

THE NUEVA SCHOOL

A young girl with long brown hair is sitting on a thick, gnarled tree branch. She is wearing a blue and pink patterned shirt, dark pants, and black sneakers with white soles. She is holding an open book and looking down at it. The tree has many green leaves, and there are other trees and bushes in the background. The sky is blue. The ground is covered with dry leaves and twigs.

**Lower School
Program Overview**



The Admissions Process

To learn more or inquire about the admissions process for prospective students, please visit us online at www.nuevaschool.org/admissions. See Key Dates and Deadlines on inside back cover.

Admissions Team: admissions@nuevaschool.org | 650-235-7119

Overall School Facts & Figures

967

Students
Enrolled

78

ZIP Codes
Represented

\$9 million

Financial Assistance
Granted

20%

Students Receiving
Financial
Assistance

70%

Faculty Holding
Advanced
Degrees

160+

Electives

150+

Student
Clubs



Since our founding, Nueva has offered an innovative and distinguished learning experience specifically designed to meet the needs of gifted learners. Nueva is a preK–12 school committed to unlocking the passions, purpose, and potential in each student, while inspiring a lifelong love of learning.

Our unique program directs intellectual growth and development through integrated curricula, guided by experienced faculty with subject-area expertise.

Mission & Values

Mission

Our school community inspires passion for lifelong learning, fosters social and emotional acuity, and develops the imaginative mind.

Vision

The Nueva School uses a dynamic educational model to enable gifted learners to make choices that benefit the world.

Motto

Learn By Doing, Learn By Caring

Values

- A dynamic learning community
- An environment of trust
- Social-emotional acuity
- Curiosity and creativity
- Passion and excellence
- Student agency

Parents as Partners

The Nueva School and Family Partnership

Parents enrich the lives of our students, faculty, and staff. One of the truly wonderful aspects of Nueva is the way parent participation is welcomed. We intentionally weave Nueva's motto *Learn by Doing, Learn by Caring* throughout our supportive and inclusive community.

The Nueva Parents Association (NPA) provides opportunities for families to be involved, get connected, and support our learning community. All current parents are members of the NPA and can volunteer in the classroom, serve on various committees, assist with event planning, and much more. The strength of volunteerism and participation provides benefits for all students as they witness the collaboration and connection of parents across grades, divisions, and campuses.



Lower School Facts & Figures

217

Approx. Students
Enrolled

7:1

Student:Faculty
Ratio

18–20

Average
Class Size

50%

Commute via
Nueva Bus

16

Approx. Students
per Grade (PreK)

40

Approx. Students
per Grade (K–4)

Notably Nueva: The Nueva Experience

Gifted Education

The Nueva School is committed to serving the specific needs of gifted learners by providing an environment where such students grow and thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. A large component of Nueva’s mission is offering a space for like-minded students to share an explorative “learn by doing” academic experience that will challenge and stimulate their exceptional intellectual curiosity.

As a leader in the world of gifted education, Nueva remains dedicated to engaging with the gifted community through continued professional development of faculty and staff, and partnerships with institutions like the Stanford d.school. We offer programs for students, educators, and parents throughout the year, including the Innovative Learning Conference and the Giftedness Institute.

Social-Emotional Learning

Nueva’s internationally recognized Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program began as Self-Science when Nueva was founded in 1967. It is integral to our pedagogy and fundamental to our commitment to nurture the whole student. Classroom instruction occurs in every grade at Nueva.

In the Lower School, students develop their vocabulary of emotions and progress through topics including active listening, appreciation, conflict resolution, and friendship. Social-emotional acuity is part of the root and culture of Nueva. It empowers students with the language and interpersonal skills to tackle every challenge with confidence, self-awareness, and empathy.

Design Thinking

Nueva partnered with IDEO and the Stanford d.school to develop the first design thinking curriculum and Innovation Lab (I-Lab) specifically for preK–12 education. Students engage with Design Thinking principles on a daily basis and across the curriculum, both in two dedicated I-Lab spaces and in their classrooms. Design thinking is taught, applied, and explored through real-life challenges with integrated projects in all disciplines of our curriculum—science, math, art, humanities, music, and more.

