

Upper School Profile 2024-2025

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-imagining 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	108
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 2025	
Semifinalists	19
Commended	39
Total	58
Total % of class	54%

Test Scores

Class of 2024 and 2025		
	mean	mid 50%
ACT	34	33–35
SAT		
EBRW	760	740–780
Math	770	730–790

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 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 434 students currently enrolled in college applied to 258 colleges, were admitted to 236, and are attending 100 different institutions in 28 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, England, Ireland, 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 2021-2024

■ 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

Cryptology

■ 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

Advanced Chinese Classes

Chinese Communication

Chinese Culture & Society

■ 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

Advanced Literature Seminar

Bad Children

Literary Anthologies

Literatures of NY and SF

The Immortal Gothic Genre

The Memoir

Victorian Monsters

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 2021 to 2024

10 or more

Brown University
Carnegie Mellon University
Columbia University

Cornell University
Harvard University
Northeastern University

Northwestern University
Princeton University
Stanford University

University of California
(Berkeley)
University of Chicago
University of Pennsylvania

5 or more

Amherst College
California Institute of Technology
Carleton College
Case Western Reserve University
Dartmouth College

Duke University
Massachusetts Institute of
Technology
New York University
Pomona College

Rice University
Tufts University
University of California
(Los Angeles)
University of Illinois
(Urbana-Champaign)

University of Michigan
University of Southern California
Washington University
in St. Louis
Wellesley College
Yale University

1 or more

Barnard College
Boston University
Bowdoin College
Brandeis University
Bryn Mawr College
California Institute of the Arts
California Polytechnic State
University (San Luis Obispo)
California State University
(Long Beach)
Carleton College
City College of San Francisco
Claremont McKenna College
Colorado College
Colorado School of Mines
Connecticut College
Drexel University
Georgetown University
Harvey Mudd College Haverford
College
Johns Hopkins University

Lehigh University
Loyola Marymount University
Macalester College
Oberlin College
Occidental College
Olin College of Engineering
Pacific Northwest College of Art
at Willamette University
Penn State (University Park)
Pitzer College
Pratt Institute
Purdue University (Main
Campus)
Reed College
Rhode Island School of Design
San Jose State University
Santa Clara University
Sarah Lawrence College
School of Visual Arts
Scripps College
Skidmore College

Smith College
Southern Methodist University
St. John's College (Annapolis)
Swarthmore College
The University of Texas
at Austin
Trinity College Dublin
Tulane University of Louisiana
United States Naval Academy
University of British Columbia
University of California (Davis)
University of California (Irvine)
University of California
(Riverside)
University of California
(San Diego)
University of California
(Santa Cruz)
University of Maryland
(College Park)
University of Miami

University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill
University of St Andrews
University of Toronto
University of Utah
University of Vermont
University of Washington
University of Waterloo
University of Wisconsin
(Madison)
Vassar College
Villanova University
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Wesleyan University
Whitman College
Willamette University
William & Mary
Williams College
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Acceptances (partial list)

American University
Arizona State University
Bard College
Bates College
Boston College
Bucknell University
California State Polytechnic
University (Pomona)
Chapman University
Clemson University
Colby College
Colgate University
Davidson College
DePaul University
Dickinson College
Emerson College
Emory University
Fordham University

George Washington University
Grinnell College
Hamilton College
Indiana University
(Bloomington) Kenyon College
King's College London
Lafayette College
Lake Forest College
Lawrence University
Lewis & Clark College
Michigan State University
Middlebury College
Mount Holyoke College
Muhlenberg College
Oregon State University
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Rhodes College
Rose-Hulman Institute of
Technology

Rutgers University
(New Brunswick)
San Diego State University
San Francisco State University
San Jose State University
Syracuse University
Temple University
The Ohio State University
Trinity College
Union College
United States Air Force
Academy
University College London
University of Arizona
University of California
(Merced)
University of California
(Santa Barbara)

University of Colorado Boulder
University of Connecticut
University of Denver
University of Hawaii at Manoa
University of Massachusetts
(Amherst)
University of Oregon
University of Pittsburgh
University of Portland
University of Richmond
University of San Diego
University of San Francisco
University of the Pacific
University of Washington
(Seattle Campus)
Wheaton College - MA