



# ***Academy Student Handbook***

*(for current and prospective academy students)*

**2018 - 2019**



# The Covington Middle School Fine Arts Academy Experience

**Date built:** 1986

**Grades:** 6th-8th

**Mascot:** Colts

**School Colors:** Maroon and Gold

## **About the Covington Middle School namesakes:**

Covington, built in 1986, was named after Weldon and Verna Covington. They were master teachers in music, and their bands always ranked among the top in state competitions. Their teaching careers spanned more than 50 years, and together they developed the successful music programs for the District.

Mr. Covington began teaching in AISD in 1932. Under his guidance, the band program grew from eight members to over 1,000 students. From 1935 on, his bands were winning first division places in the National Band Contests. In 1952, he was invited to join the American Bandmaster's Association, becoming recognized internationally as a leader in the concert band field.

Mrs. Covington started teaching immediately after graduating from the University of Texas with a degree in music education, becoming the first woman band director in Texas. Twice, her bands were runner-up to the honor band and her junior high bands consistently won many state and national honors.

The Covingtons were members of the Texas Music Educators Association for over 50 years. Mr. Covington served TMEA as the band and orchestra chairman and also as president in 1947.

Mr. and Mrs. Covington gave their careers to their students and to AISD. They served Texas' music through various programs and functions all their lives and are known for their devotion and zest in nurturing thousands of children who received a musical blessing from their instruction.

Covington Middle School Fine Arts Academy continues this tradition of dedication to the development of artistic talent and skill in young people today. Come experience our connected learning community, commitment to excellence in arts and academics, and celebration of the unique story that each individual scholar brings to our world.



## Overview

The Covington Middle School Fine Arts Academy (CMSFAA) is Austin ISD's signature middle school fine arts program. At Covington Middle School all students have access to all fine arts programs. However, only students accepted into the CMSFAA are assured a seat in the class of their primary strand. The CMSFAA accepts students at the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels. Students remain FAA members for their entire middle school career, unless they are removed from the program. All CMSFAA students must meet the requirements of their primary strand each school year.

CMSFAA students may switch primary strands at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Contact Ruth Lim, [ruth.lim@austinisd.org](mailto:ruth.lim@austinisd.org), or Dawn Piper, [dawn.piper@austinisd.org](mailto:dawn.piper@austinisd.org), for more information.

If a CMSFAA student is in danger of being removed from the CMSFAA, the student's CMSFAA advisor will serve as the point of contact for all parties and will collaborate with the student, parent, counselor and administrator according to the removal process as described in this handbook. A student that withdraws or is removed from the CMSFAA may not reapply at a later time. Transfer students that withdraw or are removed from the FAA will lose their transfer to Covington.

### Shadowing Opportunities

Students invited to audition will be able to shadow during the month of February. Dates will be posted on the school's website. Ruth Lim will arrange shadowing dates via email for qualified students. All students should complete and submit the shadowing request form with their application.

### Acceptance into the Covington Middle School Fine Arts Academy is based on the following:

- Completed application
- Teacher recommendations
- Student written essay
- Academic performance
- Daily attendance
- Discipline history
- Interview/Audition (which includes portfolio)



## Requirements for ALL Fine Arts Academy students:

- Maintain academic eligibility
- Maintain acceptable daily attendance
- Abide by the student code of conduct
- MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THEIR FINE ARTS ACADEMY STRAND
- Attend at least two activities (performances, exhibits, etc.) outside your primary strand

### Minimum Requirements by Strand

#### Minimum requirements for VISUAL ARTS majors:

One semester in 6th grade. One year in 7th and 8th grades.

Participate in middle school Visual Arts Scholastic Event (Jr. VASE) each year

#### Minimum requirements for DIGITAL ARTS & MEDIA majors:

One semester in 6th grade. One year in 7th and 8th grades.

Participate in at least one annual event: Jr. VASE, ATP1 competition, AISD Digital Arts & Media Festival

#### Minimum requirements for THEATRE ARTS majors:

One semester in 6th grade. One year in 7th and 8th grades.

Specific expectations articulated in class syllabi, guidelines and grading rubrics

Attend two Fine Art performances (other than those in which you are performing) per semester

#### Minimum requirements for DANCE majors:

One semester in 6th grade. One year in 7th and 8th grades.

Participate in both dance productions (1 each semester,) as well as high school performance opportunities, under Academy direction.

Participate under 1 competition, under Academy direction. Maintain passing grades in all subjects and at least a B average in dance.