Equipped with the mindsets and skills of design thinking, students are able to identify situations where they can better the world—both local and global—and have the personal and collaborative tools to resolve to take action.



Equity & Inclusion

An emphasis on belonging and community is a natural extension of Nueva’s mission to cultivate ethical, compassionate, and engaged global citizens. As a community, we believe a sense of belonging is essential to our vision of educating our students to communicate and connect across differences and to make choices that benefit the world. We acknowledge and respect the different economic, political, racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds and family structures of our students, families, and faculty/staff.

Our program blends social-emotional learning and design thinking, pillars of the Nueva curriculum, with a profound commitment to engage authentically with the world and ultimately make it a better place for all. Nueva strives to be on the leading edge of student empowerment and agency by creating an environment where students envision the kind of world they want to live in and giving them the tools to create a more pluralistic society. In doing so, students not only can transform the world, but also themselves.

Our Equity & Inclusion program is committed to:

Fostering a sense of hope, an impetus to act, and a firm belief that standing up for social justice and equity is both the responsible and just thing to do

Creating an inclusive culture that helps shape our desired “Beloved Community,” wherein all people are welcomed, valued, empowered, and feel a vibrant sense of belonging

Challenging systemic inequity and oppression by practicing empathy, understanding privilege, transforming conflict, and exploring creative solutions



THRIVE Program

THRIVE’s Mission

The Nueva School believes that a strong transcultural learning environment that seeks out and invites multiple perspectives and lived experiences enriches the education of all students. Developing and nurturing a diverse, pluralistic community—in which every family feels seen, supported, and that they belong—is a top priority for the school and the purpose of the THRIVE program.

What is THRIVE?

Nueva’s THRIVE program is designed to remove barriers to accessing an independent school experience by supporting and guiding historically underrepresented students and their families/caregivers from admission through graduation. To be invited to the THRIVE program, students and/or families must **either** identify as historically underrepresented, marginalized, or minoritized in the context of the Nueva School and meet one (1) of the bullet points in the criteria list (below); **or** meet three (3) or more of the bullet points in the criteria list (below).

- Student will be a first-generation college student upon graduation from the Upper School
- Student may need social-emotional and/or academic scaffolding and support as they transition to Nueva’s program
- Family needs translation services
- Family is new to the independent school system
- Family receives 75%+ financial assistance
- Student is connected with a community-based organization (CBOs), including but not limited to: A Better Chance, Summer Bridge, Peninsula Bridge, SMART, and/or Breakthrough



Academic Overview

Learning at Nueva is authentic, complex, and intellectually rigorous. Students do real work as authors, artists, inventors, explorers, athletes, and mathematicians. By giving students choice, autonomy, and high expectations for growth, we harness intrinsic motivation as the engine for academic excellence.

Through an interdisciplinary and inquiry-based program, students discover and master foundational skills in traditional academic disciplines while learning to grapple with the unknown, embrace multiple perspectives, and create novel solutions.

As they engage in learning, students explicitly develop social and emotional skills that promote self-confidence, emotional intelligence, positive communication, and collaboration. Our students are empowered to be themselves, to embrace learning fully, and to contribute to the community as stewards and changemakers.



Signature Elements of the Lower School

Students are:

- Listened to, trusted, and empowered to affect their learning
- Known and understood
- Connected to nature through our working garden, forts, and forested trails
- Independent and collaborative
- Resilient, self-reliant, and supported through our social-emotional learning curriculum

Learning is:

- Deeply intellectual with many points of entry and no ceilings
- Open-ended and child-centered
- Full of rich arts experiences such as drama, visual arts, creative play, chorus, instrumental lessons, and the Menuhin-Dowling Program
- Enhanced with curriculum-based grade-level study trips
- Collaborative through cross-grade opportunities
- Executed by dynamic teaching teams consisting of mentor teachers, associate teachers, and specialists

Our Environment

The Lower School, home to grades preK–4, is the school’s historic heart and a unifying part of the Nueva experience. Our campus provides students with an abundance of play areas—a big favorite being the forts—where students work and learn. The campus expands over 33 acres and includes two playgrounds, a sports field and court, a gymnasium, a café, and more.

