financial aid: 28

Percentage of ethnic minorities (U.S. citizens): 31

Percentage of international students: 30

Median ACT/SAT Scores (2016-2020)

ACT Composite: 31
SAT Reading & Writing: 700
SAT Math: 760

Grading standards

The grading standard at TJ is one of the most uninflated and rigorous in the United States. A's represent work that is exceptional in both quality and consistency. The top grade in a course may be B+ or A- (the grade of A+ is not awarded). Even very strong students may have averages in the B range. C's are genuinely satisfactory and represent higher achievement (and more work) than in most schools. Students are permitted one D (but no more) for promotion and graduation. With a common grading standard, there is no significant variation in the grading among courses or among departments. Our three levels of academic honors speak to our rigorous grading standards:

- **Cum laude:** Students who end the quarter with ALL of their grades at B- or better are awarded *cum laude* standing.
- **Magna cum laude:** To earn the distinction of *magna cum laude*, a student must end the quarter with ALL of their grades at B+ or better.
- **Summa cum laude:** To earn the distinction of *summa cum laude*, a student must end the quarter with ALL of their grades at A or better. In recent years, this group has represented the top ten percent of all TJ students.

Letter grades are awarded four times per year. All core courses are a full year in length, and only year-end grades appear on the transcript unless others are requested. Transcripts will also show the first semester of senior year if completed. Beginning in 2019-2020, fine arts classes became semester long instead of year long, with two courses required per year.

GPA's at Thomas Jefferson School

TJ reports a weighted GPA on a 4.0 scale in which courses with the AP designation, as well as those junior and senior courses that carry the same two-hour workload and expectations as AP classes, receive an extra point. All other courses (including fine-arts courses) are weighted on the traditional 4.0 scale, as that standard is what gives meaning to the distinction in weight of AP-level courses. To end a given marking period *cum laude*, a student must earn grades of B- or better; to end *magna cum laude*, B+ or better; and for *summa cum laude*, A- or better. A grade of C is satisfactory, indicating success in a demanding program.

- **The highest possible GPA for a typical student is a 4.4, given that only some courses receive extra weight.**
- Only two students have ever attained an unweighted 4.0 (all straight A's), but a few others have come close.
- Students are not ranked; given our small class size, it is statistically insignificant to compare students.

College Acceptances by Unweighted GPA Range, 2016-2020 (NOTE THAT WEIGHTING CHANGED FOR THE CLASS OF 2018)

3.5 – 4.0 (A- or better): Babson, Berkeley, Boston College (2), Boston U (2), Bowdoin, Brandeis, Bryn Mawr, Calvin College, Carnegie-Mellon (3), Case Western (6), Colby, Colorado School of Mines, Columbia, Cornell College (2), DePauw, Drew, Eckerd, Emerson, Emory (2), Emory-Oxford, FIU, Fordham (2), Furman, Georgia Tech, Grinnell (2), Haverford (4), Hope, Indiana, Johns Hopkins, Kenyon (2), King's College London, Knox, Macalester, Miami, (2) Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mt. Holyoke, New College (FL), Northeastern, Notre Dame, NYU, NYU: Tisch, NYU Shanghai, NYU-Abu Dhabi, NYU: Stern (2), Occidental (2), Ohio State, Puget Sound, Queen Mary London, Rhodes (2), Rice (2), Rochester (3), Rose-Hulman, Rutgers, Sarah Lawrence, Scripps, Simmons, SLU (3), Smith, South Florida, St. Johns (2), St. Louis College of Pharmacy, Stetson, Tampa, Texas, Trinity (CT), Truman State, (2) Tufts, U Chicago (2), UAB, UC Davis (2), UC Irvine (5), UC Santa Barbara (3), UC San Diego (5), UCLA (3), UMKC, UMSL, University College London, USC (2), UT Martin, Vanderbilt, Vassar, Wash U (10), Wesleyan, William & Mary, Wisconsin, Yale: Singapore, Yale: NUS

3.0 – 3.4 (B to B+): Aberdeen, American (3), Baylor, Beloit (2), Boston U, Bradley, Case Western, Clemson, College of Charleston (2), Cornell College, Eckerd, Elon, FAU, Florida Southern (2), Hendrix, Hofstra, Illinois Urbana-Champaign (2), Illinois Springfield, Illinois Wesleyan, Indiana, Knox (3), KU, Lake Forest, Lawrence U, Macalester, Missouri, MO S&T, Northwestern, NYU, Purdue, Queens (Canada), Redlands, Rhodes, Richmond, Roanoke College, Rochester, Sarah Lawrence, SLU (3), St. Andrews, St. Olaf, Tampa, Temple, Toronto, Truman State, Tulane University, Tulsa, U of Waterloo, UC Davis, Utah, Vanderbilt, Vermont, Western Ontario, Westminster College, Willamette, Wisconsin

2.5 – 2.9 (B- to mid-B): Beloit (3), Bradley, Clark, Columbia College, Cornell College, DePaul, Illinois Chicago, Illinois State, Illinois, Wesleyan, Kansas, Kansas State, Knox, Lake Forest, Lawrence, Missouri, MO S&T, New College, Puget Sound, RIT, Rochester (2), SLU (3), Southern Illinois, Syracuse, UIC (3), Whitman

1.5 – 2.4 (C- to C+): Cornell College, Florida Southern, SLU, St. John's, SUNY Fredonia, SUNY Purchase, Tampa, Willamette