#### Minimum requirements for MUSIC majors:

Music majors are required to participate in all performances

#### SOLO AND ENSEMBLE:

Solo and Ensemble each year (must perform an accompanied solo); TMEA Region Band Audition each year (not for 1<sup>st</sup> year players); attend two Fine Art performances (other than those in which you are performing) per semester; perform in the Spring Fine Arts Academy recital.

#### CHOIR:

Two years of intermediate/advanced treble or tenor/bass choir in 7th and 8th grade; UIL Solo and Ensemble each year; TMEA region auditions each year; attend two Fine Art performances (other than those in which you are performing) per semester.

#### ORCHESTRA:

Two semesters of beginning orchestra class, then intermediate/advanced class; enrollment in UIL competing orchestra ensemble each year; AISD Solo and Ensemble Contest; audition for All-region Orchestra each year; attend two Fine Art performances (other than those in which you are performing) per semester.

#### CLASSICAL GUITAR:

Year-long guitar class each year; Solo & Ensemble each year (must perform a solo); attend two Fine Art performances (other than those in which you are performing) per semester.



## Band

**Website:** [www.covingtoncolts.org](http://www.covingtoncolts.org)

The Covington Middle School Band program is highly respected throughout the region on the concert stage. The bands consistently receive 1st Divisions in UIL Concert and Sight-reading. They have traveled and competed across Texas receiving Outstanding Ensemble awards.

Covington Band has a long-standing tradition of excellence, and we would love to have you join us.

The following instrumental ensembles and music classes are offered and taught by the Covington Band staff. Instrumental Ensembles:

- Wind Ensemble
- Gold Band
- Maroon Band
- Beginning Band (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Jazz Band\*
- Steel Drums\*

\*You must be concurrently enrolled in an ensemble. Members of rhythm section (guitar, bass, drum set, piano) are not required to be in one of the aforementioned concert groups.

## Classes

For Academy band majors, band class is required both semesters of your 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. All instrumental ensembles are offered as a fine arts credit or elective. To request band on your schedule, you must sign up for Band on the choice sheet. After your audition, the directors will place you in one of the concert instrumental ensembles.

For 6<sup>th</sup> graders, classes are broken out by instrument: beginning clarinet, beginning double reed, beginning euphonium, beginning flute, beginning horn, beginning percussion, beginning saxophone, beginning trombone, beginning tuba, and beginning trumpet.

For 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, students are placed by audition into either the Wind Ensemble, Gold or Maroon Band Jazz Band and Steel Drum classes – placement by audition.

## Band Major Academy Requirements

- \_\_\_ Perform an accompanied solo at Band Solo and Ensemble each year
- \_\_\_ Audition for TMEA Region Band each year
- \_\_\_ Attend two Fine Art performances (other than those in which you are performing)
- \_\_\_ Perform in the Spring Fine Arts Academy recital
- \_\_\_ Maintain passing grades in all subjects and at least a B average in Band.

For additional information, please do not hesitate to call the Covington Band Faculty: **Ruth Lim**, Director of Bands, 512-414-5397 or  
**Kyle Norris**, Assistant Band Director  
**Arnie Yanez**, Assistant Band Director  
[ruth.lim@austinisd.org](mailto:ruth.lim@austinisd.org)



## Classical Guitar

**Website:** [www.covingtoncolts.org](http://www.covingtoncolts.org)

**The Covington Fine Arts Academy offers three levels of classical guitar studies:**

- **Beginning Classical Guitar:** The primary focus of this ensemble is for players to develop correct technique, and advance their ability to express themselves musically. The goal of the ensemble is to prepare students to play in the Intermediate/Advanced Classical Guitar Ensemble.
- **Intermediate/Advanced Classical Guitar:** This performing ensemble contains the top classical guitar players at Covington Fine Arts Academy. The ensemble studies challenging pieces requiring high degrees of independence from all musicians. This group will represent Covington Fine Arts Academy at the Austin Concert and Sight-reading Festival. They will be the representative ensemble for ALL AISD and Austin Classical Guitar (ACG) events. A limited number of sixth grade students with guitar experience will be eligible to audition for this group.

### Goals

1. **Performance/Practice:** To develop skills and practice habits in guitar playing in order to perform expressively with beautiful tone, rhythm, phrasing, articulation, dynamics, style and intonation.
2. **Listening:** To become sensitive listeners and to describe music intelligently through words.
3. **Musicianship:** To understand musical structures and ideas including but not limited to notation, theory, and music in relation to history and culture.
4. **General Procedures:** Follow daily rehearsal procedures, as outlined in the Classical Guitar handbook. Attend all performance obligations listed in the school instrumental music calendar. Meet individual responsibilities for the care and maintenance of his/her instrument and music.

