



Title of innovative course:

Teen and Police Service

Applicant information – All Information Is Required

Name of applying school district, charter school, or organization: TAPS Academy

Complete mailing address: 2726 Bissonnet #240, Houston, TX 77005

Primary contact person: [Redacted]

Primary contact person's title: [Redacted]

Primary contact person's email address: [Redacted]

Primary contact person's phone number, area code first: [Redacted]

Secondary contact person: [Redacted]

Secondary contact person's title: [Redacted]

Secondary contact person's email address: [Redacted]

Secondary contact person's phone number, area code first:

County District Number (if applicant is a Texas public school): N/A

Superintendent (if applicant is a Texas public school): N/A

Date of local board of trustees' approval of this innovative course application (if applicant is a Texas public school): N/A



Course Information

Subject area (choose only one): *Social Studies*

Career cluster (CTE only): Choose an item.

Number of credits per course: *1.0*

Grade level(s) (high school only): *9-12*

Brief description of the course (150 words or less, paragraph form):

The *Teen and Police Service (TAPS)* course includes specific topic areas associated with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Children and Youth Safety grant of 2011(COPS-CPD-2011-3) such as violence, physical and sexual abuse, stalking, domestic trafficking, sexual exploitation, and bullying. The course also encompasses law enforcement related subject areas that are important to youth. Students partner with mentor officers and discuss issues such as bullying, anger management, avoidance of gang life, drug usage, conflict management and many other youth and law enforcement focused topics. Students and officers engage in community service projects and other service-related activities. The course is designed to help youth change behavior, learn responsible decision making, participate in crime prevention projects, and reduce the social distance (the interweaving of psychological beliefs and social constructs created about a racial or ethnic group that cause people to reduce contact with the group purposely) between themselves and law enforcement.

Brief justification of how/why the course qualifies as “innovative” in terms of student need. (150 words or less, paragraph form):

One of the primary purposes of the *Teen and Police Service (TAPS)* course is to strengthen communities by encouraging at-risk youth and law enforcement to work together. This course is innovative in its unique structure of pairing students with mentoring law enforcement officers. The students and mentor law enforcement officers work together to learn from one another in an approach that values problem solving from multiple perspectives. The course contains essential knowledge and skills, not covered in any other state-approved course, some of which require collaboration between mentor officers and students.



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Course Data –Renewals

Data or other evidence that demonstrates evidence of the continued successful implementation of the course. Data and descriptive information should be provided below.

- By Spring 2023, participating LEAs that participated in the TAPS program awarded a total of 255 school credits to the students who were enrolled in the program (11+ classes).
- By Fall 2023, participating LEAs schools that participated in the TAPS program awarded a total of 108 school credits to the students who were enrolled in the program (5 classes).
- By Spring 2024, participating LEAs schools that participated in the TAPS program awarded an estimated 300 school credits to the students who were enrolled in the program (10+ classes).

Statewide Course Enrollment Data

- 2023-2024: 260 course enrollments
- 2022-2023: 256 course enrollments
- 2021-2022: 247 course enrollments
- 2020-2021: 128 course enrollments
- 2019-2020: 92 course enrollments



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Essential Knowledge and Skills for the Course:

- (a) General requirements. This course is recommended for students in Grades 9-12. There are no prerequisites required for this course. Students shall be awarded one credit for successful completion of this course.
- (b) Introduction.
 - (1) The *Teen and Police Service (TAPS)* course includes specific topic areas associated with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Children and Youth Safety grant of 2011(COPS-CPD-2011-3) such as violence, physical and sexual abuse, stalking, domestic trafficking, sexual exploitation, and bullying. The course also encompasses law enforcement related subject areas that are important to youth. Students partner with mentor officers and discuss issues such as bullying, anger management, avoidance of gang life, drug usage, conflict management and many other youth and law enforcement focused topics. Students and officers engage in community service projects and other service-related activities. The course is designed to help youth change behavior, learn responsible decision making, participate in crime prevention projects, and reduce the social distance (the interweaving of psychological beliefs and social constructs created about a racial or ethnic group that cause people to reduce contact with the group purposely) between themselves and law enforcement.
 - (2) Statements that contain the word "including" reference content that must be mastered, while those containing the phrase "such as" are intended as possible illustrative examples.
- (c) Knowledge and skills.
 - (1) The student explores social distance between community youth and law enforcement. The student is expected to:
 - (A) identify personal attitudes and perceptions about law enforcement officials;
 - (B) discuss attitudes and perceptions that law enforcement officials may have regarding at-risk youth;
 - (C) compare and discuss common youth and officer perceptions of one another’s roles within the community, contrasting the differences of opinion that may form a gap representing social distance between youth and law enforcement; and
 - (D) explain the factors that influence the perceptions of youth and law enforcement, including personal experience, vicarious experiences, historical conceptions, social context, cultural identity and racial identity.
 - (2) The student explores a career in law enforcement. The student is expected to:
 - (A) identify the educational and physical requirements for a career in law enforcement;
 - (B) discuss the ethical behavioral standards required in protecting the constitutional rights of citizens;
 - (C) research and explain the core components of curriculum in a police academy;



