

# LBJ FIRE ACADEMY IS FIRED UP

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During the winter season, Lyndon Banes Johnson (LBJ) Fire Academy continues their training and skills days to learn how to be firefighters. The academy is made up of students from all over Austin Independent School District (AISD), including 19 LASA students, and the classes are hosted at LBJ High School. The LBJ Fire Academy is a two year program during students' junior and senior year in which students learn hands-on technical skills, procedures, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

While the seniors are working on their EMS certification, the junior LBJ Fire Class just finished up their unit on ladders, where they learned how to set up ladders for multiple story building fires, and forcible entry, where they practiced opening locked metal doors by force. To put their skills into practice, the academy has all-day skills days on Saturdays where students practice techniques they learned in class. Junior Marin Maycotte said the juniors only had one skill day this year due to weather conflicts.

"We learned how to put on all the fire gear and how to use the regulators and the air packs, and then we did the air consumption test which was really interesting," Maycotte said. "We had our full gear on, and we went in circles doing a circuit seeing how long you can last on a bottle of air."

The air consumption test mimics doing light tasks with an air tank until you run out of air, and, according to Maycotte, it is largely a mental test of how far you can push yourself. Additionally, junior firefighters also practiced

climbing through confined spaces in their gear to practice crawling through tight spaces with low visibility and breathing ability.

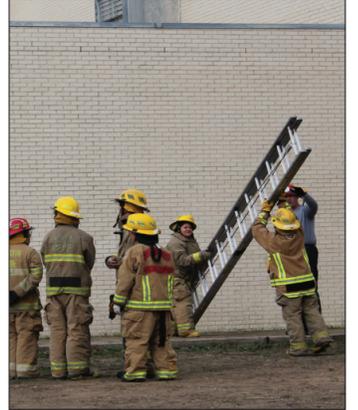
"We did confined spaces where you go under wires and crawl through a box with your pole," Maycotte said. "You're disoriented because you're wearing everything. You're wearing a mask. You're wearing a regulator, and you have to take your air clock off and crawl through wires and boxes."

The senior class, however, is almost complete with their full firefighter certification which they can then use directly out of high school to become a full time or volunteer firefighter. Senior Emma Bailey said that after practicing with tools and physical skills during junior year, students move onto fighting fires, getting their EMS certification, and practicing with Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs).

"The second year, you fight your first five to six fires [at the] beginning of the year, and then you move on to your EMS course," Bailey said. "Then when you go into the ER and the ambulance rides, you get to see this in person. Firefighting is always wonderful, but then as an EMT, you get to go through [the ER] with them and see the patient."

Bailey said she always wanted to put her career towards helping people, and her experience with the fire academy has been very rewarding along with the semester of getting EMS certified. The teamwork lessons have been the most impactful for her as she works through the program with her peers.

"You really learn about teamwork," Bailey said. "You think you know about it before, but then when your life is in somebody else's hands, it really comes into effect. They're gonna be the ones that are behind you, that are supporting you and making sure that we all get out of the situation unharmed."



**LADDERS UP** The junior fire class practices setting up ladders during class outside of LBJ High School. They were scheduled to also practice climbing up them as well but weather did not permit that day. photos by Zia Harvey



**OUT OF CONFINEMENT** Juniors Marin Maycotte and Will Basham walk back from their confined spaces test during a Saturday skills day. They had to crawl through a small space through wires and obstacles, in full gear, to simulate a low breathing and visibility situation. photos courtesy of LBJ Fire Academy



**FIRE AWAY** The senior class practices putting out a propane fire during their skills day. In the first semester of senior year, seniors deal with many live fires in action. photos courtesy of LBJ Fire Academy