Julieta & Frank Staggs
Academy of International and
STEM Studies

2020-2021
Student Handbook

Revised December 2019
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Welcome!

Dear Staggs Academy Student:

Welcome to the Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies. This unique learning opportunity is designed to accelerate your education and personal growth. The Academy offers you more freedom and more responsibility than is offered in a traditional high school, but less freedom and more supervision than is offered to most college students. At the Academy, you will be presented with challenges and given support in facing those challenges. Our goal is to help you succeed. We saw great potential in you during the admission process, and believe the Academy is a place where talent meets opportunity, which presents itself in many forms. In the end, however, your academy experience depends on you.

It is important that you realize your membership in the Staggs Academy community is a privilege, not a right. This privilege was initially granted to you by the school’s admissions committee on the basis of the selection committee’s judgment of your past performance and of your potential to benefit from and contribute to the academy. You must earn continued membership in the Staggs Academy community through your performance and behavior, both in and out of the classroom. As an Academy student, you are required to follow university and academy regulations, as well as all local, state, and federal laws. All policies are applicable to you at all times during your two year tenure. It is also your responsibility to become familiar with all of the policies and procedures of the Texas A&M International University outlined in the documents listed below:

**Texas A&M International University Student Handbook**  
This information is available on TAMIU’s and the Staggs Academy’s Web page.  

**Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies Student Handbook**  
This information is available on the Staggs Academy’s Web page.  

A copy of our handbook has been given to the parents/guardians to keep. We recommend that you read its contents in its entirety. These documents do not constitute a contract between the university and students or parents/guardians. It is intended to function as a guidebook for general information. Because the Academy is a dynamic organization, needs and expectations change; therefore, Academy policies and procedures are subject to change. You will be notified in writing of any policy changes and are responsible for familiarizing yourself with those changes.

**Violations of any university and/or Academy regulations OR any local, state or federal law will be grounds for disciplinary action and, possibly, dismissal.** Discipline is administered according to the Discipline System described in...
this handbook (See Appendix B). To indicate understanding of these procedures, **you will be asked to sign an acknowledgement form that commits you to abide by these policies.** Again, we strongly recommend that you read this handbook carefully before you sign the agreement.

The staff at the Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies is committed to providing the necessary supports to help your son/daughter succeed. These next two years will prove to be one of the best educational learning opportunities in your child’s life.

Best wishes for a successful 2019-2020 academic year at the Staggs Academy!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Patricia E. Uribe
Director, Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies
Superintendent of Texas A&M International University ISD
5201 University Blvd. Laredo, TX 78041
Tel. (956) 326-2861 Fax (956) 326-2429
Administrative Directory

Patricia E. Uribe, Ed.D.
Director/Superintendent
puribe@tamiu.edu | 956.326.2860
Dr. Patricia E. Uribe has over 25 years’ experience in public education and has served in several administrative roles in the neighboring districts. She has also served as the founding principal of the TAMIU/Laredo Early College High School. Currently, Dr. Uribe teaches graduate courses for the College of Education within the Department of Professional Programs. Along with being a published author, Dr. Uribe has served at the educational state-level as a Leadership Facilitator and Instructional Coach with Educate Texas. Dr. Uribe holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science with a concentration in Legal Studies from Southwest Texas State University (Texas State University), a Master's Degree in Elementary Education and a Master's Degree in Educational Administration from Laredo State University (Texas A&M International University), and a Doctorate Degree in Educational Leadership collaboratively from Texas A&M University Corpus Christi and Texas A&M University Kingsville.

Naiely M. Saldaña
Counselor
naiely.saldana@tamiu.edu | 956.326.2862
Naiely Martinez-Saldaña is the Counselor for the Staggs Academy. Mrs. Saldaña joins us with expertise in the dual credit curriculum, advising, counseling, and mentoring realms. Previously, she served as the Associate Director for the Office of Recruitment and School Relations at TAMIU. During her tenure as Associate Director, Saldaña worked closely with the Laredo Early College High School and served students in a widely similar scenario such as the ones our students face. With over five years of experience in higher education, Mrs. Saldaña is a strong advocate for student success. Through her position, she oversees the academic progress and performance of the students. She is also responsible for our chapter of the National Honor Society and for Student of the Month.
Texas A&M International University

THE UNIVERSITY

Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) is an international University, poised at the Gateway to Mexico. It serves as the cultural and intellectual hub of a vibrant multilingual and multicultural community. A Member of the Texas A&M University System, TAMIU is committed to preparing students for leadership roles in their chosen profession in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national and global society. The University provides over 7,500 students with a learning environment anchored by the highest quality programs built on a solid academic foundation in the arts and sciences. To fulfill its mission, the University offers a range of baccalaureate and masters programs and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in International Business. All programs focus on developing undergraduate and graduate offerings with a progressive international agenda for global study and understanding across all disciplines. On average students come to the University from over 30 different countries each semester, creating a diverse learning and living community.

OUR MISSION

Through instruction, faculty and student research, TAMIU embodies a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

OUR HISTORY

In August of 1970, students were accepted at what was the Texas A&I University Laredo. While initially a “center” under then Texas A&I University, this was the start of a legacy of higher education for South Texas. The focus then was to address a demand in teacher education and business disciplines. Texas A&I at Laredo was organized under the upper-level concept of higher education, offering junior and senior level course work, providing a local bachelor’s degree opportunity. The upper-level University later expanded to include graduate degree programs. In September 1977, the University became Laredo State University, and its “center” status was officially removed in 1987. As the University grew, its scope widened and an expanded faculty was recruited to deliver new programs. The University became a Member of The Texas A&M University System on September 1, 1989, and its name changed to Texas A&M International University in 1993.
At TAMIU, the core curriculum introduces students to academic disciplines which form the foundation of human thought: mathematics, science, history, language, literature, the arts, and social and behavioral sciences. Our core is conceived to open new areas of learning for our students and to foster skills necessary for success in higher education. The students of the Academy will be required to complete the core curriculum. As they move through this course of study, students are encouraged to develop the capacity to articulate and support a thesis, think critically, and synthesize their observations and to perceive analogies and relationships between seemingly diverse ideas and intellectual pursuits.

