

Upper School Profile 2023–24

School

Since 1967, the Nueva School has delivered an innovative, award-winning learning experience designed to meet the needs of academically gifted learners.

Over the past 50 years we have become internationally recognized for our unique curricular approach, which inspires the passions, purpose, and potential in each student while igniting a lifelong love of learning.

Nueva’s Upper School, launched in 2013, is a re-imagination of high school. In many ways more like a university than a traditional high school, Nueva offers broad-based interdisciplinary studies coupled with deep explorations into specific areas of interest.

Nueva is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is a member of the California Association of Independent Schools.

Students

Nueva attracts inquisitive, high-performing students from the greater San Francisco Bay Area who have been drawn to the possibilities and challenges of a young, innovative high school.

These socially minded intellectual entrepreneurs, researchers, and artists — a senior class of 111 students who possess a high degree of agency and self-direction — enjoy hard problems, risk-taking, and peer-to-peer learning.

Advanced Curriculum

At the heart of Nueva’s program is an advanced, interdisciplinary curriculum with significant emphasis on self-directed learning, collaboration, and primary research. A typical student course load is 7–8 classes per semester. Seniors typically take 7 classes.

In scope and depth, all courses offered range from college preparatory to college-level. **The majority of core courses meet or exceed the rigor of Advanced Placement courses; Nueva does not designate Honors or AP courses.**

The academic program builds a robust foundation in the major disciplines, supports deep inquiry into topics of individual interest, and provides explicit instruction in methods of thinking and reasoning. Advanced electives and independent courses of study allow students to move at an accelerated pace in the directions they choose.

Faculty

More than 80% of our upper school faculty hold advanced degrees. Many have taught at the university level and have been recognized by local, state, and national organizations for leadership, excellence, and innovation in teaching.

Facts and Figures

Class of 2024 enrollment	112
Upper School enrollment	450
Student-to-faculty ratio	6:1
Average class size	16
Students of color	70%
Students receiving financial aid	21%
Admitted to four-year colleges	100%

National Merit

Class of 2024

Semifinalists	25
Commended	27
Total	52
Total % of class	47%

Test Scores

Class of 2023 and 2024

	mean	mid 50%
ACT	33	32–35
SAT		
EBRW	760	730–790
Math	750	710–790

Grading

Nueva intentionally discourages academic competition among our students. We do not calculate class rank and do not offer academic honors, prizes, or valedictorian status.

To facilitate meaningful assessment of students' skills against absolute benchmarks, students receive both standards-based grades and in-depth written narratives focused on core learning competencies. Nueva reinforces continuous feedback and recognizes the need for students to learn from their mistakes as they take risks and tackle difficult problems.

Grade 9 courses are Credit/No Credit. In Grades 10–12, the highest grade is an A (no “A+” grades), which indicates the student has reached an Exemplary status with regard to the standards for that course; a “B” indicates Proficiency; and a “C” indicates a Foundational achievement of the standards. We do not weight grades.

It is Nueva's policy not to report disciplinary infractions; our expectation is that students will self-report any serious violations of school conduct policy. Nueva's college counseling office works with students to ensure they provide colleges with appropriate context for the students' decisions and their consequences.

Applied Learning

Nueva supports in-depth inquiry, research, and experimentation through programs that extend and deepen the core curriculum.

Quest Projects, an annual requirement, enable individual, mentored pursuits in areas of passionate interest. Recent projects include developing a public health initiative to address obesity in post-embargo Cuba, designing and building a jet-pack for human flight, and writing a screenplay adaptation of *Hamlet*.

The Global Citizenship Program provides students with broadening academic and cultural perspectives. They have studied anthropology and history (Peru), wildlife biology (Costa Rica), land management (American West), military culture (North Carolina), political caucuses (Nevada), immigration (Mexico), and AIDS activism (New York).

Intersession is a two-week intensive that allows students to work, think, experiment, and lead in courses taught by local and international experts in their fields. From surgical virtual reality to constitutional law to graffiti art, Nueva students describe this mid-year program as an “intellectual party.”

Defining Elements of a Nueva Education

Design Thinking

Students learn and develop an approach to problem-solving in which they identify pressing and practical needs and problems, generate creative ideas, and introduce, test, and refine solutions under real-world conditions.