### Classical Guitar Major Academy Requirements

- \_\_\_ Perform an accompanied solo at Classical Guitar Solo and Ensemble each year
- \_\_\_ Enroll in the year-long classical guitar class
- \_\_\_ Attend two Fine Art performances (other than performances in which you are performing)
- \_\_\_ Perform in the Spring Fine Arts Academy recital
- \_\_\_ Maintain passing grades in all subjects and at least a B average in Classical guitar.

For additional information, please do not hesitate to call:  
Jeff Hall, Orchestra Director, [jeffrey.hall@austinisd.org](mailto:jeffrey.hall@austinisd.org)  
Class phone: 512-841-3724



## Dance

### Website:

[www.covingtondance.weebly.com](http://www.covingtondance.weebly.com)

The Covington Fine Arts Academy offers a variety of dance studies:

- **6<sup>th</sup> grade Dance:** Semester Long Course (currently) – Students will focus on exploring movement and building basic dance skills/techniques to begin their dance education. The curriculum will include: Elements of Dance, Ballet, Jazz, Contemporary, Hip-Hop, Musical Theatre, and Choreographic Processes with a required Fall and/or Spring performance. This course is great prep for those interested in auditioning for Covington Dance Company in the spring. Dance is offered as a Physical Education credit in middle school, so we will also emphasize overall health and fitness for each child.
- **7<sup>th</sup>/ 8<sup>th</sup> grade Dance:** Semester Long Course (currently) – Students will learn and develop kinesthetic awareness, proper body alignment, physical strength, flexibility, endurance, and care of the body while exploring expressive movement through dance technique. The curriculum will include: Ballet, Jazz, Contemporary, Hip-Hop, Musical Theatre, and Choreographic Processes with a required Fall and Spring performance. Dance is offered as a Physical Education credit in middle school, so we will also emphasize overall health and fitness for each child.
- **Dance Company:** Yearlong Course – The purpose of the company is to provide dancers with the following: performance opportunities throughout the year (in addition to the Fall and Spring Show), dance training, build technique skills, and dance artistry. Auditions are held in the spring each year and open to students who will be entering 7th or 8th grade for the following school year. The curriculum will include: Ballet, Jazz, Contemporary, Hip Hop, Pom, Musical Theatre, and additional choreography/dance production elements throughout the year.

Year-long dance classes count as the required physical education classes.

## Dance Major Academy Requirements

- \_\_\_ Enroll in the year-long dance class (preferably Dance Company)
- \_\_\_ Attend two Fine Art performances (other than performances in which you are performing)
- \_\_\_ Perform in both dance productions (1 each semester)
- \_\_\_ Optional performance in 1 or 2 High School opportunities
- \_\_\_ Maintain passing grades in all subjects and at least a B average in dance.

For additional information, please do not hesitate to call the Covington Dance Faculty:

**Bethany Weber**, Dance Director

512-841-3660 [bethany.weber@austinisd.org](mailto:bethany.weber@austinisd.org)



## Digital Arts & Media

The Digital Arts and Media program is designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of digital media creation, then develop skill in creative applications, based on individual performance. The program is divided into three sections, each complimenting the other. The program aims to enhance computer literacy, to analyze current and emerging technologies, and to challenge the student to produce unique, creative multimedia projects. Each course offers students the opportunity to develop as an artist while participating in the shared experience of film production.

The Covington Digital Arts and Media program offers the following courses:

6<sup>th</sup> grade: **Graphic Design**

7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade: **Graphic Design**

**Graphic Design Yearbook**

**Multimedia and Animation I (Focus on Animation)**

**Multimedia and Animation II (Focus on Video Production)**

**Video Game Design**

### Digital Arts & Media Major Academy Requirements

- \_\_\_\_\_ Semester-long course in 6th grade. Year-long course in 7th and 8th grades.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Participation in at least one annual event: Jr. VASE, ATP1 competition, Digital Arts and Media Festival (AISD).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend two Fine Art performances (other than performances in which you are performing)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Maintain passing grades in all subjects and at least a B average in Digital Arts classes.

For additional information, please do not hesitate to call the Covington Digital Arts & Media Faculty:

**Amy Ishee**, Multimedia/Animation/Video Game Design Instructor

512-841-3665 – [amy.ishee@austinisd.org](mailto:amy.ishee@austinisd.org)



## Orchestra

**Website:** [www.covingtoncolts.org](http://www.covingtoncolts.org)

The Covington Fine Arts Academy Orchestra program, is an award-winning program with a long history of excellence. Academy orchestra majors are required to be in one of the orchestra ensembles each year, as well as to perform as a soloist and chamber musician.