In accordance with Texas Education Code, Chapter 61, Subchapter S, core curriculum requirements must be met by every student pursuing a baccalaureate degree at TAMIU, regardless of his or her major. A specific course may be used to satisfy only one core requirement. Individual academic programs may require courses contained as options in the university core curriculum to satisfy particular degree requirements. Students may be required to take extra courses if they fail to select these courses. Students following the 2013-2014 catalog and thereafter will be required to complete all core requirements prior to earning 90 semester credit hours applicable to their chosen degree. A student failing to achieve this milestone will be required to complete any remaining core curriculum requirements in the next semester of enrollment.

### Core Curriculum Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT AREA</th>
<th>COURSE OPTIONS</th>
<th>SCH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication (010)</td>
<td>ENGL 1301 and 1302 or 2311**</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics* (020)</td>
<td>College Algebra and above</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life and Physical Sciences* (030)</td>
<td>Courses can be taken from:</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ASTR, BIOL, CHEM, EPSC, GEOL or PHYS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Language, Philosophy &amp; Culture* (040)</td>
<td>Courses can be taken from:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENGL, PHIL or SPAN</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Component Area</td>
<td>Courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Arts* (050)</td>
<td>Courses can be taken from: ARTS, DANC, ENGL, MUSI, SPAN or THAR 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History (060)</td>
<td>HIST 1301 and 1302 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Science (070)</td>
<td>PSCI 2305 and 2306 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences* (080)</td>
<td>Courses can be taken from: ECO, GEOG, LEDR, PSYC or SOCI 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component Area Option I (090)</td>
<td>UNIV 1101 or UNIV 1102 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Component Area Option II* (090)</td>
<td>Life and Physical Science Lab 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component Area Option III (090)</td>
<td>UNIV 1402 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 42

**ENGL 2311 may only be used to satisfy the second 3-SCH requirement of the Core Communication Component in programs housed in the School of Engineering.**

**NOTE:** For specific core requirements, consult appropriate degree program.
Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies

UNIVERSITY HISTORY

Located on the Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) campus, Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies (formally known as The Texas Academy of International and STEM Studies) was created by State Senator Judith Zaffirini and authorized by the 79th Texas Legislature in 2005. The Academy opened on August 2014 and welcomes academically gifted and highly motivated high school students with a challenging university level curriculum.

MISSION STATEMENT

Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies offers an innovative and accelerated curriculum for motivated Texas high school students. These students will be able to excel in areas of mathematics, science, technology, engineering and international studies. The Academy seeks to encourage students to develop the creativity, curiosity, reasoning ability, and self-discipline that lead to independent thought and action, and to aid students in developing integrity that will enable them to benefit society. Prospective students must meet all the following requirements for consideration:

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Staggs Academy completed application
- Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) Score Report
- Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Score Report (compliant with Math, Reading, Writing)
- Letter of recommendation from teacher (form provided)
- Student Essay
- School transcript that includes current GPA and class rank
- Attendance Record
- Resume

Only “Complete Applications” will be considered by the selection committee. Prospective students apply as high school sophomores and must submit competitive scores. Fifty (50) high school sophomores will be admitted every fall semester, and an additional fifty (50) students will be admitted every year after that, completing the total enrollment of 100 students.
HONOR CODE

As a member of an academic community, Staggs Academy students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education, be mature, self-directed and able to manage their own affairs. Students unwilling to abide by these basic expectations will face academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Students are expected to share in the responsibility along with faculty and staff to challenge and make known acts that violate the TAMIU Honor Code. As previously stated, Staggs Academy students are subject to university rules and sanctions. For more information on the Honor Code, please visit http://www.tamiu.edu/studentaffairs/

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Students will be placed on Academic Probation at the conclusion of any long semester (fall or spring) when their institutional cumulative grade point average at Texas A&M International University falls below 2.0. Such students are encouraged to participate to the fullest in academic support programs and to seek academic advising. Students who have been placed on Academic Probation will be allowed to enroll for one additional semester in an attempt to achieve the required institutional cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better. Students are subject to suspension/dismissal if their institutional grade point average falls below a 2.0 for two consecutive semesters. (See TAMIU handbook for additional information.)


PSAT, SAT AND ACT

All 1st year students are required to take the PSAT exam during their first semester at the Academy. This is the exam used to identify National Merit Semi-Finalists, essentially all of whom become National Merit Finalists which qualifies them for prestigious scholarships. All Staggs Academy students will test in the Fall of their Junior year. If students took the SAT prior to enrolling in the Academy, it is recommended that this exam be taken again during the spring of the 1st year or the fall of the 2nd year. Students will be registering for both SAT and ACT college entrance exams beginning the Spring of their Junior year. Registration materials are available online (www.collegeboard.com), www.act.org, or in the Academy Office. Fee waivers for students are available upon eligibility.
Because university courses are so much more intense, move at a very fast pace, and assume immediate recall of prior knowledge, it is imperative that students adopt a much more rigorous study pattern than was required in high school. Grades for most courses are assigned based on only three or four exams and most courses require a comprehensive final examination. Classes meet either two or three times per week. Homework is assigned but not necessarily collected and graded. In order to be successful, it is imperative that Academy students:

