



Palo Alto Senior High School

School Profile

2025-2026

50 Embarcadero Road
 Palo Alto, CA 94301
 650-329-3701
www.paly.net
 CEEB/ACT School Code 052-350

Learn, Connect, Respect

Palo Alto Senior High School (Paly) has long had a national reputation for academic excellence. The proximity to 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 socioeconomic status and educational level. The ethnic/racial makeup of the student population is 40.4% Asian, 1.7% African American/Black, 29.2% Caucasian, 16.3% Hispanic/Latino, 1.5% Pacific Islander, and 10.8% two or more races. Additionally, 10% of students are enrolled in the Free/Reduced Lunch Program, and 8% are first-generation college students. The total student enrollment is 1,817.

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 through teacher advisors during Friday advisory periods. Teacher advisors serve as students’ academic advisors and write counselor recommendations and/or school reports.

Academics 2025-2026

Paly students enjoy a strong curriculum and lots of extra-curricular options. The student-teacher ratio is 28:1. Students can take up to seven classes each semester, with at least five required. Each semester course passed earns 5 credits.

Graduation Requirements (220 credits)

- English – 40
- Mathematics – 30
including Algebra 1 & 2 & Geometry
- Science – 20
Biological – 10; Physical – 10
- Social Studies – 40
- Electives – 25
- World Language – 20
- Arts, Visual & Performing – 10
- Career/Technical Ed (CTE) – 10
- Living Skills – 5
- Physical Education – 20

Honors Courses

Paly offers 31 Honors courses.

Paly recommends students take no more than 2 AP courses a year.

For a list of all Honors, AP and Dual Enrollment courses--as well as a description of special pathway and cohort programs-- please see the [course catalog](#).

AP Courses

Paly offers 27 AP courses.

Dual Enrollment Courses

Paly offers 17 dual enrollment courses with Foothill Community College.

Recognition

Paly’s Child Development Pathway received the Santa Clara County Kristi Porter Hoffmann Award for exceptional programming in 2023.

Class Rank & Grading Point Average

There are 456 students in the Class of 2026. Individual rank in class is not reported. To help colleges evaluate student performance, the chart below shows cumulative GPAs from grades 9–11.

Decile	Weighted GPA	Unweighted GPA
1	4.38 - 4.52	4.00 - 4.00
2	4.31 - 4.37	3.95 - 3.98
3	4.20 - 4.30	3.88 - 3.94
4	4.08 - 4.19	3.79 - 3.87
5	3.93 - 4.07	3.69 - 3.78
6	3.77 - 3.92	3.60 - 3.68
7	3.60 - 3.76	3.44 - 3.59
8	3.30 - 3.59	3.25 - 3.43
9	2.84 - 3.28	2.95 - 3.23
10	1.93 - 2.83	1.93 - 2.93

*Highest GPA reflects 6 full semesters of participation within PAUSD

Credits & GPA

All credits earned in grades 9–12 count toward graduation.

- Most courses are included in the GPA, **except** for those graded as: **P** (Pass) or **NM** (No Mark)
- School Service and Teaching Assistant (**TA**) courses **do not** contribute to the GPA and are graded as: **P** (Pass) or **NC** (No Credit)

Grading Scale

Most courses are calculated on a 4-point GPA scale, as shown below.

Some courses—Honors, Advanced Placement, and Dual Enrollment—taken in grades 10–12 are weighted using a 5-point system if a student earns a C or higher. **We do not weigh grades from coursework taken in 9th grade.**

A student’s weighted GPA appears on their high school transcript and related college materials & school reports.

	4.0 Scale (Unweighted Courses)	5.0 Scale (Weighted Courses*)
A	4.0	5.0
B	3.0	4.0
C	2.0	3.0
D	1.0	1.0
F	0.0	0.0

*Weighted courses include **AP**, **Honors**, and **Dual Enrollment** courses taken in grades **10–12 only**.

Plus/Minus Grading Policy

Please note that +/- are not factored into the GPA. The following classes do not provide +/- in their grading rubrics:

- **Career Technical Education (CTE):**
 AP Computer Science A, AP Computer Science Principles, Principles of Biomedical Science, Functional & Object-Oriented Programming, Functional & Object-Oriented Programming H, Principles of Engineering, Work Experience, Audio Music Production & Audio Music Production A
- **Science**
 Biology, AP Biology, AP Chemistry
- **World Language:**
 All classes

Off Campus Courses/College Work

Off-campus courses, with prior approval, may be added to the Paly transcript.

As of the Summer of 2023, off-campus Courses do not contribute to the GPA and are graded as:

P (Pass) or **NC** (No Credit)

Concurrent enrollment in community college courses earns double credits.

