



Palo Alto Senior High School

Established 1894

2020-2021 School Profile

50 Embarcadero Road

Palo Alto, CA 94301

650-329-3701

www.paly.net

CEEB/ACT School Code 052-350

Palo Alto High School, Paly, has long had a national reputation for academic excellence. The proximity of Stanford University, the Silicon Valley business community, and San Francisco has created a socially diverse community with high academic expectations and a strong belief in quality public education. The student body reflects the community's socio-economic status and educational level. The ethnic/racial makeup of our student population is 42.1% Asian, 1.9% African-American/Black, 41.8% Caucasian, 12.8% Hispanic/Latino, 0.7% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 0.7% Pacific Islander. 10% of the student population is enrolled in Free/Reduced Lunch Program; 9% are first generation college students. Total student enrollment is 2,135.

Palo Alto High School's Guidance Program provides academic planning, personal counseling, and college and career advising for students. At the core of the guidance department is the Teacher Advisor (TA) Program. The primary delivery of guidance materials and instruction is via the teacher advisors in the Wednesday and Friday advisory periods. The teacher advisors serve as students' academic advisors and write students' counselor recommendations and/or school reports.

ACADEMICS 2020-2021

Paly students benefit from a rich curriculum and extensive extra-curricular opportunities. The student-teacher ratio is 28:1. Students may enroll in up to seven classes a semester. Students must take a minimum of five classes. Juniors and seniors must take a minimum of five classes. Students earn 5 credits for passing each semester course. For more information about course abbreviations, please see the grading key enclosed with each transcript or visit: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/15464FhijQTTXvj0YN1eFROjwz-zanONX/preview>

Graduation Credit Requirements

- English – 40
- Mathematics – 30 (including Algebra I & 2 & Geometry)
- Science – 20 (Biological – 10; Physical – 10)
- Social Studies – 40
- World Language – 20
- Arts, Visual & Performing – 10
- Career/Technical Ed. – 10
- Living Skills – 5
- Physical Education – 20

Honors Courses

Paly offers 29 Honors courses. For a list of courses, please see page 13 of the course catalog: <https://www.paly.net/learning/course-catalog>

AP Courses

Paly offers 27 AP courses. For a list of courses, please see page 13 of the course catalog: <https://www.paly.net/learning/course-catalog>

Specialty Programs

Social Justice Pathway – A three-year program featuring self-direction and project-based learning in an interdisciplinary model rooted in community action and collaboration. Students begin by learning the practices of social justice in sophomore year by identifying global local issues that they want to devote themselves to, and learn how to achieve transformative rather than temporary relief from social problems. Students complete an action research capstone project. <https://www.paly.net/learning/programs-pathways/social-justice-pathway>

Advanced Authentic Research – In this year-long program students work with their mentors to engage in original research in areas that matter deeply to them, whether in pursuit of their unique passion, or in their exploration of new interests. AAR is UC “g” approved, and students earn 5 Career and Technical Education credits per semester. <https://www.paly.net/learning/course-catalog>

Dual Enrollment – Paly offers 5 dual enrollment Foothill Community College courses. For the list of courses, please see page 13 of the course catalog: <https://www.paly.net/learning/course-catalog>



For a list and description of all courses offered, see the Palo Alto High School Course Catalog online at: <https://www.paly.net/learning/course-catalog>

IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The high school site closed March 17, 2020 due to health concerns stemming from the pandemic. Students were graded using Credit/No Credit scale for Semester 2 in the 2019-2020 school year. In Fall 2020, school opened in distance learning with daily live interaction as well as rigorous coursework; grading has resumed and A-F semester grades will be given. Note that many of our current seniors were registered to take their first SAT or ACT last spring and have been unable to test due to test center closures and/or test administration cancellations.

CLASS RANK & GRADE POINT AVERAGE

550 students in the Class of 2021.

GPA's are calculated on a weighted 5-point system for Honors (H) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in grades 10-12. All other courses factor into the GPA on a 4-point scale. A student's weighted GPA appears on his/her high school transcript and related college-application School Reports.