- Attend all classes
- Pay attention to the professor
- Do all assigned work and study ahead
- Prepare homework the same day that is assigned
- Study each subject at least four days each week regardless of how many times the class meets per week (study each subject 30-90 minutes each day—studying is like taking medication in that you spread it out and don’t do it all at once!)
- Form study groups and participate actively in the study sessions
- Make use of the professor’s office hours or other tutorial services provided for additional help—do not hesitate to ask for help and don’t wait until the last minute
- Questions or concerns must be known to the Principal or Counselor of the Academy
- Begin to prepare for exams a week in advance
- Rewrite class notes and outline text material
- Be disciplined and responsible for your own learning
- Enjoy learning
- Get plenty of rest, physical exercise, and eat healthy
- Continue to study during breaks between semesters and during the summer

**RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES**

A unique feature of Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies is that students will have opportunities to conduct research with University professors from both Texas A&M International University (i.e. Lamar Bruni Vergara & Guillermo Benavides Z. Academic Conference) and the University of Texas Health Science Center.

Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) has chosen to focus the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) on building, integrating, and sustaining undergraduate research practices and programs, with an emphasis on applied critical thinking.
The plan is called ACT on IDEAs. ACT represents the focus of the plan – Applied Critical Thinking- while IDEAs denotes the phases of the plan- Investigate, Decide, Express, and Achieve. ACT on IDEAs will (1) Promote undergraduate research through direct connections with faculty and peers ;( 2) Empower undergraduate students by enhancing critical thinking and research skills ;( 3) Provide undergraduate students with the skills and opportunities to express their knowledge and apply it to substantive local and global issues.

SCHEDULES

The Academy counselor will assist students with registering for approved courses according to the core curriculum, degree plan, and high school graduation requirements. Students will meet regularly throughout the semesters for academic counseling and support. Students are eligible to take up to 30 SCH per year, no more than 60 for the two years in a combination of Fall and Spring.

TEXTBOOKS

The Academy provides textbooks for all courses during the academic year, this does not include summer sessions. These books must be returned at the end of the semester or if at any time the student withdraws from the Academy. Textbooks are distributed only during the first two weeks of class and it is the responsibility of the student to pick them up at the designated time. Textbooks will not be issued to the student until all required forms have been submitted and the program charge has been cleared. Students are required to pay for lost, stolen, or damaged books and materials. Failure to turn in textbooks or payment for lost, stolen or damaged books may place a hold on student records.

VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic dishonesty is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Violations for Academic dishonesty may result in dismissal from the Staggs Academy. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

Plagiarism – The act of passing off another person’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. It includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a “gift,” or obtaining, by any other means, another’s work for the submission as one’s own academic work. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- If, in a paper or assignment, you do not include material that you researched in a book, magazine, newspaper, and/or on the Web, you MUST cite the source;
- If you copy somebody’s test answers, take an essay from a magazine and pass it off as your own, lift a well-phrased sentence or two and copy and paste them without crediting the author or using quotation marks, or even pass off
somebody’s good ideas as examples of your own genius, you are committing plagiarism;

- If you borrow another’s term paper, hand in, as one’s own work, a paper purchased from an individual or off the Net, or submit, as one’s own, any papers from living group’s, club’s, or organization’s files;
- If you hand in the same paper in more than one class without the permission of the instructor.

**Cheating**—an act of deception in which a student misrepresents that he/she has mastered information related to an academic exercise. Examples include:

- Copying from another student’s tests, lab report, computer file, data listing, logs, or any other type of report or academic exercise;
- Using unauthorized materials during a test;
- Consulting a cell phone, text messages, programmable calculators with materials that give an advantage over other students during an exam;
- Using crib sheets or other hidden notes in an examination, or looking at another student’s test paper to copy strategies or answers;
- Having another person supply questions or answers from an examination to be given or in progress;
- Having a person other than oneself (registered for the class) attempt to take or take an examination or any other graded activity. In these cases, all consenting parties to the attempt to gain unfair advantage may be charged with an Honor Pledge violation;
- Deliberate falsification of laboratory results, or submission of samples or findings not legitimately derived in the situation and by the procedures prescribed or allowable;
- Revising an resubmitting a quiz or exam for regarding, without the instructor’s knowledge and consent;
- Giving or receiving unauthorized aid on a take-home examination;
- Facilitating academic dishonesty: intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate the Honor Pledge;
- Signing in another student’s name on attendance sheets, rosters, scantrons;
- Submission in a paper, thesis, lab report, or other academic exercise of falsified, invented, or fictitious data or evidence, or deliberate or knowing concealment or distortion of the true nature, origin, or function of such data or evidence;
- Procurement and/or alteration without permission from appropriate authority of examinations, papers, lab reports, or other academic exercises, whether discarded or actually used, and either before or after such materials have been handed in to the appropriate recipient;
- Collaborating with others on projects where such collaboration is expressly forbidden, or where the syllabus states the default as being one’s own work; and
- Using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying or possessing, the contents of un-administered tests, a required assignment or a past test which has, by the professor, not been allowed to be kept by their students.
Student Policies and Procedures

CLASS DAY

A typical class day is from 8:00 – 5:00; however, there may be some classes that fall outside this daily schedule. Please note that during the day when you are not in class, you should use this time as “independent study” and use your time wisely to form study groups, complete reading assignments and use any of the technology labs to complete assignments. Cowart Hall Rm 211 is your classroom that can be used anytime during the day for independent study. Classes taken outside the 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. day must be approved by the Director.

HOMEROOM CLASS

During the course of the day, the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies will assign a time and date each semester designated as “homeroom.” During this time, attendance will be taken, announcements will be made and additional academic supports such as PSAT prep, SAT prep, mentoring, etc. will be provided. Attendance to homeroom is mandatory and is handled by Staggs Academy Administration. Failure to show up to homeroom can result in removal/participation from Student Council and National Honor Society. A student will be allowed 2 excused absences from homeroom prior to losing eligibility. If for some reason you will not be attending homeroom you are responsible to contact the Staggs Academy staff and let them know prior to meeting time.