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- (D) describe the rank structure within the police force; and
 - (E) assess and discuss the risk associated with a career in policing and compare the risk to the advantages of a career as a police officer.
- (3) The student uses critical-thinking skills independently and in teams. The student is expected to:
- (A) analyze and discuss elements of a crime related problem to develop creative solutions in their community;
 - (B) use problem-solving methods when developing proposals and solutions; and
 - (C) differentiate roles of individuals on a team and explain how differences may effect teamwork and problem-solving capabilities.
- (4) The student understands that communities are negatively affected by crime and that crime can be prevented. The student is expected to:
- (A) identify and explain common root causes of crime;
 - (B) evaluate and discuss situations that are likely to result in criminal activity;
 - (C) identify areas with high rates of criminal activity; and
 - (D) identify and implement strategies for avoiding crime as an offender or a victim.
- (5) The student recognizes the importance of using management techniques to reduce anger and anxiety and to resolve conflict. The student is expected to:
- (A) identify behaviors that contribute to escalation of anger, conflict, and hostility; and
 - (B) explain strategies used in law enforcement for deescalating anger and resolving conflict.
- (6) The student analyzes the consequences of truancy. The student is expected to:
- (A) explain state law in the Texas Education Code relevant to truancy;
 - (B) describe the cascading effect of truancy on enrollment, grades, course completion, and graduation;
 - (C) describe the process of appearing in court a result of being ticketed for truancy, including the fees applied to both student and parent; and
 - (D) discuss ways to avoid truancy and increase student attendance.
- (7) The student assesses the risk associated with gang membership. The student is expected to:
- (A) identify the high risks associated with gang membership, including criminal involvement, bodily injury, and death;
 - (B) describe ways that gang-life represents a real and continuous threat to both youth and their families;
 - (C) describe the long-term legal consequences that can be associated with criminal gang activity;
 - (D) describe criminal activities that may result from actions taken by youth in response to peer pressure such as pressure to “maintain their reputation”;

- (E) identify sources of community support for youth avoidance of gangs;
 - (F) discuss and compare ways to avoid gang membership; and
 - (G) discuss and compare ways to exit gang life.
- (8) The student analyzes the inherent risks of driving. The student is expected to:
- (A) identify dangerous driving activities that may result in property damage or that could cause bodily injury or death to drivers, passengers, pedestrians or other bystanders;
 - (B) explain how texting while driving affects a driver’s concentration, actions, and reactions;
 - (C) describe and demonstrate the proper use of automotive restraints for both children and adults;
 - (D) identify the legal limits for drinking and driving;
 - (E) explain the action-reaction impairment that results from being under the influence of drugs or alcohol;
 - (F) identify the legal penalties associated with the use of alcohol or drugs or the possession of these items while driving;
 - (G) define “probable cause” for search and seizure while operating a motor vehicle;
 - (H) explain the purpose of taking a pledge for safe driving practices and following traffic laws; and
 - (I) describe steps that law enforcement officers take to ensure public safety on roads and highways.
- (9) The student analyzes the importance of verbal and non-verbal interpersonal communication skills when speaking with law enforcement officials. The student is expected to:
- (A) describe appropriate actions when coming into contact with law enforcement officials or persons of authority;
 - (B) describe and model non-threatening postures, body language, and verbal skills when approached by law enforcement officials;
 - (C) explain the procedures that are followed by law enforcement officials to communicate with citizens during an investigation of crime; and
 - (D) describe and demonstrate appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication skills for interacting with law enforcement officials.
- (10) The student examines consequences related to the use of illegal drugs and alcohol. The student is expected to:
- (A) differentiate between the legal and illegal use of drugs and alcohol;
 - (B) identify the laws related to the use and possession of illegal substances;
 - (C) explain the potential physical consequences of the use of illegal substances;
 - (D) identify the legal penalties associated with the use and possession of illegal substances;



