

Palo Alto Prep FAQ

Send your questions to pappagnewsletereditor@gmail.com to share with PAP parents.

What is PRAXIS

Praxis is a semester-long group project designed to provide students with opportunities to achieve and exercise real-world skills on a high-interest topic. In designated groups, students assign themselves a large-scale project that contributes to the community in some way. Though teachers are available to guide students, many groups are able to govern themselves, practicing independence and initiative. Students are challenged to produce something of real quality rather than a token presentation.

Praxis offers students an opportunity to gain credit for their interests and special talents that school typically doesn't recognize. We have had groups write complicated computer programs, author fantasy novels with comprehensive histories, produce cooking shows, or construct miniature medieval siege weapons.

Though Praxis can often be stressful for students, we hold it up as an challenge for students to step out of the typically prescribed school experience and carve a meaningful path for themselves.

The Praxis grade is worth 5% in all classes as an incentive for students to take the project seriously. That 5% comes partly from the quality of their completed project, their ability to work appropriately within their group, and a short essay reflecting on their role in the success of the group as a whole. The quality of their project is assessed during their presentation, which is due near the end of the semester and has opportunities to redo with feedback. Their ability to work appropriately in the group is assessed by staff, student mentors and peers over the course of the project. The essay is completely individual. Although it is expected to keep an academic tone and structure, it is graded primarily on how well it answers particular questions chosen for reflection.

What is Spring Testing/BASI/Stanford?

Palo Alto Prep as an additional method of assessing our students progress, utilizes two standardized tests, BASI Basic Assessment Skills Inventory, which we give in the fall and the spring. This test assesses student in reading and math skills at a grade and age level. It assists us with assuring that students who are not at their appropriate grade level are given the necessary support. We also use the Stanford 10 test in the spring each year. Both these tests are utilized by the faculty as independent assessments and the scores are not usually shared with parents unless we feel additional outside intervention is needed.

What is all school soccer?

All school soccer is the culmination of our spring spirit week and is a super fun Friday where the entire school goes over to Cubberly Field and there is a faculty and Admin team verses the students. Faculty has won 3 years in a row!

What is Spirit Week?

Spirit week occurs the week prior to Halloween in the fall and again in the spring leading up the all school soccer game. It a week planned by the ASB and features theme days such as pajama day, twins, superhero, video game day. Activities are planned for the student body during the lunch hour each day around the theme of the day.

What is intersession?

Intersession occurs the week prior to spring break and coincides with the school's international trip. It is a week of classes that are primarily nonacademic and there are no grades given. The purpose is to encourage students to try new activities.

Intersession classes are chosen by the students and afford the teachers a chance to teach a hobby or skill that they don't get to share during their regular academic classes. Classes taught range from cooking, building a board game, college readiness, dungeons and Dragons, digital photography, horseback riding, ceramics, and sailing to name a few.