SIGNING IN

Students are required to sign in every morning before 10AM at the Academy office. Please note that even if a student’s first class does not begin until 11AM, he/she is expected to be on campus everyday by 10AM. The additional time can be used to study or visit the tutoring/writing center. Repeated violations for failing to sign in before 10 AM may be cause for dismissal.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

While there is no formal dress code, Academy students are expected to dress appropriately for school. A standardized dress code adheres to common practices of modesty, cleanliness and neatness to dress in a respectful manner within the acceptable standards of the community and in such a manner as to contribute to the academic atmosphere, not detract from it. Dress in a respectful manner. UNACCEPTABLE to Wear include: Sheer, see through shirts/blouses, tank tops, muscle shirts, halter-
tops, or any shirt/blouse with exposure to backs or midriffs, t-shirts with in appropriate language or messages and short shorts.

**LUNCH**

The University offers a meal plan that helps make the most of your time on campus. Aramark provides a range of meal plans, flexible dining hours, and convenient locations near your classes that will allow you to grab a quick bite with your friends. You can also bring lunch from home and store it in the Academy refrigerator.

**ABSENCES**

Class attendance is required. Students are expected to be in class Monday through Friday. Students or parents must call to report absence(s) to the Academy Office before or on the day of the absence before 8:30 AM. Students will be asked to complete an Absence Report Form. The Academy does not have authority to grant excused absences from class. Only the professor can approve class absences, and should be consulted regarding assignments. Please note that more than three absences may jeopardize student’s GPA and may put the student at risk of dismissal from the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies. It is the sole responsibility of the student to coordinate their absences with their professors. University faculty will not discuss those matters with anyone other than the student.

**CLASSROOM CONDUCT**

Students are expected to be alert, attentive, energetic and eager to learn. Students who exhibit disruptive behavior or show disrespect to a professor in the classroom are subject to disciplinary sanctions.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to be above reproach in all scholastic activities. Students who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies. “Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.” (See TAMIU catalog for more information)

http://www.tamiu.edu/catalog/2015-2016/appendixa.shtml
ACADEMIC DISMISSAL OR WITHDRAWAL

Student dismissal is based on approval from the Director and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Once joining the Staggs Academy, student is committing to fulfill the 2-year STEM program. Students may be dismissed from the Academy due to academic circumstances failing below 2.0 minimum GPA requirements or disciplinary infractions. Student voluntary withdrawal from the program prior to the 2 year commitment, may result in the student being required to reimburse the Academy of any cost incurred from tuition, fees and books from the semesters leading up to withdrawal.

After one semester of probation, if student fails to meet 2.0, student will be placed on Academic Suspension and thus may be dismissed from the Staggs Academy. Any student seeking to voluntarily withdraw from the Staggs Academy must set up a meeting with Staggs Academy administration. Formal written request must be submitted and cleared through Academy administrators.

UNIVERSITY GPA

University grades are available online through UCONNECT, 7-10 days after finals are completed. Grades are obtained through the University Registrar’s office and uploaded to student records, available online. Unofficial transcripts and grades are available via UCONNECT.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE POLICY

High school GPA and Rank will be calculated by merging (former) high school credits and grades to their completion of Academy credits by Staggs Academy counselor and transcript committee. Students will have access to their high school Rank/GPA through their Academy counselor. For further details on Course Levels, Class Ranking Policies, and GPA Calculations please refer to GPA Rank Polices. (Appendix A)

ACADEMIC SUPPORT STRUCTURES

The Staggs Academy, through the university, offers several academic support structures such as the Writing Center that provides free individual and small-group tutoring sessions, peer review sessions, and writing workshops. The University Learning Center (ULC) provides free one-on-one tutoring, group tutoring, supplemental instruction, review sessions, workshops and other academic services as needed or
requested. With particular courses, students will be required to attend Supplemental Instruction (SI) sessions.

OFFICE OF COUNSELING AND SERVICES AND DISABILITY SERVICES

The Office of Student Counseling and Disability Services work to promote a supportive learning community to empower all TAMIU students to be capable and competent adults while adjusting to the challenges and transitions to University life and a multicultural setting. The services include: individual, couple and group counseling; mental health awareness programs; special events; and academic and facility accommodations for students with disabilities. (University Success Center Rm 138, (956) 326-2230)

As a student selected for the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies, you are expected to practice self-discipline and to assume a shared responsibility for ensuring this development. We make every effort to assist you in managing your behavior by educating you about university policies. Violating school or university policy may subject you to dismissal from the Academy. (See Appendix B)

HEALTH SERVICES

The Office of Student Health Services offers a variety of services for the students of TAMIU. Since the students of the Academy are considered minors, the parents would have to sign forms allowing students to be treated at the clinic. By consenting, you are providing permission for the student to receive all types of care/treatment available through Student Health Services. Available services include: care and screenings by Registered Nurses and contracted staff (physician and Nurse Practitioner), diagnostic testing, provision of over-the-counter medications under physician protocols, provision of prescriptions as ordered by physician or Nurse Practitioner, women’s health services (well-woman exams and family planning), sexual health education and prevention of sexually transmitted illnesses (male and female condoms), sexual health screenings, screenings provided by City of Laredo Health Department. Please note parents can opt out of this service.

PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, harassment based on sex, including harassment because of pregnancy or related conditions, is prohibited. A pregnant/parenting student must be granted an absence for as long as the student’s physician deems the absence medically necessary. It is a violation of Title IX to ask for documentation relative to the pregnant/parenting student’s status beyond what would be required for other medical conditions. If a student would like to file a complaint for discrimination due to his or her pregnant or parenting status, please contact the TAMIU Title IX Coordinator (Lauren A. Jones, J.D., 5201 University Boulevard, KL 159B, Laredo,
The University advises a pregnant or parenting student to notify his or her professor once he or she is aware that accommodations for such will be necessary. It is first recommended that the student and professor attempt to work out the reasonable accommodations with each other. The Office of Student Conduct and Community Engagement (Mayra Hernandez, MGHernandez@tamiu.edu) can assist the student and professor in working out the reasonable accommodations. In the event that a student will need a leave of absence for a substantial period of time from the University, the University urges the student to consider a Leave of Absence as outlined in the Student Handbook. As part of our efforts to assist and encourage all students towards graduation, TAMIU provides LOA’s for students, including pregnant/parenting students, in accordance with the Attendance Rule and the Student LOA Rule. Both rules can be found in the TAMIU Student Handbook (http://www.tamiu.edu/scce/studenthandbook.shtml).

TAMIU does not discriminate or permit harassment against any individual on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity in admissions, educational programs, or employment. TAMIU does not tolerate illegal discrimination, sexual harassment, and related retaliation.

Under Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, sex discrimination includes all acts of sexual misconduct including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation; definitions for these terms can be found in the Student Handbook. For further information concerning the TAMIU Title IX procedures, please visit: Appendix G of the Student handbook and http://www.tamiu.edu/compliance/titleixcompliance.shtml.

If you would like to file a complaint relative to Title IX or any civil rights violation, please contact the TAMIU Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity/Title IX Coordinator, Lauren A. Jones, J.D., 159B Killam Library, 5201 University Boulevard, Laredo, TX 78045, TitleIX@tamiu.edu, (956)326-2857 and/or the Office of Civil Rights (Dallas Office), U.S. Department of Education, 1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620, Dallas, TX 75201-6810 (214)661-9600. Reports may also be made through the TAMIU electronic, anonymous reporting site located at www.tamiu.edu/reportit.

DustyALRT is a universal notification system that allows students, faculty and staff to be notified via text message, e-mail or pager in the event of a campus emergency or closure. It provides an innovative addition to the existing methods that the University has in place.
to alert the community of emergency situations. Subscribers to DustyALRT will pay no fees for the service, other than any regular fees associated with text messaging services. DustyALRT is for emergency messaging only and will not be used to distribute advertising or other unsolicited content.

For more information concerning DustyALRT registration, visit the following TAMIU links:

- DustyALRT Sign Up: https://dustyalrt.tamiu.edu/authentication.aspx

- DustyALRT Registration Instructions: https://dustyalrt.tamiu.edu/dustyalrt.pdf

ID CARDS

Each student will be issued a TAMIU photo Identification card, which must be carried at all times and presented to the Academy or University officials upon request. Lost identification cards must be replaced and there is a $10.00 charge for the replacement.

PROGRAM CHARGE

Staggs Academy's Program Charge (entire amount) is due on or before the first class day of each semester (fall/spring). We recommend that you pay the first installment in July/November and the second installment on the first class day. Students are expected to pay all financial obligations to the University when due. Students will be dropped from the courses after the 12th class day for non-payment and will have no recourse but to return to their comprehensive high school. (Note: Students on waivers are exempt from this policy)

For Students on Waivers: Failure to maintain a cumulative 2.5 GPA at the end of each semester will result in loss of waiver.

STUDY ABROAD

At the end of senior year, students will be given an opportunity to attend a study abroad excursion. Study abroad is a discovery process, a discovery of foreign language and academics, countries and cultures, but most importantly it is a discovery of yourself. Destination will be determined during their tenure at the Staggs Academy. Cost of program will be incurred by the student. TAMIU has a comprehensive offering of study abroad programs, financial aid, and student services to guide you in this process. Depending on funds, the Staggs Academy will also be offering scholarships. (Must be 18 years old before first travel date.)
Reading the Globe

Texas A&M International University Common Read Program, spearheaded by University College, is a University-wide initiative aimed at engaging all members of the University and the surrounding common academically oriented intellectual activity.

Since 2008, the program, dubbed “Reading the Globe”, has enabled all First Year students to engage a selected internationally focused book through their University Seminar during the Fall semester. This provided the opportunity for discourse about issues relevant to students and raises social awareness on a local and global scale.

Faculty and staff also participate in the Common Read, fostering and strengthening the growth of an intellectual community in and around TAMIU that supports students’ academic development.

Students enrolled in the Julieta and Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies will be able to write the essay to compete for the study abroad trip to the country in which the common reader was set. Students are eligible to write the essay only during the semester in which they are enrolled in UNIV 1101 Learning in a Global Context.

All of the 12-15 students winning the Essay contest must be 18 years of age before the trip commences in order to participate in the study abroad trip. For selected students not yet 18 years of age during the semester in which they enrolled in UNIV 1101, those students will be awarded a scholarship for the study abroad trip related to the next common reader so that they are able to go abroad. In this latter case, students are highly encouraged to read the new common reader and attend the said author’s presentation, as feasible.

SUMMER SCHOOL, AP CREDIT OR COURSEWORK
FROM ANOTHER INSTITUTION

Courses taken in summer prior to entrance to the Academy at a college or university will be taken for college credit and not for numerical value. Grades will not be used to contribute to Staggs Academy GPA or Rank, as coursework will come with a Letter grade only and no numerical value.

AP Exams
Any AP Exams taken will be considered for credit of the courses without a direct impact on GPA since no actual grade point average will be given for these credits.

