



Head of School Position Statement

The Nueva School

Hillsborough and San Mateo, California

July 2020/2021





"Keep Creating the Magic!"

THE NUEVA MISSION AND VISION

The guiding Mission, Vision, and Values of Nueva are central to the life of this extraordinary school. The community speaks as one: committed to the visionary and engaging education of gifted youth. As Nueva seeks its next head of school, the most common wish for the school's future is to "Keep Creating the Magic!"

At Nueva, if you sit in on a faculty meeting or lunch with students or a community meeting, you'll be convinced that its Mission and Vision are truly understood and serve as a source of both inspiration and action for students, parents, faculty, and staff. All are keenly aware of the school's commitment to meeting the needs of imaginative children authentically: "stage, not age," "choice and voice," the importance of social-emotional support for each child.

Unique to Nueva is its intentional commitment to two Missions: Mission I to provide an outstanding, personalized education to each student at Nueva, and Mission II to engage and share with the greater educational community the benefits of the latest research into pedagogy and best practices in education.

Mission I seeks to inspire a passion for lifelong learning, to foster social and emotional acuity, and to develop a student's imaginative mind. Students are encouraged to take intellectual, social, and academic risks and find comfort in knowing they have the environment to ask questions, make mistakes, and enjoy the journey of learning.

Operating on a larger stage to meet Mission II, Nueva sponsors its own Innovative Learning Conference, where the Nueva community engages the educational community, worldwide, in the discovery of the science and craft of innovative teaching and learning. Faculty and administrators at Nueva also present regularly at national conferences and

conduct several summer institutes at Nueva on topics ranging from "Giftedness" and "Equity and Inclusion" to "Design Thinking," the latter held in the school's ground-breaking I-Lab. The school has been recognized three times with the US Department of Education's Blue Ribbon School Award and was designated an Ashoka Changemaker School.

Successful in meeting its Mission(s), the school has grown dramatically. For many years, the school hovered around 400 students, PreK-Grade 8, on the Hillsborough campus until 2013 when the Upper School program, Grades 9-12, located in San Mateo, was opened. Successful from the start, the school now reports 940 students in total and is nearing its enrollment cap of 967.

The deep knowledge and passion of current head of school Diane Rosenberg has guided the school inspirationally and well for the past nineteen years, a time of unprecedented program innovation and success. Having reached a position of worldwide influence, Nueva continues to lead the way and seeks that new head of school who will continue the commitment to gifted education and to bold, visionary leadership of this remarkable school.





Students arrive from 70 different zip codes, from San Francisco to San Jose, encompassing the entire Silicon Valley locale.

Bright and articulate, students in the Lower School and Middle School demonstrate high performance on the Wechsler Intelligence Quotient (IQ) test, a measure of general intelligence and knowledge, for admission. Also important in the admissions process is

THE NUEVA COMMUNITY

"Nueva is a vibrant and dynamic ecosystem that thrives because of the profundity and diversity of its relationships—and because all of these relationships exist to center and support the students we serve. Those students crave an exceptional depth of thinking and of their scholarship. We are a school committed to our mission and to uplifting and upholding the rights and needs of our gifted population." (Accreditation self-study report, 2019)

"Vibrant and dynamic." Appropriate adjectives to describe all constituencies of the Nueva community: students, faculty and staff, and families, as well as the governing body.

Students: Characterizing "the Nueva student" is no easy task. Few generalizations can capture the range and depth of their interests and accomplishments or their backgrounds. Currently, students of color (African American, Asian American, LatinX, Middle Eastern, Biracial/Multiracial, and Native American students) make up 57% of the student body. Nearly 20% of students receive some level of financial assistance to attend the school; the school awards over \$5.5M in financial awards each year.

observation of motivation, curiosity, creativity, the ability to transition, as well as social and self-help skills. All applicants "shadow" a current student in the admissions process. High School students are admitted with a combination of test scores and current-school evaluation and records in addition to interviews and visits to campus.

Beyond the statistics, the students at Nueva are inquisitive, intense, perceptive, creative, articulate, tenacious—and kind. They can express their appreciation for teachers who partner with them to explore their questions and ideas. Middle School students appreciate that "the teachers let us lead," and teach them "how





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to learn rather than *what* to learn.” They are also adamant that “no one feels out of place at Nueva,” that the “community of peers lifts everyone up.” A middle school student said, “We all recognize that everyone has different strengths. We must use our knowledge, and we are at this school because we want to be here.”

