

## FACTS AND FIGURES

Upper School enrollment (9-12):	<b>235</b>
Average class size:	<b>14</b>
% students enrolling in 4-year college:	<b>97%</b>
% of students who choose a gap year:	<b>5%</b>
Students in the Class of 2026:	<b>51</b>
Median unweighted 6-semester GPA:	<b>3.96</b>
Median weighted 6-semester GPA:	<b>4.14</b>
In May 2025, 104 students took 181 AP exams:	
Scores of 4 or 5:	<b>79%</b>
Scores of 3 and above:	<b>93%</b>

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Gabrielle McColgan

Director of College Counseling  
and Upper School Academic Policy  
(650) 470-7761  
gmccolgan@castilleja.org

### Courtney Oben

Associate Director of College Counseling  
(650) 470-7739  
coben@castilleja.org

### Heidi Gallegos

Registrar and Administrative Assistant  
to College Counseling  
(650) 470-7706  
hgallegos@castilleja.org

## CEEB/ACT CODE

052-330

Castilleja School  
1310 Bryant Street  
Palo Alto, CA 94301  
(650) 328-3160  
[castilleja.org](http://castilleja.org)



## Our Learning Community

### OUR PROGRAM

Castilleja was founded in 1907 to open new educational opportunities for women, and that work continues today as we seek to amplify women's voices and inspire our middle and high school students to become leaders who will effect meaningful and necessary change. To pursue our motto—**Women Learning, Women Leading**—we rely on the most current research regarding the critical advantages of deep-dive, interdisciplinary learning.

### OUR STUDENTS

The student body reflects the region's ethnic and economic diversity, with **75% of students identifying as students of color and 22% of students receiving tuition assistance**. Our students learn deeply, strengthen their voices, and make empowering choices through interdisciplinary problem-solving and real world engagement. Students engage with issues of diversity, antiracism, human rights, and environmental awareness, and they demonstrate intellectual excellence in creative writing, mathematics, performing and visual arts, robotics, and research science for which they are nominated and awarded distinctions for their accomplishments and service. In the past three years, our student-athletes have been recruited to play at the following NCAA college programs: University of Chicago, Colby, Colorado College, Columbia, Harvard, Harvey Mudd, Howard, MIT, Northwestern, Pomona, Santa Clara, Stanford, Tufts, UVA, and Yale.

### OUR FACULTY

Relationships are at the heart of Castilleja. Our talented faculty members build meaningful and lasting connections with their students while also challenging them to develop their own voices and pursue their passions. **90% of our faculty hold advanced degrees** from colleges and universities throughout the world and have been recognized by local, state, and national organizations for their contributions to student learning and thought.

## Our Mission, Values, and Affiliations

### MISSION

Castilleja School educates motivated young women to become confident thinkers and compassionate leaders with a sense of purpose to effect change in the world.

### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Each member of the Castilleja community is responsible for fostering an equitable, respectful, and just community. Together, we commit to learning from diverse voices and experiences, and we aspire to engage our differences with courage, honesty, intellectual curiosity and respect. We believe this commitment to diversity and inclusion is essential to developing compassionate leaders.

### HONOR CODE AND REPORTING POLICY

The Castilleja Honor Code and Acceptable Use Policies speak to the promotion of trust and respect by and for all members of our community, both in terms of academics and personal conduct. When requested, Castilleja will report to colleges any incidents in grades 9-12 that result in probation, suspension, or expulsion.

### AFFILIATIONS

Castilleja is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is a member of One Schoolhouse, the International Coalition of Girls' Schools, the National Association of Independent Schools, the National Association for College Admission Counseling, the Western Association for College Admission Counseling, and the Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools, and is a partner and summer site for the Peninsula Bridge Program.

**Please note: ACT and SAT test centers remain scarce in the Bay Area as of Fall 2025. Castilleja enthusiastically supports students who choose to opt out of ACT/SAT testing and offers thanks to the many colleges who practice test free/optional admission and/or provide testing centers in their local areas.**

# Upper School Curriculum

## Advanced Curriculum

First taught in the 2012–13 academic year, Advanced Topics (AT) courses are designed by Castilleja faculty and grounded in research into how adolescent girls learn best, what college faculty expect entering students to know, and what skills are essential for success in upper-level college courses. AT courses replace a traditional AP curriculum, exploring topics in greater depth and emphasizing experiential learning. **AT courses in any academic discipline are our most rigorous courses and are generally only available to juniors and seniors.**

## Course Load Balance

We strongly recommend that students limit themselves to four AT courses and five core academic courses per semester. Students may be limited in their selection of courses due to scheduling conflicts and the enrollment limitations of a small school.

## AP Exams

While Castilleja does not teach an AP curriculum, we recognize that in certain cases AP scores can provide value to students in college. When an AP exam is well-aligned with the curriculum in a specific Castilleja AT course, any student enrolled in that AT course will have the option to sit for that AP exam at Castilleja.