Science of Mind

Students study foundational principles of psychology and neuroscience, developing fluency in social-emotional best practices through peer feedback and coaching.

What Is a Nueva Student?

In their free time, Nueva students write programs and poetry, create laboratories in their basements and other worlds in their journals, borrow quantum mechanics textbooks from their teachers, and stay up late debating Dante. On a Friday evening, student-built robots cruise the halls, debates about global economics unfold at teachers' desks, and goggle-clad students pursue supervised but purely extracurricular research.

The 414 students currently enrolled in college applied to 253 colleges, were admitted to 231, and are attending 100 different institutions in 29 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, England, the Netherlands, and Scotland. Adventurous and independent, over 70% of Nueva graduates choose to leave the state of California for college and annually over a third are the sole matriculant to their college.

Upper School Course Offerings 2020–2023

■ Math

3 years required

**Math 1, 2, and 3 is an integrated math sequence in which students learn geometry, algebra 2, trigonometry, pre-calculus, basic statistics, and functions.*

Math 1*

Math 2*

Math 3*

Calculus

Statistics and Probability

Post-Calculus Options

Complex Analysis

Differential Equations

Knot Theory (Intro/Adv.)

Linear Algebra

Mathematical Modeling

Multivariable Calculus

Number Theory

Quantum Information/
Computation

Electives

Cryptography

■ Lab Science

3 years required

Required Courses

Biology

Chemistry

Electives

Advanced Biological Research
Methods

Applied Molecular Biology

Bioorganic Chemistry

Calculus-based Mechanics

Computational Biology

Drug Design

Experimental Biology

Mechanisms of Cancer

Modern Physics

Neuroscience of Addiction

Optics, Imaging and
Astrophysics

Physics

Physics Research

Sensory Neuroscience

Social Action Science Research

XRT: Experiment and
Research Team

Interdisciplinary Courses

Environmental and
Earth Science

■ History, Social Sciences, and Civics

3 years required

Required Courses

American History

Global History I

Global History II

Senior Seminars

American Government

International Relations

Religion in America

Electives

American Indian History

California History:

Foot, Hoof, Rail

Capitalism and the Apocalypse

Death and Life in Cities

Economic Inequality

Environmental Economics

50 Words for Snow:

Translation Theory

How Not to Think Wrong

Interpreting Religions

Japanamerica:

Japanese Pop Culture

Macroeconomics

Microeconomics

Philosophy of Consciousness
and Personhood

Post-Colonial Latin-American
History

Psychology

Senior Economic Thesis
Seminar

Steel, Telescopes and Trains:

Recreating Science and
Technology

Urban Studies

■ World Languages

3 years required

Chinese 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Japanese 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Spanish 1, 2, 3, 4

Advanced Spanish Classes

Spanish Communication

Spanish Literature

■ Design Thinking, Engineering, and Computer Science

Advanced Programming

Workshop

Chemical Engineering

Computer and Digital Security

Computer Vision

Creature Comforts

Electric Bike Building

Functional Programming

I-Lab Engineering and

Fabrication Workshop

Intro to Computer Programming

Intro to Mechanical Engineering

Machine Learning (Intro/Adv)

Mobile App Design

Object-Oriented Programming

Product Design (Intro/Adv)

Programming and Data

Analytics

Software Engineering

Video Game Development

Independent and Collaborative Study

■ Literature and Communications

4 years required

Required Courses

English 9: The Great Dialogue

English 10: Landscapes of Self
and Other

English 11: American Literature

Senior Seminars

Adaptations:

From Text to Screen and Stage

Afrofuturism: Black Histories,
Black Futures

Anna Karenina in Our Time

Chronicles of Wandering

Fiction Writing

The Immortal Gothic Genre

Reading Like Victorians

Shakespeare in the World

Electives

Intro to Journalism

Speech and Debate

Yearbook and Online

Media Production

Independent and Collaborative Study

■ Arts: Fine and Performing 2 semesters required in the same subject

Performing Arts

A Cappella Soundwaves

Chorale (Intro/Adv)

Fall Play

Groove Workshop

Jazz Ensemble

Music Design and Production
(Intro/Adv)

