



## MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SEARCH TAIPEI AMERICAN SCHOOL

Taipei City, Taiwan  
July 1, 2019



*The following was sent to us by Sharon Hennessy, Head of School at Taipei American School. It is a very accurate summary of the Middle School. It is worth noting that RG175 search consultants Tom Hudnut and Debbie Reed, respectively, chaired the last two accreditation teams to visit TAS. They know the School intimately and look forward to discussing the position and the School with interested candidates.*

### **The Taipei American School Middle School**

consists of 68 teaching faculty, 20 non-teaching staff, and approximately 600 students in Grades 6 to 8. The Middle School prides itself on setting a strong academic foundation for its students, which successfully prepares them for the rigors of the Upper School and believes in providing all students with the opportunity to develop skills in a number of curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. The vast range of offerings further challenges students in areas of already-known strengths and passions, while also exposing our middle school students to new and unfamiliar learning experiences that will broaden their outlook and knowledge.

The Middle School has worked hard in recent years to align itself with the Upper School in not only academic areas including mathematics, science, and Mandarin, but also in important instructional areas including robotics, performing arts, and athletics. Middle school teachers are grouped into teaching teams that consist of the “core” subjects of mathematics, science, English, and history, as well as within their academic departments. This deliberate team focus allows middle school teachers to work together on behalf of the students and the curriculum. The faculty aim to consider all students from an educational, social, and emotional point of view that is supported by the grade-level counselors, psychologists, academic support teachers, English for academic language teachers, and speech and language therapists.

In 2018, there was a major focus on re-aligning the mathematics and Mandarin curriculums in both the Lower School and the Upper School. While the department chairs have been a major part of this



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students to play in any of the 11 TAS sports offered throughout the school year. The middle school sports program is also well aligned with the Upper School varsity sports program and allows for the student-athletes to be well prepared for Upper School sports. Additionally, there is a focus on fitness and training programs are offered throughout the entire year for all middle school students, with this “movement” and skills-based training well supported by the PE curriculum.

The performing and visual arts also play an integral part in the Middle School fabric. The centerpiece is the

Middle School Musical, which involves 100 students and is a highlight of the Middle School community. Various other performances are delivered on a regular basis by the student musicians, dancers, and actors. The art and innovation department is also highly involved with the movement towards technology, with both art teachers heavily planning to implement a new curriculum in the Tech Cube.

change, the Middle School Principal has and will continue to be a driving force ensuring that the changes move from theory to reality. Sitting in “the middle” presents some unique challenges, including the need to work with the entire school while maintaining an appropriate Middle School developmental focus.

There is one counselor per grade level that follows the students as they move from Grade 6 to Grade 8. In this division, faculty and staff work very hard to develop adult and student relationships through homeroom groupings and various activities hosted throughout the year that include Camp Taiwan, Wellness Wednesdays, Spirit Week, and community service.

Athletics is an integral part of the School and has been a major component of the TAS *Strategic Plan*. In the Middle School, the aim is to provide the opportunity for



Click on image above to watch the *Essential Capacities* video a student made in 2017



## STRENGTHS OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

The students, the faculty, and the supportive parent community provide TAS with its foundation for success. All three major stakeholders have produced a very special culture, where expectations are high and they work very hard to achieve their goals. Celebrating successes, the division also recognizes the need to continually improve, which is accomplished through self-reflection and the use of data.

The faculty and staff are prepared to change; both students and teachers are often the catalysts for this improvement. The Middle School Principal, with the guidance and support of the Head of School and other senior administrators, has the responsibility to coordinate these middle school changes to align with the *Strategic Plan*.

The Middle School has a number of offerings that have helped drive various school wide programs. Model United Nations (MUN) is an extracurricular activity offered to Grades 6 - 12 that enables students to attend and host various conferences around the world. The most recent program initiative in the Middle School is public speaking and debate, where for the first time in February 2019, a TAS middle school team will travel to the United States to compete in debate tournaments. This success is also found in VEX Robotics, in which the TAS middle school team has qualified for the World Championship for the last two years.

As a campus, the TAS Middle School possesses amazing facilities. The completion of the Tech Cube in December 2018 will be the jewel in the crown for the entire school supporting enhancements in the areas of performing arts, scientific research, art and innovation, and robotics.





The community's strong academic expectations have supported recent academic changes. There is a commitment to continuing this focus including significant changes to the Middle School schedule with the purpose of:

- Increasing academic instruction time so that world languages (Mandarin, Spanish, and Classics) become the fifth "core" subject.
- Ensuring a greater consistency in class sizes (while we have an average of approximately 16 students per class, the reality is that there is a huge variation in class numbers because of restrictions within the current Middle School schedule).
- Offering a greater depth and breadth for our elective courses more in line with the *Strategic Plan* and the Upper School.
- Make proper use of the new Tech Cube and enhance our STEAM program.
- Enhance our homeroom program through more regular meeting times and opportunities for wellness initiatives and community building in the Middle School.
- Protection of common planning time for teaching teams and departments.



## GOALS FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

TAS provides an amazing amount of high-quality professional development (PD) for faculty and staff. In recent years, the School has deliberately planned all PD around the *Strategic Plan* and has brought experts and consultants to TAS, rather than haphazardly sending teachers off to various conferences and workshops. With this approach in mind, the Middle School is centering the PD for 2018 on:

- Writing across the curriculum—led by TAS Director of Pedagogy and Curriculum Dr. Nathaniel Smith
- Responsive Classroom—tied in with TAS wellness goals and builds on work that the Lower School is doing in this area of positive education

The Middle School has worked very hard to improve transitions for new students to TAS, as well as from the Middle School to the Upper School. The development of strong relationships between the Middle School and Upper School departments and administration have produced significant benefits for the students as they move from the Middle School to the Upper School. The Lower and Middle School administrations are also focusing on needed



changes that will ensure the same ease of transition for students as they move from Grade 5 to Grade 6.

During the 2018-19 school year, TAS will focus on growing the STEAM program to take full advantage of the new Tech Cube building. While offering new STEAM electives, one Middle School goal is to have all teachers within every subject area utilize the new Tech Cube, developing activities and lesson plans with an approach that embraces STEAM across the curriculum. This year the pilot program of examining a “Mission to Mars” is being integrated across all STEAM subjects in Grade 7. The goal is for interdisciplinary learning to occur across the Middle School curriculum, which a number of faculty are focusing on this school year.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Candidates wishing to be considered for the Taipei American School’s Middle School Principal position should send, **in a single PDF**, a letter detailing their interest, a resume, and a writing sample to **BOTH**:

Deborah E. Reed  
[dereed2014@gmail.com](mailto:dereed2014@gmail.com)  
 626-840-5898

AND

Thomas C. Hudnut  
[tom@tomhudnut.com](mailto:tom@tomhudnut.com)  
 818-512-3811



**Application Deadline: October 1, 2018;  
 formal application by November 1, 2018**