One Upper School student said, “Our ideas are appreciated here. Our teachers and head of school listen to us with an open mind. We are trusted and allowed to take our own research in our own direction.” The same student went on to say that “one of my research projects was turned into a class.” Confidently, another student observed, “We are quirky, but our definition of the word is that we are excited, passionate, and focused on what we are learning.”

Faculty: The faculty at Nueva is extraordinary, full stop. Well-versed in the benefits and challenges of gifted learners, they feel deeply the responsibility of knowing and supporting the children in their care. They appreciate the creative freedom that comes from the schoolwide commitment to constructivism and the responsibility of attending to individual students. They relish the “joy of learning” that characterizes the program, and they acknowledge the inspiration that comes from teaching such imaginative, creative learners, and helping to guide and shape their questions. One teacher commented that, “This is a place that leads with ‘yes’ and values kindness and civility.” Faculty members provide multiple narrative assessments for each student, each year, and faculty members collaborate and revise curriculum every summer. In short, the responsibilities are significant, and at the same time, “it is a privilege to walk into Nueva every day.”

The faculty numbers 160, and 80% of the faculty holds an advanced degree. Teaching institutes are conducted for all faculty new to the Nueva program: one each in gifted learning or social-emotional learning, design-thinking, and diversity and inclusion.





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The professional staff at Nueva numbers 62, and their commitment to the school is also exemplary. High-performing professionals in every area of school administration, from admissions and development to operations, are dedicated to the mission of the school. Maintenance and operations currently support nearly 600 events at the school, from student learning events to full-scale conferences and summer programs.

Parents: The Nueva parent body is noteworthy for its enthusiastic commitment to the school. The Nueva Parent Association, headed by three co-presidents, supports classroom activities and numerous programs, from fundraising efforts to parent education. Beyond that, many parents lend their expertise and professional backgrounds to serve on school-wide task forces that have led to significant new initiatives for the school. Most of all, they are deeply appreciative of what the school has meant for their children: a place where a child's individual needs are met, a School that is grounded in its values and welcomes a school-home partnership, a School that is culturally responsive, a School that "listens" and responds to requests for improvement. One Nueva parent shared, "We want our child to experience the magical love of learning and to risk to pursue learning, not grades. At this school I've watched my child become her whole self."



Board of Trustees: The governing body at Nueva numbers 30, and their commitment to the Mission and Vision of the school is unwavering. Sophisticated and thoughtful, the Board is keenly aware of the importance of the productive partnership between the head of school and the Board, and they seek to replicate that relationship with the next leader of the school. The Board engages regularly in strategic planning and maintains appropriate stewardship over the financial resources of the school. Board members understand the roles and responsibilities of a high-performing Board, and in every way seek to make certain that the school practices mission-driven decision-



making. Stated by one board member, “We’re a research-based school, and we are willing to consider anything that works. We go and find out, and we don’t allow inertia to get in the way.”

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: A heartfelt community-wide commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion practices also characterizes the Nueva community. Through the cultivation of empathy, students and the wider community learn that “reflection and action” on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion are expected of all members of the community.

THE PROGRAM: “Learn by Doing, Learn by Caring”

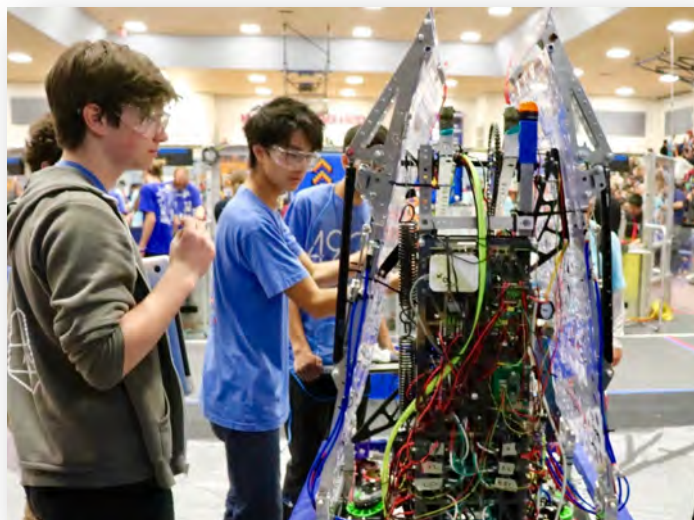
Nueva’s approach to curriculum is carefully constructed and curated, subject to yearly revision and development. This uniquely progressive, constructivist program inspires intellectual growth through integrated curricula, guided by talented faculty with deep subject-area expertise. Choice is central: choice about homework, choice about topics, choice about the language of expression in product and materials. Learning is carefully guided and yet open-ended and child-centered; there are no ceilings and few limitations imposed on where students want to venture.