Individual rank in class is not reported. To assist you in evaluating student performance, the following grade distribution chart is provided.

GPA Range (Unweighted)	Number of Students
New – no GPA yet	6
3.75 – 4.00	256
3.51 – 3.74	104
3.01 – 3.50	111
2.51 – 3.00	41
2.50 and below	32

TESTING

Students at Paly continue to demonstrate outstanding performance on standardized tests.

ACT Scores: Composite Average

Year	2018	2019	2020
ACT Scores	28.2	28.2	26.9
Nat'l Scores	20.8	22.6	20.9

SAT (1600 Scale)

Year	2019	2020	Nat'l & Int'l Mean
Evidence-Based Reading & Writing	648	669	531
Math	683	697	528

AP Scores (May 2019)

988 students took 2,286 tests
94% scored 3 or higher
45% scored a grade of 5

National Merit Program

Year	2019	2020	2021
Semifinalists	31	26	38
Commended Scholars	67	73	74

ACTIVITIES – Award-Winning Student Activities

Arts

Creative Writing: 1st, 2nd, 3rd Place, Palo Alto Short Story Contest

Won Young Arts (national art award)

Won Anna Eschoo's Congressional Art Competition

100+ Scholastic Arts awardees

National Medal for Scholarship Arts and:
Short Story: Gold Medalist
Photography: Gold Medalist
Photography: Silver Medalist
Poetry: Silver Medalist

87 students won Scholastic Arts award in Photography (2019)

Band

Symphonic Band & Orchestra: Unanimous Superior, CMEA Festival (2019)

9th Grade Band: Superior, CMEA Festival (2019)

10 students in County & All State bands & orchestra (2018-2019)

Instrumental Music Dept.: Sweepstakes Award NYC Heritage Festival

Band & Orchestra: Gold 1st Place NYC Heritage Festival

Choirs

CMEA Festival Superior: Madrigals Singers & Spectrum Singers (2019)

Tour of Italy (2018)

CMEA Unanimous Superiors: Festival Choir, Madrigal Singers, Spectrum Singers, Premier Choir, Viking Chorus (2018)

CMEA Award Unanimous Superiors: Concert Choir, Madrigals Singers, Spectrum Singers, Premier Choir (2017)

ACDA/CASMEC Honor Choir members (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020)

Chanticleer Regional High School Invitational (2017)

Community Engagement

Fall 2018: 227 students contributed 25,773 hours of service

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)

Bay Area Conference (2018):

4th Place in Marketing

6th Place in Hospitality Management

Math Club

Amer. Intentional Math Exam: 41 qualifiers

US Online Math Olympiad: 1 qualifier

Won Internat'l High School Math Contest in Modeling (HiMCM)@ (2019)

Finalist at Internat'l Math Modeling Challenge - USA Regional

Placed Top 6 at Internat'l Math Modeling Challenge, IM2C

Publications

C Magazine: Gold Crown, Columbia Scholastic Press Assoc. (2018-2019)

The Campanile (newspaper): Nat'l Scholastic Press Assoc. Pacemaker Finalist Award; Columbia Scholastic Press Assoc. Gold Crown (2019-2020)

InFocus (broadcast): Journalism Education Assoc. of No. California "Best of the West" 3rd Place; and "Best of Show" 1st Place (2019-2020)

Madrono: Journalism Education Assoc. of No. California "Best of the West" 3rd Place

Paly Voice (online news): Nat'l Scholastic Press Assoc. Pacemaker Finalist Award; Columbia Scholastic Press Assoc. Silver Crown (2019-2020)

Verde (magazine): Nat'l Scholastic Press Assoc. Pacemaker Award, Columbia Scholastic Press Assoc. Silver Gold Crown (2019-2020)

Viking (sports magazine): Nat'l Pacemaker Finalist, Nat'l Scholastic Press Assoc.