Fine Arts Academy musicians have many opportunities to perform. The Orchestra receives support from the Austin Chamber Music Center, which provides weekly coaching for students in chamber ensembles. In addition, students work closely with the Crockett orchestra directors who visit often to clinic individuals and small groups.

### Orchestra Classes

The following classes are available to Orchestra students:

- **Covington Symphony Orchestra**—Entry into this orchestra is by audition only. This ensemble serves as our Varsity Orchestra in all competitions and represents the Orchestra program at Covington at all showcases and other Fine Arts academy events.
- **Covington Concert Orchestra**—This orchestra is made up of students with at least one year of playing experience. It is the Non-Varsity Orchestra at all competitions.
- **Covington Beginning Orchestra**— This orchestra is for beginners and no music experience is needed. This class provides the foundation for all of the other orchestras.
- **Instrumental Ensemble**-These semester long classes are designed to supplement the Intermediate or Advanced Orchestra and are open to violin, viola, cello and bass. The focus in each class will be alternative styles and students will have the opportunity to perform at more casual venues.

### Orchestra Major Academy Requirements

- \_\_\_ Perform a solo at Orchestra Solo and Ensemble each year
- \_\_\_ Audition for TMEA Region Orchestra during 8<sup>th</sup> grade year
- \_\_\_ Attend two Fine Art performances (other than those in which you are performing in) each semester
- \_\_\_ Perform in the Spring Fine Arts Academy recital
- \_\_\_ Participation in the scheduled concerts and extra rehearsals
- \_\_\_ Maintain passing grades in all subjects and at least a B average in Orchestra

#### Recommendations

- Private lesson enrollment
- Daily practice
- Austin Youth Orchestra participation

For additional information, please do not hesitate to call:

Jeff Hall, Orchestra Director

512-841-3724 - [jeffrey.hall@austinisd.org](mailto:jeffrey.hall@austinisd.org)



## Theatre Arts

**Website:** [www.covingtoncolts.org](http://www.covingtoncolts.org)

The Theatre at Covington Fine Arts Academy is a 3-year high school preparatory program in the arts. We emphasize creating a well-rounded student artist who feels comfortable in their own skin, and has confidence in their creative abilities. The performance and problem solving skills students learn in theatre help them not only in the performance sphere but in every aspect of business, education, leadership, and community service. As Stella Adler once reflected, "The theatre was created to tell people the truth about life and the social situation. The tools learned in theatre can help students change their reality."

Theatre offerings are broken down into semester-long beginning classes, and year-long intermediate and advanced production classes. Students majoring in theatre will be leveled by ability based on their audition. All other incoming students at Covington will start with a beginning course and work their way up as their ability level dictates.

As a department we produce at least two one-act mainstage shows each year, as well as one or more school-wide musicals. We also represent Covington at the spring AISD drama festival and the AISD Fall One Act Play Festival where students compete in individual and small group performances. These opportunities are supplemented by class-created performances of monologues and scenes to build their audition repertoire and experience level. The stage is our laboratory for students to practice the skills they learn in class every day and the results are outstanding!

### Theatre Arts Major Academy Requirements

- \_\_\_ Semester-long course in 6th grade. Year-long course in 7th and 8th grades.
- \_\_\_ Attend two Fine Art performances (other than performances in which you are performing) \_
- \_\_\_ Maintain passing grades in all subjects and at least a B average in Theatre Arts
- \_\_\_ Other specific expectations articulated in class syllabi, guidelines, and grading rubrics throughout the semester

For additional information, please do not hesitate to call the Covington Theatre Arts Faculty:

Nola Kogan, Theatre Director  
512-841-3678 - [nola.kogan@austinisd.org](mailto:nola.kogan@austinisd.org)



## Visual Art

**Website:** [www.covingtoncolts.org](http://www.covingtoncolts.org)

The Visual Arts Program at Covington Fine Arts Academy focuses on the development of technical skills in a variety of media. In the art program, students will learn new techniques and sharpen their skills while exploring artists and art history. Areas of visual art studies are: drawing, painting, ceramics, printmaking, screenprinting, 2D/3D design, sculpture and found art.

### Visual Arts Classes

- **Art MS 1** — is offered as a semester-long class, and is open to 6<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- **Art MS 2** — is offered as a year-long class, and is open to 7<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- **Art MS 3** — is offered as a year-long class, and is open to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

### Visual Arts Major Academy Requirements

- \_\_\_ Participate in middle school Visual Arts Scholastic Event (Jr. VaSE) each year
- \_\_\_ Attend at least two activities (performances, exhibits, etc) outside of your primary strand
- \_\_\_ Maintain passing grades in all subjects and at least a B average in Visual Arts
- \_\_\_ Semester-long course in 6th grade. Year-long course in 7th and 8th grades.