A well-earned and popular phrase at Nueva, when it comes to students, programs, and the spirit of innovation, is, “Yes, and...” It is the notion of always being ready to do possibility thinking with young people, their teachers, and the community at large. Learning at Nueva is both engaging and original, PreK-Grade 12, and the program has deep roots in each of the following areas:

Giftedness: Nueva recognizes that gifted learners have specialized educational needs. Gifted learners may experience asynchronous development, in terms of

intellectual and social capacities or in different content areas. The educational model employed at Nueva is designed to meet students “where they are,” no matter the topic, the grade, or the age of the students. Pursuing deep learning experiences, co-created with faculty, Nueva students become “practiced explorers who know their questions really matter.” Critical to the success of the Nueva program is having faculty members who understand and nurture the talents of all students.

Problem-Based Learning: The hands-on, project-based approach throughout the program honors student choice and interest as well as promoting independent, informed trajectories for students. Inquiry-based and interdisciplinary, problem-based learning is closely aligned with real world issues, requiring students to be creative and iterative in order to achieve results—and to change the world for the better. All MS and US students participate in self-directed but mentored projects such as the year-long Quest and Recital projects. The rationale here is to encourage creativity and critical thinking, directed by the students themselves, with oversight from an adult on project design and discipline-area depth. And as the projects change course over time, the students must be flexible and resourceful. Students also develop their capacity to work in groups on deep, complex issues of import.





Social-Emotional Learning: In the Lower and Middle Schools, students learn and embrace the importance of self-knowledge, the power of active and empathetic communication, and the commitment to respecting differences and “upholding human dignity.” The Upper School extension of social-emotional learning is Science of Mind (SOM). Students learn to care for others: One middle school student piped up, “Look around the room. We want you to know that we all recognize that everyone has different strengths.” Social-emotional skills are reinforced by teachers in all classrooms through the use of Open Sessions, Appreciation Circles, conflict resolution methods, and restorative justice practices.

Design Thinking: An early adopter of design thinking, Nueva uses design thinking as an ethos for everyday thinking and collaborating to solve problems at the school, in the local community, and on a global scale. Lower School students might use design thinking to solve problems about the campus or to help a classmate with a social issue. Middle School students might use design thinking to tackle land use issues for Native American tribes and work collaboratively to solve the problems



that arise. Upper School students have used design thinking to solve scheduling problems or address pressing social issues like homelessness or texting while driving. Nueva asserts that: “This wholesale adoption of the model is what we aim for, as it will continue to inform our students’ thinking and problem-solving well into the future.”

Environmental Citizenship: Nueva has a long history of students interacting with nature and of a commitment to environmental stewardship. Students in the Lower School spend substantial time in the “forts,” an area of woods in which students explore, build structures, and organically develop communal play spaces. Students throughout the grades engage in outdoor education, from Nueva’s garden to camping trips. Students at many levels study the environment in their courses,



from wonderings about living systems in Lower School, to a solar house and sustainability project in 6th grade, to a college-level Environmental Economics course in Upper School. The school's operations and facilities showcase a commitment to environmental citizenship, from compostable food service items, to LEED-certified construction. The school is currently constructing a new facility to house expanded environmental programming and articulating specific curricular objectives in environmental citizenship.

Students at Nueva “Learn by Doing, Learn by Caring.” It’s a place for authentic learning where students are trusted as co-creators of their own learning, developing as resilient, self-reliant, and innovative individuals. And to be good people. The vision for student success at Nueva is expansive. An Upper School student quoted her current head of school, “We’re not college prep here, we are about life prep.” Nueva cultivates a complex and textured learning experience for all students and the larger community.



FINANCE AND FACILITIES FOR LEARNING

Finances and Investing in the Future:

Enrollment of 940 students PreK–12 reflects steady growth, particularly in the Middle School and the 2013 addition of an Upper School, resulting in a tripling of enrollment over the last 20 years. The school's conditional-use permit caps enrollment at 967.

Nueva provides 180,000 square feet of facilities—including the recently completed state-of-the-art, LEED gold certified, AIA award-winning upper school at the San Mateo Campus—that sit on nearly 37 acres across two campuses centrally located in the world-renowned Bay Area of Northern California, nestled between San Francisco and Silicon Valley.