Robotics Team

Founder's Award First Robotics Teams, Calgames (2019)

Utah Regional First Competition Winner (2019)

Engineering Quality Award Winner (2019)

Science Olympiad

3rd Place, Ukiah Invitational (2020)

1st Place, NorCal State Competition: Anatomy & Physiology, Circuit Lab, Codebusters, Experimental Design, Forensics, Geologic Mapping, Herpetology (2019)

3rd Place, NorCal State Competition (2019)

2nd Place, Santa Clara Regional Competition (2019)

1st Place, NorCal State Competition: Astronomy, Fermi Questions, Game On, Thermodynamics (2018)

Speech & Debate

State Champions, Lincoln Douglas Debate (2019)

State Championship Finalist, Congressional Debate (2019)

State Championship Semifinalist, Oratorical Interpretation (2019)

State Championship Qualifier, Impromptu Speaking (2019)

Nat'l Championship Semifinalist, Congressional Debate (2019)

Nat'l Championship Octafinalist, Lincoln Douglas Debate (2019)

Nat'l Speech & Debate Assoc., Academic All-Americans (2008-2019)

Nat'l Speech & Debate Assoc., 100 & 200 Club Members (2019)

Spirit Team/Cheer & Dance

3rd Place, Dance Team, Character, National (2018)

4th Place, Small Dance Division, National (2019)

3rd Place, Small Dance Division, National (2018)

Overall Excellence

1st Place, X-Small Contemporary

3rd Place, National/Hip Hop

3rd Place, National

Theatre

Calif. State Thespian Festival:

1st Place: Sound Design IE (2017, 2018)

1st Place: Costume Construction (2017)

2nd Place: Stage Mgmt. IE, Costume Design IE (2017)

2nd Place: Monologue IE (2018)

All State: 6 students (2017)

Asst. Director for PlayWorks: 1 student (2017, 2018)

Cable Coiling: 1st place (2017)

Calif. Playwrights' performances: 3 students
Event Callbacks: 5 students (2018); 9 students (2017); 5 students

Scholarship Winners: 2 students each (2017)

Selected for Opening Number: 1 student (2018); 2 students each (2017)

Selected for Closing Number: 3 students (2018)

State Thespian Student Board: 1 student each (2017, 2018); 2 students

Superior Ratings: 16 students each (2017, 2018); 8 students

Athletics

Palo Alto High School is a member of the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League in the following sports:

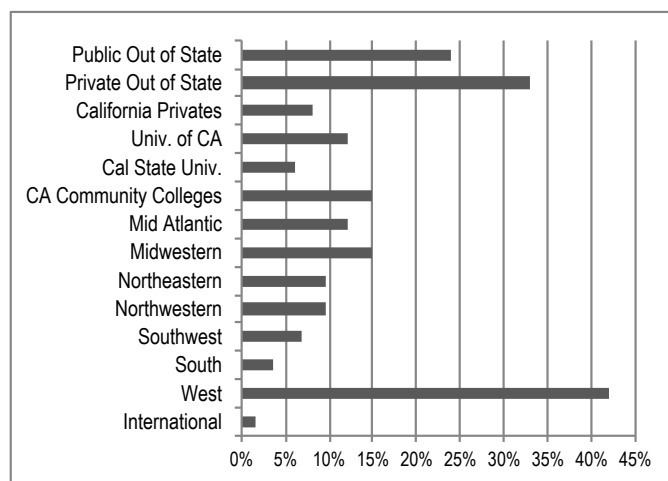
- Badminton (C)
- Baseball (B)
- Basketball (B,G)
- Cheer (C)
- Cross Country (B,G)
- Field Hockey (G)
- Football (B)
- Golf (B,G)
- Lacrosse (B,G)
- Soccer (B,G)
- Softball (G)
- Swimming & Diving (B,G)
- Tennis (B,G)
- Track/Field (B,G)
- Volleyball (B,G)
- Water Polo (B,G)
- Wrestling (C)

B = Boys G = Girls C = Co-ed

POST HIGH SCHOOL PLANS - CLASS OF 2020

Due to distance learning second semester of last year, we were unable to collect complete data. The following information reflects 404 students from a class of 525.