### Castilleja offers the following AP exams:

Art: 2-D Art & Design or Drawing, Calculus: AB or BC, Chinese Language & Culture, Computer Science A, English Language, English Literature, French Language & Culture, Music Theory, Statistics, Spanish Language & Culture

## Class Rank and Grading System

Students are not ranked. In the Upper School, only AT courses are given an extra point in the weighted GPA; Honors courses are not weighted in the GPA; GPAs include grades 9-12; plus and minus grades are weighted (e.g. B+=3.33, A-=3.67). We do not give academic credit or grades for cocurricular pursuits or courses taken outside of Castilleja. Students with an unweighted GPA of less than 2.5 are placed on academic probation. Castilleja is on a semester system; quarter grades are not given.

Students may enroll in a limited number of courses through One Schoolhouse, these courses are included on the Castilleja transcript and in the GPA.

## Course Offerings

### LEGEND:

*required course*

# not offered in 2025–26

\* not offered in 2024–25

+ single semester course

### COMPUTER SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

(1 sem required)

*Introduction to Computer Science in Java* +  
AI & Machine Learning Honors \* +  
Engineering I +  
Engineering II +  
Engineering III Honors \* +

#### AT Computer Science:

Object-Oriented Problem Solving & Design  
in Java +  
Software Product Development +

#### AT Engineering:

Product Development # +

### ENGLISH

(4 years required)

*English I*

*English II*

#### AT English:

*American Voices*  
Afrofuturism \* +  
Black Women Writers & Culture +  
Monsters \* +  
Poetry Workshop +  
Queer Literature +  
Shakespeare, "Classic" Plays \* +  
Shakespeare, "Problem" Plays \* +  
Unreliable Narrators \* +

### HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE

(3 years required)

*Global Identities and Institutions*  
*Connecting History to Community*  
Gender & Sexuality Studies Honors +  
International Relations Honors # +  
Latin American History Honors # +  
Macroeconomics \* +  
Modern World Religions Honors \* +  
Population, Migration, & Conflict Honors \* +

#### AT History-Social Science:

*United States History*  
Psychology +  
Research and Writing +

### MATHEMATICS

(3 years required after Algebra I)

*Algebra II and Trigonometry* (Honors)  
*Euclidean and Analytic Geometry* (Honors)  
Introductory Calculus (Honors)

#### AT Math:

Calculus  
Calculus with Infinite Series  
Linear Algebra +  
Multivariable Calculus +  
Statistics I + and II +

### SCIENCE

(3 years required)

*Physics*  
*Chemistry* (Honors)  
*Biology* (Honors)  
Astronomy Honors # +  
Biology & Economics of Cancer Honors \* +  
Biotechnology & Bioethics Honors +  
Climate Change & Global Inequities Honors \* +  
Organic Chemistry Honors \* +

#### AT Science:

Biology: Genes, Development, & Evolution  
Chemistry: Equilibrium, Kinetics,  
& Thermodynamics  
Physics: Modern Mechanics

### VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

(2 years required)

*Exploration in the Arts* +  
Ceramic Design I + and II +  
Dance Workshop I + and II +  
Photography I + and II \* +  
Theatre I + and II +  
Visual Arts I + and II +  
Vocal Music Workshop I + and II +  
Advanced Ceramic Design +  
Advanced Dance Workshop +  
Advanced Photography +  
Advanced Theatre: Directing & Production +  
Advanced Theatre: Fundamentals of Directing +  
Advanced Visual Arts +  
Advanced Vocal Music Workshop +  
**AT:**  
Art: Ceramic Design  
Art: Visual Arts  
Music: Theory and Musicianship  
Theater: Production +

### WORLD LANGUAGES

(Through Level III required)

Chinese IB, II, III, IV Honors  
French IB, II, III, IV Honors  
Spanish I, II, III, IV Honors  
**AT:**  
Chinese Language & Culture  
Chinese Seminar  
French Language & Culture  
French Seminar  
Spanish Language & Culture  
Spanish Seminar

### FITNESS & WELLNESS

(2 years required)

*Fitness and Wellness I*  
*Fitness and Wellness II*

# Leadership at Castilleja

Learning to lead is a challenging and empowering experience at Castilleja. As our students grow as leaders, we help them think about two important concepts: exercising choice and building capacity. Our pedagogical principles and enrichment experiences ensure that every student graduates from Castilleja with an appreciation of their own personal leadership style.

**ACE CENTER** promotes Awareness, Compassion, and Engagement to foster women leaders through experiential learning. Leadership programming is designed and assessed using Castilleja's learning and leading competencies, which focus on students' development of initiative, agility, and purpose. Leadership is learned and practiced through classroom experiences, grade-level programming, student-led initiatives, internships, and volunteering opportunities.

**GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT** The **Global Investigator Program**, an endowed travel-based learning opportunity, gives students the opportunity to collaborate with social change agents, educators, and students on the ground. Students explore first-hand the socio-political and economic complexities of globalization while collaborating in reciprocal project-based learning with partners, including Kampung Halaman Foundation in Indonesia, an award-winning organization promoting the role of youth in the community through art and media. In addition, Castilleja's annual **Global Week** engages the entire school in a deep exploration of issues affecting the global community through workshops, projects, and in-depth engagement with speakers. The 2025 Global Week theme was *Bridging Divides: The Art of Listening, The Journey of Learning*. Past themes include: *Inclusive Journalism: Moving Beyond the Headlines*; *Climate Justice & Indigenous Communities*; and *Languages We Speak = Identity, Access, and Justice*.

**LOCAL ENGAGEMENT** Castilleja students connect with local organizations through student-led community action programs that support the guiding principle of reciprocal learning and partnership. Students do not count hours; through both hands-on service and policy advocacy, they deepen their awareness of a local need, cultivate a sense of compassion and understanding, and then create a plan for effective engagement to facilitate community action that is authentic, sustainable, and develops a life-long commitment to community building and social impact. Local partners include *LifeMoves*, *Grassroots Ecology*, *Special Olympics*, *League of Women Voters*, and *Channing House Retirement Community*.

**BOURN IDEA LAB**, the first *FabLab@School* established in a U.S. school and in collaboration with Stanford University, is a workshop space equipped with traditional and digital fabrication tools that empower girls to design and build projects, helping them develop creative confidence and technical skills as they turn their ideas into physical reality. Programming enhances individual and collaborative learning across the curriculum. The Bourn Idea Lab is also home of Castilleja's robotics programs, including our award-winning FIRST Robotics team, Team 1700 Gatorbotics.

**TEACHING & LEARNING ANTIRACISM** Woven throughout the curricular and co-curricular experiences, students internalize key habits of mind that help them understand their positionality, listen to multiple narratives, and sit with dissonance. Through affinity group experiences, Castilleja students find strength in their personal identifiers and cultivate a sense of belonging and community. Leaders of affinity groups and students passionate about diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) have the opportunity to grow their antiracism practice and engage in advocacy through the DEI Leadership Council, where students address equity issues affecting their communities and strategize with campus stakeholders to co-create a more inclusive school community.

## Class of 2025 College Choices

We share this exciting and diverse list in order to celebrate the excellence of every college to which our students are admitted and choose to attend. All 51 members of the class will follow in the footsteps of Castilleja's previous classes to extraordinary educational experiences, whether in the fall of 2025 or after a gap year. (Bold type indicates matriculation by at least one student.)

American University  
Bates College  
Beloit College  
Boston College  
**Boston University**  
Brandeis University  
**Brown University**  
Cal Poly, Humboldt  
Cal Poly, Pomona  
**Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo**  
Carleton College  
**Carnegie Mellon University**  
Case Western Reserve University  
Chapman University  
Colgate University  
Colorado College  
Colorado School of Mines  
Cornell University  
CSU Chico  
CSU Fullerton  
CSU Long Beach  
**Dartmouth College**  
**Denison University**  
DePaul University  
**Duke University**  
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Univ  
Emory University  
George Washington University

**Georgetown University**  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Grinnell College  
**Hamilton College**  
**Harvard University**  
**Harvey Mudd College**  
Haverford College  
Howard University  
Indiana University, Bloomington  
Kenyon College  
Lehigh University  
**Loyola Marymount University**  
Macalester College  
Marymount Manhattan College  
McGill University  
Michigan State University  
Muhlenberg College  
New York University  
**Northeastern University**  
**Northwestern University**  
Oberlin College  
**Occidental College**  
Oregon State University  
Pennsylvania State University  
Princeton University  
**Purdue University**  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
**Rice University**

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology  
San Diego State University  
**San Francisco State University**  
San Jose State University  
Santa Clara University  
**Scripps College**  
Skidmore College  
Sonoma State University  
**St Olaf College**  
**Stanford University**  
**Tufts University**  
**UC Berkeley**  
UC Davis  
UC Irvine  
**UC Los Angeles**  
UC Merced  
UC Riverside  
UC San Diego  
UC Santa Barbara  
UC Santa Cruz  
**United States Air Force Academy**  
United States Naval Academy  
University of Arizona  
University of British Columbia  
**University of Chicago**  
University of Colorado  
University of Connecticut  
University of Edinburgh

University of Georgia  
University of Glasgow  
University of Hawaii  
University of Illinois  
University of Maryland  
University of Miami  
**University of Michigan**  
University of North Carolina  
**University of Notre Dame**  
University of Oregon  
**University of Pennsylvania**  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of Puget Sound  
University of Richmond  
University of Rochester  
University of San Diego  
**University of Southern California**  
University of St Andrews  
University of Toronto  
University of Vermont  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington  
University of Wisconsin  
**Vanderbilt University**  
Vassar College  
**Washington University in St Louis**  
Wesleyan University  
**Yale University**