For additional information, please do not hesitate to call the Covington Visual Arts Faculty:

**Dawn Piper**, Art Teacher, 512-841-3680  
dpiper@austinisd.org



## Vocal Music

**Website:** [www.covingtoncolts.org](http://www.covingtoncolts.org)

There are many opportunities to participate in vocal music at the Covington Fine Arts Academy. The following courses are offered for vocal majors:

### ***Men's Choir***

This is an audition-only group consisting of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys, which will have a focus in repertoire, vocal and choral technique, while continuing their curriculum from the Beginning Choir. This group also participates in other "gigs" that surface throughout the year; i.e. Christmas caroling, local events, nursing homes, National Anthem performances for athletic events, etc. The students will perform in at least five scheduled concerts including the Fall Concert, Winter Concert, school assemblies, UIL. They also have the opportunity to participate in the All-City Choral Festival as well as a winter performance for Covington's feeder elementary schools.

### ***Varsity Treble and Intermediate Treble Choir***

These choirs consists of a select group of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls selected through an audition process during the previous year. These students will work on advanced repertoire and choral technique. They will perform in at least five scheduled concerts including the fall concert, winter concert, school assemblies, and UIL. This group also participates in other "gigs" that surface throughout the year; i.e. local events, nursing homes, National Anthem performances for athletic events, etc. They also have the opportunity to participate in the All-City Choral Festival as well as a winter performance for Covington's feeder elementary schools.

### ***Pop! - Beginning Choir***

Consisting of 6<sup>th</sup> grade males and females, this choir will have a focus in repertoire, vocal and choral technique, and music theory. These students have the opportunity to participate in the All-City Choral Festival, and Solo and Ensemble competition. The students will perform in at least three scheduled concerts including the Fall Concert, and Winter Concert.

## Vocal Arts Major Academy Requirements

- \_\_\_ Perform an accompanied solo at Choir UIL Solo and Ensemble (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years)
- \_\_\_ Audition for TMEA Region Choir (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years)
- \_\_\_ Attend two Fine Art performances (other than those in which you are performing in) each semester
- \_\_\_ Maintain passing grades in all subjects and at least a B average in Vocal Arts
- \_\_\_ Enroll in 2 years of advanced treble or tenor/bass choir in 7th and 8th grade years.

For additional information, please do not hesitate to call the Covington Vocal Arts Faculty:

**Carol Hopkins**, Choir Director, 512-414-5398

[chopkins@austinisd.org](mailto:chopkins@austinisd.org)



## Covington MS Fine Arts Academy Student Removal Process

A Fine Arts Academy student may be removed from the Fine Arts Academy for one or more of the following reasons:

\_\_\_\_\_Lack of academic achievement

\_\_\_\_\_Excessive absences/truancy issues

\_\_\_\_\_Failure to abide by student code of conduct

\_\_\_\_\_Failure to meet the requirements of the fine arts strand in which the student is a major

1. PROBATION: CMSFAA Advisor must inform student that he/she is failing to meet one or more of the above requirements to remain in the fine arts academy during the week after report cards are issued (or during week of return from semester break). The probationary letter will be signed by Ruth Lim or Dawn Piper, strand Advisor, student, and parent and will describe the conditions and remediation during the probationary period (PROBATIONARY LETTER WILL BE PROVIDED BY FINE ARTS ACADEMY OFFICE).
2. WARNING: Ruth Lim or Dawn Piper, strand Advisor, and counselor will meet with the student and parent to warn that student is in danger of removal from the Academy at least six weeks before the end of the semester. **When parent/guardian is contacted, a time is set to meet in person or parent may waive the right to meet in person and receive information by phone conversation and/or email.** Parent is informed of the period of time of probation.
3. NOTIFICATION: Ruth Lim or Dawn Piper and campus administrator will meet with the parent to present the letter of removal. Removal will be effective as of the first day of the following semester.

If the parent fails to attend the above meeting(s), the campus must reschedule for a later date agreed upon by both parties and not to exceed five school days. Failure of the parent to attend the rescheduled meeting waives the parent's right to participate in that meeting allowing the campus to proceed without the parent. The parent will be sent a copy of any documentation presented at the meeting.

**If the student is a transfer to CMSFAA and are removed from the FAA, they will be sent back to their home school beginning the next semester without the opportunity to reapply for the CMSFAA.**

Note: Steps not included in this document but helpful in the removal process are the CMSFAA Advisor and counselor's interventions such as documented communications with the home that could lead to probation for removal. These interventions must include documented conference(s) with the student, parent, counselor and Fine Arts Academy representatives.