91% directly to 4-year colleges • 6% directly to 2-year colleges



CONTACT INFO

Principal Brent Kline (650) 329-3831

Assistant Principals

Jerry Berkson (650) 329-3760

Tom Keating (650) 329-3760

Margaret Reynolds (650) 329-3760

Michelle Steingart (650) 329-3760

Guidance Department

Selene Singares (12th Grade) (650) 329-3712 ssingares@pausd.org

College & Career Center (650) 329-3818

College Advisors

Sandra Cernobori (A-K) (650) 329-3813 scernobori@pausd.org

Crystal Laguna (Outreach) (650) 329-3719 claguna@pausd.org

Janet Cochrane (L-Z) (650) 833-4298 jcochrane@pausd.org

Palo Alto Unified School District

Dr. Donald B. Austin, Superintendent
25 Churchill Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94306
(650) 329-3737

MEMBER OF:

- The College Board
- National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC)
- Western Association of College Admission Counselors (WACAC)

Complies with NACAC's *Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission*.
Accredited by Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

All credits earned in Grades 9-12 count toward graduation. All courses are counted in computing grade point average with exception of courses earning: **P** = Pass, **CR** = Credit, **NM** = No mark, **NC** = **No Credit** and **NA** = Drop for Non-attendance.

Grade Point Equivalents

Grade points are determined by using the following scale of equivalents:

A = 4 B = 3 C = 2 D = 1 F = 0

*All AP and Honors classes will receive an extra grade point for a C or above in grades 10 to 12.

Time Structure

We use a modified block schedule with seven 90 minute classes that each meet two to three times per week, depending on the week. Each semester course earns 5 semester units of credit.

Graduation Requirements: 220 credits total

- 40 English
- 20 Physical Education
- 40 History/Social Science
- 10 Career/Technical Ed
- 10 Fine/Performing Arts
- 20 World Language
- 20 Science
- 5 Living Skills
- 30 Mathematics

Interpretation of Symbols in Course Numbers/Titles

- A Advanced
- H Honors
- AP* Advanced Placement
- D** Dual Enrollment College Class
- NCP Not College Prep
- SJ Social Justice Pathway
- B Blended
- AS After School

* Paly recommends students take no more than 2 AP courses a year
 **The D for dual enrollment was just started in 2019-20.

ADVANCED PROGRAMS

Classes marked "H" or "A" are part of a special sequence of courses (honors or advanced) with high academic standards leading to Advanced Placement "AP" courses at college level. These courses provide intellectual challenge beyond that of regular college preparatory courses. The school hopes that the college admissions office will consider the nature and quality of the work, as well as the grades, in assessing this record.

CLARIFICATION OF ALL COURSE ABBREVIATIONS CAN BE FOUND IN OUR COURSE CATALOG AT:

paly.net/course-catalog

Selected Course Abbreviations

	Career Technical Education
Comp Des 1 & 11	= Computer Aided Design (full year or semester)
CompApp	= Computer Applications/ Computer Information Technology
Expl Exp	= Exploratory Experience
Gen Weep	= Work Experience Education Program
Tchg Prac	= Teaching Seminar and Practicum
	English
RdgBetLines	= Reading Between the Lines – Expository Reading and Writing Course
	Math
IntrAnl/ Calc (IAC)	= Intro to Analysis/Calculus
	Other
Lib Trn	= Library Training
SchServ	= School Service*
ROP	= Regional Occupational Training Program
OPRTN	= Self-contained classroom, individualized curriculum
Sci LbAs	= Science Lab Assistant
Tchr Asst	= Teaching Assistant *
Expl Exp-AAR	= Advanced Authentic Research Program

* *School Service and Teaching Assistant will be graded on a P (indicating work of C or better) or NC (No credit) basis. These courses do not calculate into their GPA*

Grade Point Averages on the Transcript

District Unw = All courses listed on transcript from Grade 9 on, unweighted
 Weighted GPA = Honors (H), Advanced Placement (AP) and dual enrollment (D) courses at PAUSD are calculated on a weighted 5-point system for classes taken on campus. We do not weight grades from coursework in 9th grade.
 Off campus courses with prior-approval are added to the Paly transcript. Only dual-enrollment college courses at PAUSD and AP coursework get an additional point in the weighted GPA.

All other courses factor into the GPA based on a 4-point scale.