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- (E) discuss and explain the effect that a conviction for the possession of legal substances may have on future employment in various fields; and
 - (F) create an individualized plan for remaining drug free or for receiving individualized support to break the cycle of drug use.
- (11) The student analyzes the relationship between bullying and violence. The student is expected to:
- (A) identify bullying behaviors;
 - (B) identify root causes for bullying behaviors in offenders and the effects of bullying behaviors on victims;
 - (C) describe the relationship between bullying and potential violence;
 - (D) explain steps that can be taken to reduce bullying in schools and neighborhoods;
 - (E) compare appropriate and inappropriate responses to the threat of violence; and
 - (F) explain strategies for remaining safe if active shooting or other violence erupts within the community or school.
- (12) The student categorizes types of crime. The student is expected to:
- (A) differentiate between misdemeanor and felony crimes;
 - (B) explain the difference in consequences between misdemeanor and felony crimes;
 - (C) describe potential motives for different categories of crime such as burglary, robbery, assault, or murder;
 - (D) analyze how one category of crime can easily become a more serious crime without initial intention for it to expand;
 - (E) explain the potential amplification of crime when criminal acts are committed by those who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol; and
 - (F) compare the juvenile and adult justice systems to determine the steps of processing alleged offenders through the court system and to identify the types of consequences rendered through the court.
- (13) The student evaluates situations requiring the use of force by a police officer. The student is expected to:
- (A) explain the guidelines and restrictions in state and federal laws related to the use of deadly force;
 - (B) explain situations that require the use of force to resolve a crime in progress; and
 - (C) model appropriate interactions with authority to avoid the use of deadly force in given scenarios.
- (14) The student explores issues surrounding crimes representing grave infringement of human rights such as human trafficking, rape, physical and sexual abuse, stalking, and dating abuse. The student is expected to:



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- (A) discuss the dangers associated with violations of personal privacy with sexting and the use of social media as potential dating abuse;
 - (B) describe the impact of human trafficking on the health and wellbeing of individual victims and the prevalence of the occurrence of human trafficking within the locality;
 - (C) discuss and compare normal dating behaviors, relationships, and infatuation, including behaviors that can result in stalking;
 - (D) identify behaviors that can help protect individuals from becoming vulnerable to sexual violence such as rape or date rape;
 - (E) identify signs and symptoms of physical or sexual abuse; and
 - (F) identify steps to be taken to report suspected physical abuse and help potential victims.
- (15)The student investigates strategies, techniques, and tools used to solve crime. The student is expected to:
- (A) identify the role of forensics in solving crime;
 - (B) describe the use of K-9 units in solving crime;
 - (C) identify and interpret evidence in a mock crime scene;
 - (D) lift and preserve developed latent prints from a simulated crime scene; and
 - (E) use forensic evidence to solve a mock crime.



Recommendations for proposed innovative course

Recommended resources, technology, and instructional materials to be used:

1. Modules. PowerPoint files facilitated during each lesson. Module objectives are provided upon successful completion of the training.
2. TAPS Academy. *TAPS Academy Student Workbook: Skills and Knowledge to Reduce the Social Distance Between Youth and Police*. 2024. Provided to every student to engage in activities and review lessons (softcopy).
3. TAPS Academy. "TAPS Academy." Accessed February 26, 2025. <https://www.tapsacademy.org/>.
4. Penn, Everette B. *Police and Youth*. UK: Routledge, 2022.
5. Houston Police Department. "Youth Programs." Accessed February 26, 2025. <https://www.houstontx.gov/police/youth-programs.htm>.

Recommended activities:

Students may complete hands-on challenges designed to increase trust, reduce conflict, and avoid violence with police officers.

Required Activity:

Service-Learning Project through (EAR) for 3 hours or more— a joint project of students and law enforcement officers to build the community through education in the classroom, action in the community, and reflection on the impact.

Sample Optional Activities:

- Field Study – Gathering Evidence to understand the process that takes place during a crime investigation.
- Field Study – Attending Court to observe and interpret various court sessions while finding out more information from judges and other court personnel.
- Neighbor Survey/Interview – Students interview residents from their community and record responses regarding how they feel about neighborhood crime.
- Student Led Summit – Students lead a summit highlighting various presentations over topics they have discussed in the course. It will be centered on one theme, for example: bullying, victimization, safe driving, or others.



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Recommended assessment methods for evaluating student outcomes:

- Pre-test, midterm, and post-test attitude surveys. Students will be asked various questions about how they feel regarding the police and other scenarios related to the topic.
- Graded weekly lesson activities
- Graded weekly quizzes
- Formative and summative assessments.
- Final exam

Recommended educator certifications:

The classroom teacher should be highly qualified with a (6-12) Social Studies certificate. Additional classroom support will be provided by subject-area experts from the community and law enforcement.

Required trainings, including associated costs, if applicable:

Successful completion of the TAPS Academy Core Training is required to offer the course. TAPS Academy Core Training for the TEEN POL course requires approximately 6 hours of instruction led by TAPS Academy instructors. The course is offered on demand through video conferencing software. Course mastery is demonstrated by the submission and approval of the exam given at the end of the instruction. A score of 80% or higher is required. After successful completion of Core Training, teachers receive access to the course-specific student and classroom instructional resources, and Ongoing Training resources and support via online and telephone communication. At the time of this application the fee of \$5,000 is charged for a one-year all-inclusive license to instruct as many students as desired in the school district (often grant/foundation funds are available to defer costs). Please contact TAPS Academy at 832-525-1560 or visit www.tapsacademy.org for further information and support as related to the course.