Summer School at the Staggs Academy
All courses taken in summer between junior and senior year for students of the Staggs Academy at an institution other than TAMIU will be taken for numerical value and college credit. Grades will be used to contribute to Staggs Academy GPA or Rank. Students will
be responsible for submitting numerical grades to the counselor. If no documentation is provided, grades will be taken as follows:

**STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

A=90, B=80, C=70, D=60, F=50
Upon registration, students automatically become members of the University community and assume full responsibility for proper conduct until their separation from the institution. Misconduct at the University is not tolerated as it diminishes the overall value of the degrees awarded by TAMIU. All students at the University should be involved in assuring the honesty of all students through their own individual actions and deeds. Conduct standards at the University are set forth in writing to give students general notice of prohibited conduct. See Appendix B and TAMIU Code of Conduct. http://www.tamiu.edu/studentaffairs/pdf/judicial/Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf

**STUDENT LIFE**

TAMIU is rich in student life and the Office of Student Orientation, Leadership & Engagement (SOLE) provides many opportunities for you to grow as a young professional while unleashing your pride for our University. With over 90 student organizations, there is an opportunity for all students to find a co-curricular group that suits their academic or individual passions. Each year, SOLE helps to promote events such as Spirit Week, Resolutions Week, The Tree Lighting Ceremony and the SOLE Speaker Series- an opportunity for students to become engaged in discussions on leadership with each new month. New Student Orientation, also known as Dusty Camp, is also coordinated through SOLE. New students are introduced to important information regarding their transition to TAMIU.

**TAMIU STUDENT HANDBOOK**

It is the responsibility of the administration, faculty, staff and students to be aware of and abide by all approved policies, procedures, rules and regulations set forth by the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents that are posted on the System home page or that are disseminated through handbooks and manuals to all component campuses that make up the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS). The TAMIU Student Handbook, which contains a description of the rights and responsibilities of all students enrolled at this institution, is posted on the University website for quick references and easy access to students, faculty and staff. TAMIU Student Handbook Link is posted below: https://www.tamiu.edu/scce/studenthandbook.shtml
TRANSPORTATION

The Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies does not offer transportation. It is the responsibility of the student (and parents/guardians) to get to and from the University.

TRANSCRIPTS

Students can request transcripts online for their university coursework. Staggs Academy High School Transcripts will be available upon request directly from Administration. High School Transcripts will include their 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th year of coursework and scaled on a 100 point scale. University Transcripts are available upon request through the University Registrar’s office.

UNIVERSITY PARKING

The campus parking zones are distinguished by two areas: General Parking (free) and Reserved Parking (for Faculty and Staff). Students are allowed to park in the general parking area which does not require a permit. Each driver is responsible for properly parking his or her vehicle in the spaces provided. Vehicles parked improperly are subject to a citation.

- Parking Violations and Fines
  - On street, parallel parking is permitted in the designated areas along the West Road and East Road. On-street parallel parking is not permitted in any other areas of the University regardless of the color of the curb.
  - Parking is NOT permitted at red curbed areas at any time.
  - Parking is prohibited in all campus loading docks and driveways. Vehicles found there will be subject to fines, wheel locks, immediate towing, or impoundment.
  - Vehicles displaying improper permits that park in the reserved parking area will be immobilized with a wheel lock device (Boot)

For additional parking information, please visit the following webpage: http://www.tamiu.edu/adminis/police/trfrgs.shtml
Appendix A

Academic Achievement-District Policies
Grade Point Average/ Class Rank Policy

STUDENT ACADEMIC RECORDS

Staggs Academy student academic records consist of the student’s prior coursework from their former high school (9th and 10th grade) as well as their dual credit grades for the courses completed at Texas A&M International University. Advising and registration is conducted by the Staggs Academy counselor to ensure high school graduation requirements are being fulfilled through their dual credit coursework.

All student coursework considered for credit towards a student’s graduation plan will be calculated for GPA and rank purposes, regardless of the origin of the credits, for example: Homeschool, Private Entity, Public School District, Out of State district, etc. Equivalencies will be conducted by Staggs Academy counselor in accordance to TEA Standards for Distinguished Achievement Graduation Plan in the State of Texas.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

All dual credit coursework completed while enrolled as a Staggs Academy student and completed at TAMIU, shall be calculated on a 100-point system using their final semester averages. Maximum points for all grades will be at 100 points and will be entered as whole numbers (Professor’s discretion to round up or down).

CALCULATION

The TAMIU District shall include in the calculation of class rank, grades earned in the 9th and 10th grade of high school courses that are part of the towards graduation requirements. Student high school grades will be recorded as numerical grades in the counselor’s office and further reviewed by Transcript Committee for accuracy. Numerical grades for all courses shall be assigned grade points described below for the purpose of obtaining grade point averages (GPA) and determining class rank. These grades and class rank will be used to provide direct information about the student’s academic achievement.

PRIOR COURSE WORK

Courses taken during summer prior to entrance to the Academy at a college or university will be accepted for college and high school credit but grades will not be calculated in the Staggs Academy GPA or Rank calculations, as coursework will come with a letter grade only and no numerical value.
All AP Exams taken will be considered for college and high school credit without a direct impact on GPA since no actual grade point average will be given for these credits.

A committee made up of University faculty and staff (Registrar, Instructional Technology, College of Education, University College, College of Arts and Science, etc...) will assist the Staggs Academy Administration in verifying GPA calculations.

The Dean’s List requires a grade point average of 3.65 on all work attempted for a particular, semester, with a minimum of fifteen hours completed. The Honor Roll requires a GPA of 3.50 on all work attempted for the semester with a minimum of twelve hours completed.

The following weight grading and conversion scales will be used for grades 9-12 and for students graduating in 2016 and thereafter. All high school grade point averages will be computed to 4 decimal points for rank determination. All university/dual credit courses on the high school transcript are awarded 1 credit for high school graduation requirements. All Staggs Academy coursework will be used as whole numbers on the student transcript. Numerical course averages will be obtained directly from university professors.