Annual revenues are projected to exceed \$52 million, including over \$5 million in annual giving. In addition, the school provides \$5.5 million in annual tuition assistance to approximately 180 students,





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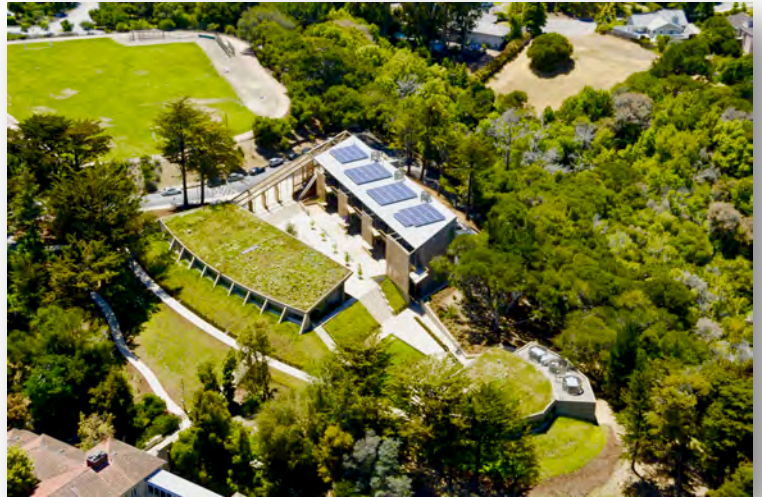
PreK–12. Positive net operating surplus and cash generated from operations consistently service debt and annual capital requirements. A community of supporters has already pledged \$58 million towards a current \$100 million capital campaign target. In the last 15 years, over \$130 million in new equity and \$40 million in debt has funded the school's expansion in enrollment, staffing, a second campus, renewed facilities, program, and a current endowment of \$12 million.

The Places and Spaces for Learning:

Sustainable Green building practices continue to drive facility development at Nueva. The students and community would expect nothing less.

Nueva is one school on two campuses with the Hillsborough Campus housing the PreK-Grade 8 programs. The heart of this campus is the Crocker Mansion for PreK-Grade 4 learners. The learning environment takes advantage of natural surroundings with 32 acres of green spaces that provide outdoor classrooms and play spaces.

The Hillside Learning Complex (LEED Gold Certified) for the Middle School was completed in 2007. The design is both practical and symbolic where local natural wood is used in blending design into the landscape. Master planning for the



Hillsborough Campus continues. Currently under construction is an Environmental Center to support the PreK-Grade 12 program in Environmental Citizenship, also a new Humanities Center, designed with both communal and inspirational individual spaces, organized around an Ewok motif. In August 2014, Nueva expanded to a Grade 9-12 Upper School on the new San Mateo Campus, with the objective of reimagining the traditional upper school experience. Often referred to as the Bay Meadows campus, the Upper School campus was intentionally designed to evoke a futuristic addition to the student experience. The new open-design campus was built to enliven Nueva key hallmark programs with multiple flexible spaces, open interdisciplinary seating for faculty, a central cafe and gathering space, and cozy nooks for small groups of students to gather. The Upper School was also built to the gold standard of energy and environmental design.

Any visitor is struck by how the Nueva mission and pedagogy have been embodied within the new Upper School facility design, where instruction has informed construction. One teacher looking out over student-directed learning, unfolding in a world history class, said "This is a lived place. Students make the spaces for learning their own."





QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE NUEVA SCHOOL

Year Nueva founded:	1967
Accreditation Agency:	CAIS and WASC
Total Enrollment:	936
Elementary School Enrollment:	214
Middle School Enrollment:	299
Upper School Enrollment:	423
Percentage of Annual Student Turnover:	5%
Percentage of Students with Financial Awards:	19%
Three-Year Average of Faculty Turnover:	14%
Student/Teacher Ratio:	6:1
Tuition (2019-20):	\$29,380-53,500 (includes all mandatory fees)
Operating Budget:	\$52 Million
Number of Faculty:	160
Number of Operational Staff:	60
Number of Board Trustees:	30





KEY LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES:

The next leader of Nueva School will have the opportunity to provide stewardship for a singularly vibrant and successful school. In order to serve the school fully and well, the next head of school for Nueva will bring a set of key leadership skills and attributes to the work, as described here:

Gifted learning: Uncompromising commitment to gifted learners at the heart of the school’s mission and growth across all divisions. Deep alignment with the importance of social-emotional learning for gifted learners. Unequivocal clarity about personalized, problem-based learning in an environment where the importance of “caring” is equal to the importance of “doing.” Recognize and support the needs of gifted, passionate learners.

