



Palo Alto Senior High School

School Profile

2026-2027

Established 1894

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 40.6% Asian, 1.6% African American/Black, 26.5% Caucasian, 18.1% Hispanic/Latino, 1.7% Pacific Islander, and 11.4% 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 1,797.

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 2026-2027

Paly students enjoy a strong curriculum with a range of 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
incl. 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 33 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](#).

Dual Enrollment Courses

Paly offers 32 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.
- Through its AP Capstone Pathway, our peer mentorship program has been cited by The American Academy of Arts and Sciences as a model for spreading economic capital amongst diverse students.

Class Rank & Grading Point Average

There are 455 students in the Class of 2027. 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	4.39 - 4.51	4.00 - 4.00
2	4.31 - 4.38	3.95 - 3.98
3	4.21 - 4.30	3.90 - 3.93
4	4.12 - 4.20	3.83 - 3.89
5	4.00 - 4.11	3.74 - 3.82
6	3.88 - 3.98	3.63 - 3.73
7	3.69 - 3.87	3.49 - 3.62
8	3.44 - 3.68	3.24 - 3.48
9	3.08 - 3.42	3.00 - 3.23
10	1.12 - 3.07	1.15 - 2.97

*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, Intro to Engineering Design, Work Experience, Audio Music Production & Audio Music Production A
- Science:** Biology, AP Biology, AP Chemistry
- World Language:** All classes
- VAPA:** Photo 1, Adv. Photo, Adv Photo Honors, AP2D Art & Design Photo, AP2D Art PH

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 Course Code Symbols on Transcripts:

A Advanced (Math) / Accelerated (Eng)

D Dual Enrollment with Community College

AP Advanced Placement

H Honors

SJ Social Justice Pathway

Testing

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

ACT Scores: (141 Test Takers in 2026)

Year	Paly Average	National Average
2024	29.7	19.4
2025	29.9	19.6
2026	29.2	19.4

SAT Scores: (586 Test Takers in 2026)

Section	2025	2026	National Mean
EBRW	672	669	530
Math	692	692	515

AP Scores (2026)

- **947** students took **2,815** exams
- **94.6%** scored a **3 or higher**
- **51.7%** earned a **score of 5**

National Merit Program

- **35** students were named **Semifinalists (2026)**
- **93** students earned **Commended** status (2026)
- **40** students were named **Semifinalists (2025)**
- **78** students earned **Commended** status (2025)

Regional, State & National Award-Winning Student Activities & Clubs

Arts:

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

Music:

Concert Band • Symphonic Band • Wind Ensemble • Pep Band • String Orchestra • Chamber Orchestra • Symphony Orchestra • 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 • Economics • Pen & Pipette 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:

249 students in the Class of 2027 contributed **27,700** service hrs, with an estimated economic impact of **\$1,001,107**.

Athletics

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

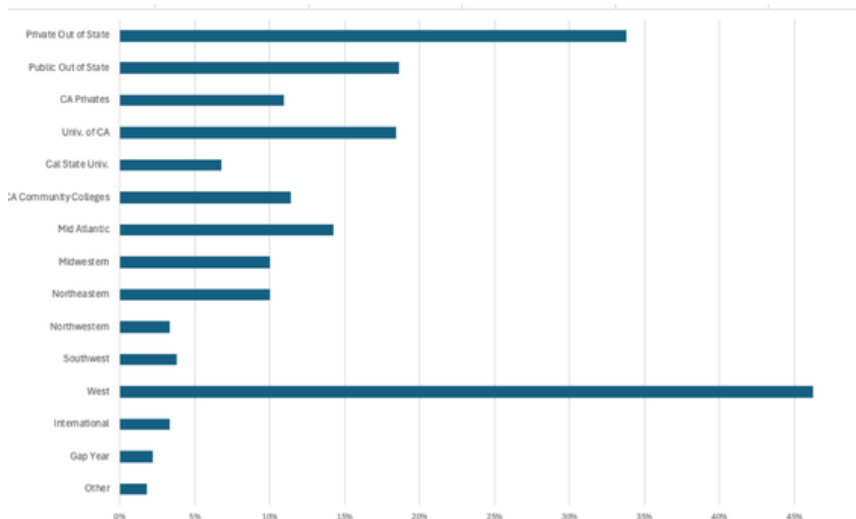
League and competes in a wide range of sports:

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 2026 Post-High School Plans

82.8% attending a 4-year college 🎓 11.7% attending a 2-year college
3% taking a Gap Year 🏠 2.5% pursuing other plans



A college-specific matriculation summary for 2023-2026 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, College Pathways, English Learners	claguna@pausd.org
James Hamilton	Bha-Hag	jhamilton@pausd.org
Selene Singares	Hak-Maa	ssingares@pausd.org
John Moreno	Mad-Seo	jmoreno@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. Jason E. Glass, Superintendent
25 Churchill Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94306
(650) 329-3737

Accreditations & Professional Memberships

Accredited

Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

Member of

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)
Western Association for College Admission Counseling (WACAC)
The College Board

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