Courses shall be classified as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staggs Academy Course Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Levels</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 (J)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 (Q, H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 (P, U)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CLASS RANKING EXCEPTIONS: Grade points for the following courses shall not be used in computing averages for the selection of top students or for scholastic honors.

1. Courses taken by correspondence
2. Courses where credit was obtained through testing

STUDENT RANK: A student’s class rank shall be determined according to the following:

1. Initial rank shall be determined after all grades are recorded starting with Fall semester of the students Junior year.
2. All dual credit high school courses taken at TAMIU regardless of when they were taken will be calculated in the student’s GPA.
3. Students will be limited to taking only two courses from another institution (LCC, Texas Tech, etc.) for GPA purposes. (90% of classes must come from the Staggs Academy) The time frame for these two courses will be the summer before the first semester of enrollment up until graduation. First two courses will be averaged with the high school GPA. Should there be a need to take an additional course (more than 2), it will need to be approved by the Academy administration and may be for credit only. (not part of GPA calculation)
4. Students will be responsible for bringing documentation that shows numerical grade from another institution. If a transcript is provided that shows only the letter grade, the numerical grade will be transferred as follows:
   - A = 90
   - B = 80
   - C = 70
   - D = 60
   - F = 50

VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN

The valedictorian and salutatorian shall be the top two students with the highest weighted grade point average (GPA) who have been enrolled in the District for the two years. If there is a tie, the TAMIU institutional GPA will be used to break the tie.

DROPPING A COURSE

Dropping a course: Students are expected to complete all courses for which they were registered. Students are not able to drop a course, so we ask them to be mindful of the courses they select each semester. If students are having difficulty with a class we expect them to take full advantage of the academic support structures provided to them by the Academy. (Writing Center, Tutoring Center, Library, Counseling, etc.).

Abandoning a class: Students are expected to complete all courses for which they were registered. If a student abandons a class or fails the class because he/she did not attend classes as required, he/she may be required to reimburse the Academy for tuition and
textbook of the class they failed. If a student is having difficulty with a class, the expectation is to communicate with the Academy administration for support and take full advantage of academic support structures provided to them by the Academy. (Writing Center, Tutoring Center, Library, Counseling, etc.).

Students with a D or F are required to retake the course for high school credit. The new academic grade will be replaced on the transcript once course is retaken and completed.

Students who voluntarily withdraw for the Academy before the end of the Academic year may be required to reimburse the Academy for all registration fees.

**RETAKEING A COURSE**

A passing grade is considered a 70 grade point average or above; students with a D or F are required to retake the course for high school credit. If the student fails the course, they are expected to pay out of pocket expenses for retaking the course. Failure to retake failed courses may result in a delay to high school graduation.

Students wishing to retake a course over the summer to improve a grade of a C or better will be allowed to retake it for credit as long as it is taken at TAMIU. Students who wish to retake a course in the summer will be responsible for tuition, fees, and books. The new numerical grade will be used for GPA calculations. As TAMIU policy indicates, the last grade will stand for GPA purposes.

*TAMIU Catalog Policy: Repetition of a course: If a student repeats a course that may not be taken for additional credit, it is the policy of the University to count as part of a student’s cumulative grade point average only the last grade received in the course, whether passing or failing, other than a grade of “W.” However, for purposes of grade point average calculation on course work for graduation, grades stand as recorded unless the same course is repeated at this University.*
Appendix B

Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies
Student Discipline Level System

LEVELS 1-5

The following level system is intended as a guideline in assessing the nature of given policy violations and for administering disciplinary responses consistently. The following list of specific policy violations (and the levels listed after each policy in the alphabetical section of “Student Life Policies”) is an attempt to specify consequences for more obvious types of violations and should not be considered an all-inclusive list without flexibility in individual circumstances. Sometimes behavior might fall under several categories, and in these cases, the Staggs Academy administrative staff reserves the right to determine the level and assess appropriate point values. The staff also reserves the right to determine the appropriate disciplinary level for violations of policy not listed.

LEVEL 1 (10-20 POINTS)

Examples of policy violations at this level include but are not limited to:
- Missing or arriving late to mandatory functions (homeroom, supplemental instruction, etc.)
- Noise violations
- Violates dress/grooming code
- Insubordination
- Inappropriate displays of affection
- Not signing in by 10:00 AM (daily)
- Use of obscenities, profanities, vulgar language, etc.
- Misusing school property (includes not maintaining cleanliness in STEM room)
- Roughhousing

LEVEL 2 (20-30 POINTS)

Examples of policy violations at this level include but are not limited to:
- Fraudulent use of identification/signing in for someone else
- Safety and security violations, incense, candles, open flames, unauthorized electronic devices, possession of combustible materials
- Using electronic devices inappropriately
- Inappropriate verbal/physical contact

LEVEL 3 (30-40 POINTS)

Examples of policy violations at this level include but are not limited to:
- Unruly, persistent, disruptive behavior
- Vandalism
• Fighting
• Being non-compliant
• Harassing someone (May also be Level 4 or Level 5)

**LEVEL 4 (50-90 POINTS)**

*May result in suspension* from the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies

Examples of policy violations at this level include but are not limited to:

• Participating in vandalism
• Verbally abusing staff
• Fighting
• Bullying
• Serious misbehavior
• Violating computer policy
• Violating safety and security policies (May also be Level 5)
• Harassing someone
• Interference or disruption of the educational mission of TAMIU; inappropriate behavior in class, Academy offices, STEM room, etc.
• Safety and security violations: incendiary devices, possessing firearms or prohibited weapons, fireworks, or lasers, arson, etc.
• Activities that endanger the lives of self or others
• Vandalism (willful & malicious destruction/defacing or property
• Falsifying Staggs Academy or TAMIU documents
• Possession of knife (can include pocket knife)
• Threatening behavior” verbal, physical (includes online blogs or social media)
• Conduct unbecoming a Staggs Academy student

**LEVEL 5 (100 POINTS-ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES)**

*Zero tolerance* means that certain actions will absolutely not be tolerated under any circumstances and violations *will result in an immediate dismissal review* by the Staggs Academy administration. Examples of policy violations at this level include but are not limited to:

• Possessing and/or using alcohol or illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia (includes selling, delivering)
• Acts that would constitute violations of law, other than a minor traffic violation or smoking
• Theft, (Violations of University Policy)
• Violating safety and security policies
• Violation of computer policy
• Under the influence
• Terroristic Threat
• Using/Exhibiting/Possessing Firearm
• Title 5 Penal Code Felony
• Assault Class A

**Other**
• Students who repeatedly violate Level I, II or III offenses may also be viewed as not ready for the Staggs Academy experience and may be dismissed.
• Aiding & Abetting: Assisting or encouraging others in the violation of rules and regulations. Student is found equally responsible for the violation.

**APPEALS PROCESS**

Parental questions or complaints regarding disciplinary measures should be addressed to the Staggs Academy administration. The appeal must be in writing and submitted to the Director of the Staggs Academy within fourteen (14) school days of the assessed penalty. The Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences will conduct the hearing. All decisions at this level are final.
Appendix C

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies?
   Located on the Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) campus, the Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies (formally Texas Academy) is an additional option for high school students in this region. High school juniors and seniors will be able to complete their last two years of high school while earning college credit.

2. How was the Academy formed?
   The Academy was created by State Senator Judith Zaffirini and authorized by the 79th Texas Legislature in 2005. The Academy will follow regulations of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

3. How many students will be selected?
   A cohort of 50 “rising juniors” will be selected each year. Selected students will receive free tuition, fees and books and will be able to make substantial progress towards a University degree in any area while exploring research and collaborative educational opportunities with project partners including the University of Texas Health Science Center of San Antonio’s (UTHSCSA) Laredo campus.

4. Will I earn a high school diploma?
   Upon completion of their two years in the Academy, students will have earned their high school diploma concurrently with college credits toward a bachelor’s degree.

5. How much does it cost to attend the Academy?
   After meeting all the requirements of the Academy and admitted to the program, students are responsible for a non-refundable program fee of $750/semester. However, this fee may be waived after a complete Financial Aid application is approved.

6. How do I apply?
   You can directly apply online at: http://www.tamiu.edu/coas/theacademy/Apply.shtml

7. Can I attend classes during summer?
   The Academy only offers courses during the fall and spring semesters. Students will be responsible for paying their own tuition if they attend summer school.

8. How will I know when you receive all my application documents?
   The Academy Selection Committee will review all applications and give you a call if you are missing any documents.
9. How much do the PSAT scores count? What about teacher and counselor references, transcripts, essay and interviews?
   No pre-determined weights are assigned to any file elements, and no formulas or computer programs are used to select students. Candidates are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, but must have competitive scores and transcripts, although no specific GPA or PSAT score guarantees entry. Admission is based not only on scores and transcripts, but also on apparent motivation, maturity, career interest, interviews, teacher and counselor evaluations, and behavioral record.

10. If I cannot attend Interview Day, could I be interviewed by phone or by other special arrangement?
    Sorry but no. Our process would be slowed significantly, and an undue burden would be placed on our small staff if we had to make special arrangements to accommodate schedule conflicts. There may be some flexibility as to which Interview Day may be assigned, but dates other than those already scheduled will not be entertained.

11. What are graduation requirements?
    Students will complete 60 - 68 semester credit hours with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0. A wide range of elective course options is available. Graduates receive an advanced high school diploma including college credits.

12. What curriculum does the Academy offer?
    All courses offered at the Academy are University courses taught by University faculty. The mission of the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies is to offer an innovative and accelerated curriculum for motivated Texas high school students. These students will be able to excel in areas of mathematics, science, technology, engineering and international studies. The Academy seeks to encourage students to develop the creativity, curiosity, reasoning ability, and self-discipline that lead to independent thought and action, and to aid students in developing integrity that will enable them to benefit society.

13. Will I be required to take standardized tests?
    No, the Texas Education Agency will waive the last STAAR EOC exam.

14. What is a typical day for the students at the academy?
    Academy students will report to campus by 8:00 a.m. and will be dismissed at 3:30 or 5:00 p.m., depending on their schedule. Students will follow their class schedule as would any other TAMIU student. Students will be required to start off their day at an assigned classroom (Cowart Hall 211).

15. How much does it cost to attend the Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies?
    The Academy is funded by TAMIU, the Foundation System, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Laredo Campus and private donors. The Academy will pay for tuition, fees, and books. A program charge of $750 (non-refundable) per semester will be required and the student will be responsible for
their own meals. Payments can be made on-line, mailed or in person at the Bursar’s Office (Zaffirini Success Center, Room 137).

16. **Where are the Academy Students housed?**
   All Academy students will be housed in Cowart Hall 211 (classroom) and 213 (offices).

17. **Can students participate in University life?**
   Students will be able to participate in University life. Some organizations offer numerous leadership and service opportunities, from Student Government to campus clubs, to musical and theatrical groups and intramural athletics. The University sponsors dances, game and activity nights, movies, plays, and recreation. Academy students are at liberty to participate in many of the TAMIU sponsored organizations and events.

18. **Is transportation provided to Texas A&M International University (TAMIU)?**
   At this time, the Academy does not offer transportation to its students. It is the student’s family’s responsibility to transport their student to and from the Academy.

19. **Are home-schooled students admitted?**
   Yes, but they may require additional documents and screening.