Bold educational visionary: Ensure the Nueva ethos of driving educational innovation through experimentation, prototyping, and implementing new ideas. Preserve Nueva’s ability to pivot toward the best research-based teaching and learning. Lead Nueva’s educational vision with inspiring ambition, determined will, and personal humility on behalf of the school and its purpose. Lead change effectively.

Mission I, Mission II: Serve both the students at Nueva—Mission I—and outreach to a larger educational community—Mission II—with equal passion and depth. Ensure the integrity of Nueva’s

Mission, Vision, and Core Values, PreK-12. Commitment to measuring the implementation of a mission-driven school, using multiple data sources to document success.

Outstanding faculty: Proven track record to attract, develop, and retain a well-qualified, passionate, and diverse cadre of faculty members who embrace and vivify the mission for teaching gifted learners. Build robust and useful systems for professional evaluation and growth.

Ensure communication and practices that tap into the expertise and good will of the faculty.

Curricular leader: Understand and support the power of co-creating impactful teaching and learning experiences with and between students and faculty. Recognize that the strength of the program is the faculty’s ability to adapt and respond to student interest, using deep inquiry to foster profound intellectual experiences.

Community builder: Proven capacity to nurture and deepen the culture of Nueva across the school community, ensuring continuity for a “one school, two campuses” setting. Ability to build strong community-wide relationships across all constituencies, including alumni. Ensure a culture of transparency and trust.





Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

Demonstrated personal and institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion work evidenced by a track record of attracting and retaining diverse students, families, faculty, and staff. Ability to envision and implement mission-aligned DEI practices informed by the Nueva pillars of giftedness & SEL, with the underlying belief that diversity and cultural competency are necessary sources of strength and excellence for 21st century learners and leaders.

Systems thinking: Track record of establishing the necessary systems and infrastructure to address the significant growth and organizational changes of scaling Nueva as a PreK-12 school. Effectiveness in navigating and leading a complex, multi-campus educational program. Delegate responsibility and accountability to bring about greater role clarity and efficiency.



Leadership and teamwork: Success in implementing leadership development practices that promote collaboration, teamwork, and shared decision-making across the school. Develop the capacity of a strong senior leadership team to operate “at scale” for current size of the school and its unique mission.



Inspiring communicator: Implement a consistent and intentional communication model across constituencies, inspiring commitment to the mission, clarifying the rationale for decisions, and building shared understandings across divisions. Ability to tell stories that capture the art and science of the Nueva experience.

Advancing the school: A track record of success in leading all components of a vibrant and effective advancement program, characterized by building meaningful relationships and partnerships in support of the school’s future. Support capital and major gift fundraising.



A NOTE TO THE FUTURE LEADER OF NUEVA:

Essential to understanding Nueva and taking on this leadership role is to honor and bring passion to Nueva's obligation to the unique drive, curiosity, and challenge to conformity that a gifted child brings to learning. The school employs inclusive teaching practices and actively taps student autonomy, consistent with the self-determination that gifted students need to search out ideas and to follow interests and passions. Everyone across the school experiences learning that is deeper, more vivid, and more acutely sensed. It is critical that the new school leader shares across a committed community the richness and joy of the journey.



PERSONAL QUALITIES

The successful candidate will demonstrate the background, experiences, and disposition characterized by the following personal and professional qualities:

- Emotional intelligence and a relationship builder, bringing warmth and empathy to the community
- Heart-led intellect that reveals scholarship, creativity, and abiding curiosity
- Proactive as a communicator and an active listener
- A growth mindset and a student of best practices in the profession
- A balance of intensity and desire to succeed with a sense of fun and good humor
- Optimistic and motivated by possibility thinking

APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested candidates may apply online at: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

If you have any questions, please contact the consultants on the search:

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or Mark Ulfers
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NOTE: This is a confidential search.

TIMELINE: The School seeks to make an appointment for the next Head of School at Nueva for July 2020 or July 2021, depending on the availability of qualified applicants. All applications should be submitted expeditiously and no later than **October 15**. The School has begun interviewing for the position and reserves the right to move forward with this appointment when the appropriate candidate has been identified.