



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the overall mission of TAF Academy?

TAF Academy is a 6th-12th grade school model with a mission to prepare every student for college and for life through a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) focused curriculum. Our goal is to enlist students as active participants in their education and to cultivate a keen awareness of their important role within the world.

Is this a Charter School?

No, Charter Schools are not allowed in Washington State. Therefore, private sector contributions to education reform require creative partnerships with public school districts. TAF Academy was formed through such a partnership between Technology Access Foundation (TAF) and Federal Way Public Schools (FWPS).

What grade levels do you offer?

TAF Academy is a combined Middle and High School. For the 2010-2011 academic year, we will serve students in 6th-11th grades.

TAF Academy will reach full enrollment the following year, when we will enroll students in all grades 6 through 12.

What is the average class size?

All classes are capped at 25 students per class with a maximum of 50 students per grade level.

How many students currently attend TAF Academy?

Enrollment at TAF Academy for the 2009-2010 academic year stands at 195 students in grades 6 through 10.

Where is the school located?

TAF Academy is located between the campuses of Totem Middle School and Star Lake Elementary at:

**26630 40th Ave. S
Kent, WA 98032**

Does the school provide transportation to students who live outside of the area?

No. Parents of students coming to TAF Academy from outside of the school's boundaries are expected to provide their own transportation to and from TAF Academy.

Do students have to take an entrance exam to attend the school?

No. Entrance exams are not required for admission to TAF Academy. Once enrolled, new TAF Academy students do take placement tests in both Math and Literacy (reading/writing). These assessments ensure that teachers know where each student stands academically. Teachers can then differentiate classroom instruction in a way that meets the needs of all students.

What after-school academic support is available to students?

Twice weekly tutoring is mandatory for all students scoring below grade level on the WASL.

How balanced is the curriculum?

TAF Academy uses Project Based Learning (PBL) and Authentic Intellectual Work (AIW) to integrate subject matter while providing real world experience to students. Technology is woven throughout the projects and is a core component in all classroom instruction.

What language programs, if any, does TAF Academy offer?

TAF Academy currently offers French and Japanese foreign language classes during the school day.

What's the learning environment like?

At TAF Academy the principal, faculty, staff, parents and students work together using critical tools, resources and support to build a culture of success and to uphold an expectation of high academic achievement for all students ensuring that every student meets their academic and personal goals. Academic excellence is part of the fabric of TAF Academy. Every member of the school community works together to create an excellent educational environment for students.

How is technology used to support teaching and learning at this school?

Technology is a critical component of TAF Academy's curricular framework. TAF Academy uses technology to provide new skills, techniques and information to both teachers and students. Technology is used in each classroom and incorporated into the work that is done each day by teachers and students through use of Smart Boards, document cameras, and the Digital Learning Commons (DLC).

Are computers available to all students?

Yes. TAF Academy has a 1:1 laptop program, where each student is provided a laptop for work on campus during the school day.

What extracurricular opportunities (sports, clubs, and community service) are available for students?

TAF Academy students have the option of attending Quasar and Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) classes after school. Quasar is a technical training and internship program. Current ELOs include Bridge Building, SAT Prep, French Club, Art Club, and KODU. If interested, middle school students can play sports at Totem Middle School and high school students can play sports at the high school located within their home boundaries.

How does the school monitor student progress towards meeting grade-level standards?

TAF Academy employs an Achievement Manager, who works with the data received from the standardized tests administered to TAF Academy students.

The information the Achievement Manager provides helps to inform and guide teachers around the use of student work and data in determining how to better support students during the school-day and through afterschool academic support and enrichment to make certain that all grade-level standards are not just being met, but exceeded.

How does TAF Academy prepare students for their careers?

TAF Academy invites professionals from a variety of fields to talk to students as part of the monthly **Juicy Jobs** program.

Then, starting in their sophomore year of high school, TAF Academy students have the option to participate in an internship training program called **Quasar** and will be eligible for paid summer internships in STEM-related fields at local companies.

How is the school funded?

TAF Academy is a joint venture between Federal Way Public Schools and the Technology Access Foundation. Funding for TAF Academy combines public funding from Washington State and private funding from TAF. Private funds are provided to supplement public funds provided by the Federal Way School District.

How do I enroll my child into TAF Academy?

If you are interested in enrolling at TAF Academy, contact Denise Mosley in the TAF Academy office at 253.945.5187 or visit the TAF Academy website (www.fwps.org/taf) to obtain an application. Students outside of Federal Way are welcome to apply through Choice Enrollment.

Due to small class sizes, **space is limited**. Submit your application today!

What opportunities are there for parental involvement and engagement?

TAF Academy has a dedicated and energetic Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), and all TAF Academy parents are welcome to join this group. They get together regularly to support our students, staff and parents to reach academic excellence; to develop unity and pride as a school community through innovative ideas; to inspire, motivate, and empower students individually and collectively; and to be positive stewards in the local and business communities.

What kinds of exchanges do teachers have with students?

Because TAF Academy classes are capped at 25 students with no more than 50 students per grade, small classes allow for individualized instruction and attention, and promote opportunities for students to develop relationships with teachers and peers. TAF Academy students feel recognized, knowing they are not just another face in the crowd.

What professional development opportunities do teachers have?

TAF ensures that all classroom teachers are continually learning, bringing new best practices to the classroom, and reflecting on their work. Operating as a Professional Learning Community (PLC), TAF Academy teachers meet weekly for planning and collaboration to share resources and knowledge necessary for teaching specific skills and to give feedback to peers in constructive ways.

They continually build their knowledge base in order to offer effective instructional strategies that ensure all students have a full grasp of the material. With guidance from an instructional coach, faculty members engage in action research, which encourages them to continually apply critical thinking and active reflection to their daily teaching practices, thus building their efficacy as instructors.

Who is Technology Access Foundation (TAF)?

TAF is a Seattle-based nonprofit organization that prepares students of color for success in today's technology-driven world. With support from its programs, such as TechStart and TAF Academy, more students in public schools **graduate high school on-time, ready to succeed in college and in whatever career they choose**

For more information about enrolling your student at TAF Academy, visit our website <http://www.fwps.org/taf>

or contact TAF Academy Office Manager Denise Mosley:
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dmosley@fwps.org