We also have:

- Hiking trails and a meadow classroom
- A chicken coop and garden
- Science labs
- Art studio



CORE AREA OF FOCUS		PRE-KINDERGARTEN–GRADE 4	
Global Perspectives in Humanities & the Arts	Language Arts	Students read across genres and develop analytical and creative writing skills through Readers' and Writers' Workshops and thematic studies. Structured Word Inquiry, an investigative study of linguistics, begins in preK, giving students a strong grounding in morphology, etymology, and the conventions of our spelling system.	
	History, Social Sciences, and Civics	Student- and teacher-initiated thematic studies integrate history, geography, philosophy, and civics.	Sample themes: • PreK: Elections, civil rights, origin stories, and beliefs • Kindergarten: Mystery, big history, da Vinci • 1st: Identity and community • 2nd: A People's History of Immigration in the Bay Area • 3rd: Creation of Culture: A Study of Ancient Egypt and Mali • 4th: Path of the Hero and Ancient Greece
	Equity and Inclusion	Through thematic studies, students explore aspects of equity and inclusion. Building awareness and empathy, we challenge our students to be courageous changemakers and global stewards.	
	Visual/Performing Arts and Music	Classes regularly integrate art across subjects. Students attend weekly music and movement classes and have regular opportunities for dramatic play, creation, and dance.	Cross-curricular weekly classes in art and music integrate a variety of media/genres, skill development, and art/music appreciation. Drama is integrated into classroom curricula. An extensive private music lesson program is available on-site. PreK through first graders experience weekly creative dance and movement classes. Biweekly chorus begins in second grade.

Science, Technology, Engineering & Math	Science	Students study physical, earth, space, and life sciences through inquiry and hands-on experimentation; scientific communication through discussion, questioning, and argumentation; media literacy development using primary sources and complex texts; and design thinking, engineering, and ecological studies using the campus and garden.	Sample units • Decomposition/composting • Human biology and development • Physics of flight, chemistry, ecological adaptations/biomimicry • Magnetism, experimental design, complex motors
	Technology, Design, and Engineering	Throughout disciplines, students engage in short- and long-term projects focused on systems and design thinking. Technology is leveraged as a tool for communication, research, documentation, design, programming, and fabrication.	Sample projects • Coding games and robotic blocks, building and designing with a range of materials • Scratch programming, video production, online research, circuitry, woodworking, multimedia • Digital literacy, typing, online research, email etiquette, Python, 2-D & 3-D modeling, advanced circuitry
	Mathematics	Students engage in a highly differentiated math program based on low floor-high ceiling problems. Students in all grades study data and probability, geometry and measurement, number sense and operations, and algebraic functions. Units integrate contextual problems, games, puzzles, and projects that develop strong conceptual understanding, hone strategic thinking skills, and offer multiple opportunities to collaborate and communicate mathematical thinking.	Sample projects • Building classroom towns to meet our needs (3-D geometry in first grade) • Chocolate Math with Chef Pierre (multiplication in second grade) • Saving money for a trip to New York (algebra in second grade) • Writing, pricing, and scaling recipes (large number multiplication in third grade) • Skyscraper nets (exploring area, surface area, perimeter, and volume in fourth grade)

Wellness, Resiliency, and Applied Learning	Social-Emotional Learning	Social-emotional learning skills are formally taught at every grade level to develop self-awareness, self-management skills, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Reflection and mindfulness are incorporated throughout the program.		
	P.E., Health, and Wellness	Our physical education program promotes the social, emotional, and physical benefits of nutrition, wellness practices, and exercise. P.E. classes introduce cooperative games and help students develop physical strength, stamina, athletic skill, and a growth mindset. Enrichment courses provide after-school athletics opportunities.		
	Trips and Outdoor Learning	Regular use of our 33-acre campus allows students to take their learning outside, whether studying ecology, investigating in the garden, writing in the meadow classroom, or building SEL skills through collaborative games and environmental stewardship. Field trips enrich learning beyond campus, and overnight trips integrate science, SEL, and thematic studies.	Field trip samples: • Water treatment plant • Chabot Space Center • Angel Island • San Mateo County History Museum • San Francisco Chinatown	Overnight/camping trips: • 1st: Sleepover at Nueva • 2nd: China Camp • 3rd: Pie Ranch • 4th: Westminster Woods
	Choice and Passion Projects	Students at every grade level engage in choice activities—either joining in a small-group activity for one session or for a trimester-long class. Students pursue topics of interest through passion projects involving question generation, research, and application. Many students participate in and form student-run clubs, plays, and music ensembles, e.g., creating a Lower School newsletter, a theater troupe, a dance performance, and an ocean protection foundation.		
	Leadership and Community Engagement	Students become stewards of their classrooms and campus, lead community meetings, mentor other grades, and propose and lead initiatives. First through fourth graders also participate as leaders in the Lower School Community Committee, serving to identify school-wide needs and implement solutions.	Leadership and community engagement examples: • Secret service (anonymously identify and meet needs within the community) • Creating sanctuaries for bugs • Holding a Lost and Found Fair • Leading a No-plastic Week • Kindness March (a student initiative to inspire kindness) • Water filter system fundraiser for children in a rural community	



PreK Sample Schedule

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:00-8:15 Drop off at Lower Loop				
8:30-9:00 Morning Gathering				
9:00-9:45 Theme* Study & Open Snack	9:00-9:45 Theme* Study & Open Snack	9:00-10:15 Science	9:00-9:30 Music	9:00-10:30 Theme* Study & Open Snack
			9:30-9:45 Snack	
9:45-10:45 Library	9:45-10:45 Math & Theme* Study		9:45-10:45 P.E.	
		10:15-10:45 Snack		
10:45-11:30 Gather	10:45-11:30 Gather	10:45-11:00 Gather	10:45-11:30 Gather	10:30-11:00 Gather
		11:00-11:45 Creative Movement		11:00-11:45 Science
11:30-11:45 Reader's Workshop	11:30-11:45 Reader's Workshop		11:30-11:45 Reader's Workshop	
11:45-12:30 Lunch & Recess				
12:30-12:45 Story before Rest Time				
12:45-1:30 Rest Time				
1:30-1:45 Clean and Pack Up				
1:45-3:00 Choices & Theme* Study Specialist joins at 2:15	1:45-3:00 Tuesday Tea	1:45-3:00 Choices & Theme* Study Specialist joins at 2:15	1:45-3:00 Math & Theme* Study Specialist joins at 2:15	1:45-3:00 Game Time
3:00-3:15 Closing Gather				
3:15-3:45 Dismissal				

Kindergarten Sample Schedule

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:00 Outdoor soft landing / Play time / Parents welcome on K Lawn				
8:15-8:30 Morning Meeting				
8:30-9:15 Literacy				
9:15-9:45 Snack / Recess				
9:45-10:30 P.E.	9:45-10:30 Music	9:45-10:30 Creative Movement	9:45-10:30 Social Emotional Learning (SEL)	9:45-10:30 Science / Garden
10:30-11:00 Class Time				
11:00-11:45 Math				
11:45-12:15 Lunch				
12:15-12:45 K Recess				
12:45-1:15 Daydream Time				
1:15-1:30 Handwriting				
1:30-2:15 Theme*	1:30-2:15 Science	1:30-2:15 Theme*	1:30-2:15 Library	1:30-2:15 Theme*
2:15-3:00 Investigations				
3:00-3:15 Closing Snack				
3:15-3:30 Prep for Dismissal				

1st Grade Sample Schedule

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:00-8:15 Classes Open				
8:15-8:45 Morning Meeting				
8:45-9:45 Math				
9:45-10:15 Class Time / Tutorial				
10:15-10:40 Snack Recess				
10:45-11:45 Literacy	10:45-11:45 Science	10:45-11:45 Literacy	10:45-11:45 Literacy	10:45-11:45 Literacy
11:45-12:10 Cross-Grade Recess				
12:15-12:40 1st-4th Lunch				
12:45-1:15 Community, Calm, and Conference Time				
1:20-2:15 Science	1:20-2:15 SEL	1:20-2:00 P.E.	1:20-2:00 Music	1:25-2:00 Creative Movement
Break and Transition	2:20-3:00 Theme*	Break and Transition	Break and Transition	Break and Transition
2:30-3:10 Library		2:20-3:05 Art	2:20-3:00 Theme*	2:15-3:15 Choice
	Read Aloud		Read Aloud	
3:15-3:30 Close & Staggered Dismissal				

* We define a theme as year-long overarching, big ideas and essential questions that generate lines of inquiry and study.





Beyond the Classroom

Physical Education and Athletics

Our Lower School physical education program focuses on physical fitness, healthy living, and sports. P.E. consists of individual and team-building activities that develop skills and confidence in a non-competitive and nurturing environment. Nueva's athletics program officially begins in fourth grade and offers options such as cross-country, basketball, and track & field. Fourth graders are also eligible to play flag football and soccer if players are needed to fill a JV roster.

Enrichment Classes

Enrichment classes are taught after school by Nueva faculty and Bay Area experts, and are open to all K–8 students. Classes offer students opportunities to dive into a study or activity they are excited to try.

Sample classes include:

- Art
- Steel drums
- Exploration
- Coding
- Chess
- Jewelry
- Soccer
- Making
- Cooking

The Menuhin-Dowling Program and Music Lessons

Established by Helen Dowling and Sir Yehudi Menuhin, the Menuhin-Dowling Program is an exemplary, performance-oriented music opportunity open to instrumental and vocal music students in first through eighth grade. The program encourages students to deepen musical knowledge across disciplines, including theory, practice, and performance.

The Menuhin-Dowling Program requires an audition. Students in this program make a significant commitment to their music study and have opportunities to perform throughout the year.

Separately, private, on-campus music lessons are also available for students interested in developing their instrumental or vocal skills. Students take lessons with professional musicians, ranging from string and percussion instruments to piano or voice.



Private lessons and the Menuhin-Dowling Program are available for additional fees. Financial assistance is available for both programs.

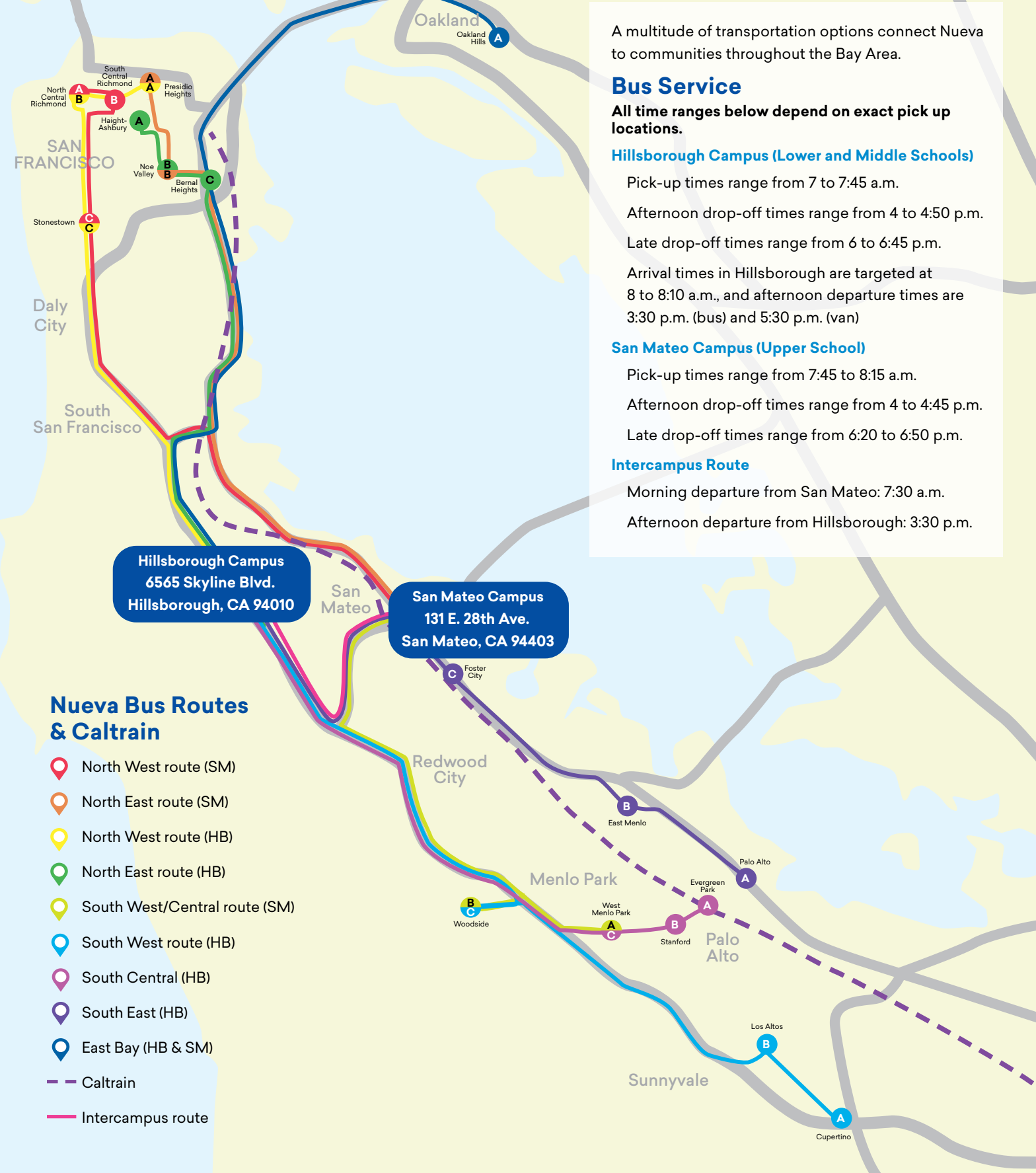
Before-School Care, After-School Care

Our Extended Day Program provides daily, supervised care before and after school for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Before-school care is available from 7:30 until 8 a.m. and after-school care is available starting after school until 6 p.m.

Families may register for these programs annually or on an as-needed basis.



Getting to Nueva: Transportation Options



A multitude of transportation options connect Nueva to communities throughout the Bay Area.

Bus Service

All time ranges below depend on exact pick up locations.

Hillsborough Campus (Lower and Middle Schools)

Pick-up times range from 7 to 7:45 a.m.

Afternoon drop-off times range from 4 to 4:50 p.m.

Late drop-off times range from 6 to 6:45 p.m.

Arrival times in Hillsborough are targeted at 8 to 8:10 a.m., and afternoon departure times are 3:30 p.m. (bus) and 5:30 p.m. (van)

San Mateo Campus (Upper School)

Pick-up times range from 7:45 to 8:15 a.m.

Afternoon drop-off times range from 4 to 4:45 p.m.

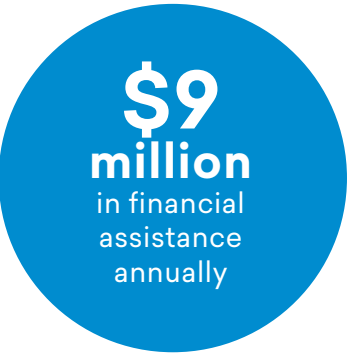
Late drop-off times range from 6:20 to 6:50 p.m.

Intercampus Route

Morning departure from San Mateo: 7:30 a.m.

Afternoon departure from Hillsborough: 3:30 p.m.

Financial Assistance



We know that a Nueva education is a significant financial investment. Nueva has always believed that a community of diverse voices and perspectives provides the best possible conditions for learning. This is why the overriding purpose of our financial assistance program is to ensure that Nueva is affordable for every family.

We seek to attract students who reflect the diversity of the Bay Area and a variety of life experiences, interests, and talents, regardless of their economic circumstances. Additionally, and most importantly, we meet 100 percent of a family's demonstrated financial need, and we meet that need with grants, not loans.

Our commitment is to ensure that all our students can fully access Nueva's curricular and extracurricular programs and services without placing a significant financial burden on their families, for as long as they have a demonstrated need.

Under Nueva's Financial Assistance Program, households earning less than \$150,000 annually, with assets typical of that income level, will receive 100 percent financial assistance. This 100 percent grant covers all aspects of a Nueva education, including transportation, lunch, enrichment activities, and after-school services.

Additionally, households earning between \$150,000 to \$250,000, with assets typical of that income level, will contribute between 1 and 10 percent of their income towards tuition.

For those with an annual income above \$250,000, financial assistance is determined based on a family's demonstrated need.

For all families who receive financial assistance, the school will cover any additional expenses associated with a Nueva education at the same percentage as the tuition assistance each receives.



Additional Programs

Nueva’s financial assistance goes beyond tuition.
We ensure every Nueva student can take part in the full Nueva experience.

Nueva provides consistent support from enrollment to matriculation. Assistance toward tuition and wraparound services remains in place throughout a student’s time at Nueva, assuming a family’s financial circumstances remain consistent.

The percentage of tuition that Nueva covers for your family is **Your FA%.**
Some families receive 100% assistance, meaning that they pay nothing toward a Nueva education.

Nueva *also* covers the cost of additional programs and services at the same percentage as **Your FA%***

We call these “wraparound services” because they support your child and your family from every angle while they are at Nueva!

Essential Services



Lunch (PreK–4th)
(*Lunch in 5th–12th is included in tuition)



Transportation



Extended Day (K–8th)
(before care and after care)

Enrichment Opportunities



Athletic Teams
(Gear and travel to competitions are included in tuition)



Overnight trips



Opt-in electives, enrichment, and activities
(and associated travel and competition)



Nueva Summer Camp (1st–12th)
(including the summer before enrollment)



Menuhin Music Program



Private music lessons at Nueva

Miscellaneous Services



Spending money for Nueva’s annual book fair



Senior prom and senior yearbook pages



Paid internships
if Your FA is 50% or more (requires application)



Spending money for curricular overnight trips
if Your FA is 50% or more



Standardized tests taken at Nueva



College application fees

*unless otherwise noted

Academic and Personal Support



Learning support and counseling by Nueva staff, if needed, is included in tuition



Learning support/tutoring
(including summer)

Outside Support
when required by Nueva (evaluation and/or sessions)

Occupational therapy
Speech therapy

Financial Assistance Statistics

Students Receiving Assistance

Distribution of financial assistance received among the 189 recipients in 2026-27:

Average Financial Assistance Grant*

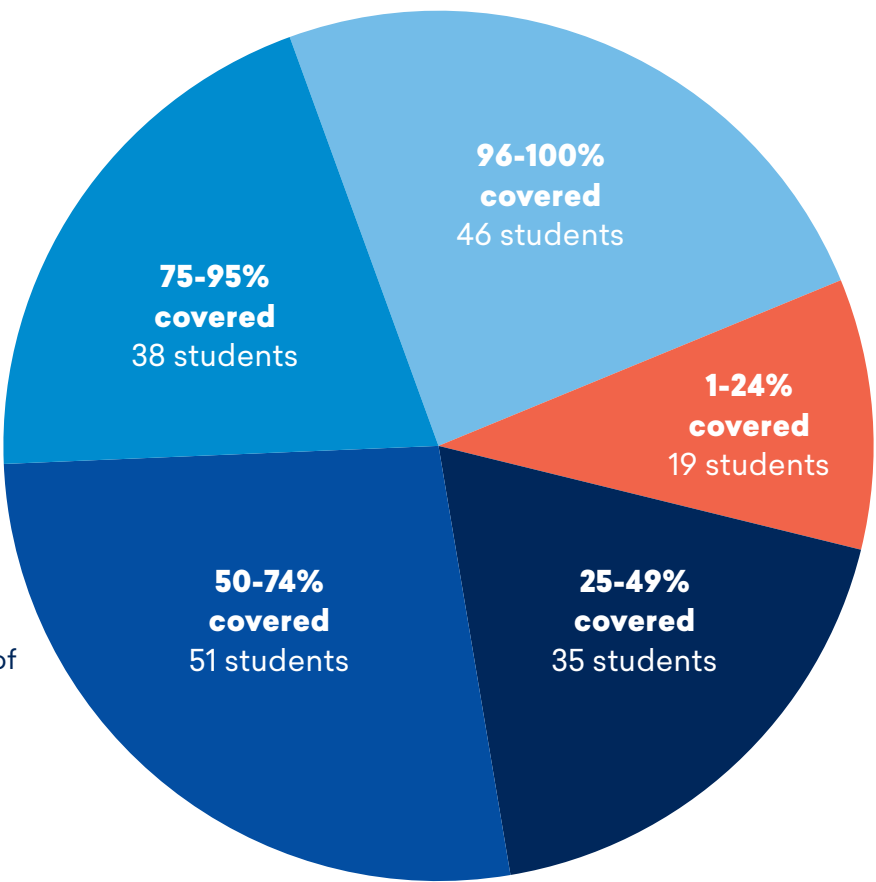
\$28,375 Lower School

\$45,281 Middle School

\$49,502 Upper School

*This does not include assistance granted for expenses outside of the cost of tuition.

Nueva has a **Financial Assistance & Family Partnership Coordinator** who supports families receiving FA throughout their time at the school—ensuring access to all aspects of Nueva life.



How to Apply for Financial Assistance

Create an account with Clarity, our online financial assistance application platform. After you complete and submit your application, please remember to upload your tax documentation to your Clarity dashboard:

- 2025 federal tax documents (Clarity will pull these documents directly from the IRS)
- 2026 November and December paystub for each wage-earning parent or guardian
- All 2026 W-2 and 1099 forms

More details about the application process can be found at nuevaschool.org/financial-assistance

Key Dates and Deadlines*

November 3, 2026: Admissions Application Guarantee Deadline for Kindergarten, Middle School, and Upper School applicants; Ensures an opportunity for an on-campus Activity Session

January 5, 2027:
Final deadline for Ravenna admissions application and all required documents

February 3, 2027:
Financial Assistance application and all supporting documents due in Clarity

March 12, 2027:
Admissions and Financial Assistance decisions released

March 19, 2027:
Admissions decision reply and enrollment deposit due

*For applicants applying for PreK Round II Admission (those who will turn 4 years old between March 5–May 16, 2027), IQ assessment results are due no later than March 16, 2027, while all other application materials must be submitted by January 5, 2027.



The Nueva School
inspires a passion
for lifelong learning,
fosters social and
emotional acuity, and
develops the student's
imaginative mind.

Please visit our website for the most recent information
regarding Nueva's Lower School.

Thank you for your interest in The Nueva School!

THE NUEVA SCHOOL

Hillsborough Campus
Grades PreK–8
6565 Skyline Boulevard
Hillsborough, CA 94010
650-350-4600

San Mateo Campus
Grades 9–12
131 East 28th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403
650-235-7100

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