Musical Theater (Intro/Adv)

Steel Drums

Fine Arts

Drawing (Intro/Adv)

Graphic Design (Intro/Adv)

Mixed Media (Intro/Adv)

Painting (Intro/Adv)

Sculpture (Intro/Adv)

Interdisciplinary Arts

Fabricating Your Artistic Vision
(Intro/Adv)

Stained Glass

Yearbook and Online Media
Production

Independent and Collaborative Study

■ Additional Requirements

Athletics and Wellness 8 seasons required

Interdisciplinary Studies 2 years required

Nueva Quest: Pursuit of In-Depth Mastery 4 years required

Design Engineering

Design Thinking

History and Philosophy
of Science

Science of Mind 4 years required

College Acceptances and Matriculation Classes of 2020 to 2023

10 or more

■ Carnegie Mellon University	Harvard University	Princeton University	University of Chicago
Columbia University	Northeastern University	Stanford University	University of Pennsylvania
Cornell University	Northwestern University	University of California (Berkeley)	University of Southern California

5 or more

■ Brown University	Harvey Mudd College	Tufts University	University of Michigan
California Institute of Technology	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University of California (Los Angeles)	Washington University in St. Louis
Case Western Reserve University	New York University	University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign)	Wellesley College
Dartmouth College	Reed College		Yale University

1 or more

■ American University	Johns Hopkins University	School of Visual Arts	University of Oregon
Amherst College	Lehigh University	Scripps College	University of Oxford
Barnard College	Loyola Marymount University	Skidmore College	University of Rochester
Boston University	Macalester College	Smith College	University of St Andrews
Bowdoin College	Maryland Institute College of Art	Southern Methodist University	University of Toronto
Brandeis University	Middlebury College	St. John's College (Annapolis)	University of Utah
Bryn Mawr College	Oberlin College	Swarthmore College	University of Vermont
California Institute of the Arts	Occidental College	The University of Texas at Austin	University of Wisconsin (Madison)
California Polytechnic State University (San Luis Obispo)	Olin College of Engineering	United States Naval Academy	Vanderbilt University
California State University (Long Beach)	Pacific Northwest College of Art at Willamette University	University of British Columbia	Vassar College
Carleton College	Pitzer College	University of California (Irvine)	Villanova University
Claremont McKenna College	Pomona College	University of California (Riverside)	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Colorado College	Pratt Institute	University of California (San Diego)	Wesleyan University
Colorado School of Mines	Purdue University (Main Campus)	University of California (Santa Cruz)	Whitman College
Connecticut College	Rhode Island School of Design	University of California (Santa Cruz)	Willamette University
Drexel University	Rice University	University of Miami	William & Mary
Georgetown University	Santa Clara University	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Williams College
Georgia Institute of Technology	Sarah Lawrence College		Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Haverford College	School of the Art Institute of Chicago		

Acceptances (partial list)

■ American University	George Washington University	Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology	University of Colorado Boulder
Arizona State University	Grinnell College	Rutgers University (New Brunswick)	University of Connecticut
Bard College	Hamilton College	San Diego State University	University of Denver
Bates College	Indiana University (Bloomington)	San Francisco State University	University of Hawaii at Manoa
Boston College	Kenyon College	San Jose State University	University of Maryland (College Park)
Bucknell University	King's College London	Syracuse University	University of Massachusetts (Amherst)
California State Polytechnic University (Pomona)	Lafayette College	Temple University	University of Pittsburgh
Chapman University	Lake Forest College	The Ohio State University	University of Portland
Clemson University	Lawrence University	Trinity College	University of Richmond
Colby College	Lewis & Clark College	Tulane University of Louisiana	University of San Diego
Colgate University	Michigan State University	Union College	University of San Francisco
Davidson College	Mount Holyoke College	United States Air Force Academy	University of the Pacific
DePaul University	Muhlenberg College	University College London	University of Washington (Seattle Campus)
Dickinson College	Oregon State University	University of California (Merced)	Wheaton College - MA
Emerson College	Penn State University (University Park)	University of California (Santa Barbara)	
Emory University	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute		
Fordham University	Rhodes College		