Key to Transcript Symbols on Transcripts: Symbol Meaning

- A** Advanced (Math) / Accelerated (Eng)
- AP** Advanced Placement
- SJ** Social Justice Pathway
- D** Dual Enrollment with Community College
- H** Honors

Testing

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

ACT Scores: Composition (93 Test Takers in 2025)

Year	Paly Average	National Average
2023	29	19.5
2024	29.7	19.4
2025	29.9	19.6

SAT Scores: Composition (570 Test Takers in 2025)

Section	2024	2025	National Mean
EBRW	677	672	532
Math	706	692	511

AP Scores (2024)

- 955 students took 2,565 exams
- 96% scored a 3 or higher
- 52% earned a score of 5

National Merit Program

- 28 students were named **Semifinalists (2025)**
- 75 students earned **Commended** status (2025)
- 40 students were named **Semifinalists (2026)**
- 78 students earned **Commended** status (2026)

Award-Winning Student Activities & Clubs

Arts:
Creative Writing • Scholastic Arts • Stage Technology & Design • Theater • Paly Artists Guild • 2D Art & Design

Music:
Symphonic Band & Orchestra • Jazz Band • Pep Band • Concert Band • Wind Ensemble • Madrigal Singers • Aurora Voce • Premier Choir • Concert Choir • Viking Chorus • Tri-M Music Honor Society

Clubs:
Math Club • Philosophy Club • Robotics Team • Science Olympiad • Speech and Debate • Youth Community Service Club (YCS) • Best Buddies Club

Publications & Journalism:
Anthro • C Magazine • The Campanile • InFocus • Ink • Madrono • Paly Voice • Proof • KPLY • Verde • Veritas • Via Verde • Viking • Video Production

Student Activities:
Spirit Team • Cheer and Dance

Community Engagement:
291 students in the Class of 2026 contributed **39,196 service hrs.**, with an estimated economic impact of **\$1,363,657.**

Athletics

Palo Alto High School is a member of the Santa Clara Valley Athletic

League and competes in a wide range of sports:

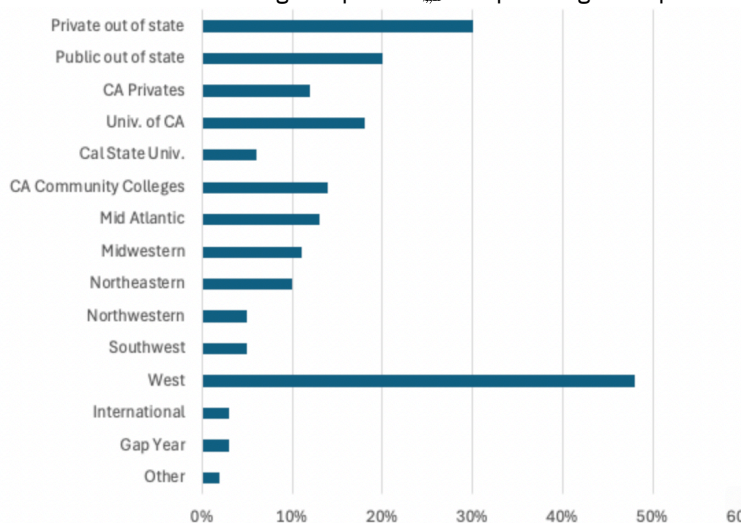
Badminton (C)	Lacrosse (B, G)
Baseball (B)	Soccer (B, G)
Basketball (B, G)	Softball (G)
Cheer (C)	Swimming & Diving (B #+, G# +)
Cross Country (B, G)	Tennis (B, G)
Field Hockey (G)	Track & Field (B, G)
Flag Football (G)	Volleyball (B, G)
Football (C)	Water Polo (B, G +)
Golf (B +, G)	Wrestling (C)

Key: B = Boys G = Girls C = Co-ed
+ = League Champion # = CCS Champion



Palo Alto High School- Class of 2025 Post-High School Plans

79% attending a 4-year college 16% attending a 2-year college
3% taking a Gap Year 2% pursuing other plans



A college-specific matriculation summary for 2023-2025 is available on paly.net/college

Contact Information

Administration

Principal

Brent Kline

Assistant Principals

Jerry Berkson
LaDonna Butler
Rebecca Shen-Lorenson
Mike Stieren

Guidance Department

School Counselors

Crystal Laguna	A-Be	claguna@pausd.org
James Hamilton	Bh-Gri	jhamilton@pausd.org
Selene Singares	Gro-Low	ssingares@pausd.org
Charles Taylor	Lu-Shaw	chtaylor@pausd.org
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College & Career Advisors

Sandra Cernobori	A-K	scernobori@pausd.org
Crystal Laguna	Pathways	claguna@pausd.org
Janet Cochrane	L-Z	jcochrane@pausd.org

Registrar

Karla Larson klarson@pausd.org

Guidance Department Secretary

Pamela Garcia pgarcia@pausd.org

Palo Alto Unified School District

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

Accreditations & Professional Memberships

Accredited
Western Association of Schools and Colleges ([WASC](http://WASC.org))
Member of
National Association for College Admission Counseling ([NACAC](http://NACAC.org))
Western Association for College Admission Counseling ([WACAC](http://WACAC.org))
The College Board

Complies with NACAC's Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission