

## FACTS AND FIGURES

Upper School enrollment (9-12):	236
Average class size:	15
% students enrolling in 4-year college:	97%
% of students who choose a gap year:	10%
Students in the Class of 2024:	61
Median unweighted 6-semester GPA:	3.95
Median weighted 6-semester GPA:	4.11
In May 2023, 116 students took 181 AP exams:	
Scores of 4 or 5:	83%
Scores of 3 and above:	97%

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Gabrielle McColgan

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

### Alyson Tom

Associate Director of College Counseling  
(650) 470-7739  
atom@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 equalize 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 **69% of students identifying as students of color and 20% 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: Bowdoin, Brown, Harvard, NYU, Pomona, Santa Clara, University of Pennsylvania, 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. **87% 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.

**COVID-19** Castilleja began distance learning in March 2020, began hybrid learning in January 2021, and re-opened fully in May 2021. We did not make significant changes to our calendar, grading system, course offerings, or academic requirements during that period. Please note: ACT and SAT test centers remain scarce in the Bay Area as of Fall 2023. **Castilleja enthusiastically supports students who choose to opt out of ACT/SAT testing.**

# 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 no more than four AT courses and no more than 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 2023–24**

**\* not offered in 2022–23**

**+ single semester course**

### COMPUTER SCIENCE & ENGINEERING (1 sem required)

*Introduction to Computer Science in Java* +  
Engineering I +  
Engineering II +

#### 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*  
21st Century Literature \* +  
African American Women Writers +  
Literature of Immigration +  
Satire and Comedy \* +  
Shakespeare +  
Unreliable Narrator \* +

### HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE

(3 years required)

*Global Identities and Institutions*  
*The Individual and Society* +  
*U.S. Government* +  
Gender & Sexuality Studies Honors +  
International Relations Honors +  
Latin American Studies Honors +  
Macroeconomics Honors \* +  
Modern World Religions Honors \* +  
Population, Migration, and Conflict Honors \* +

#### AT History-Social Science:

*United States History*  
Art History # +  
Asian American Studies +  
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 + & II +

### SCIENCE

(3 years required)

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

#### AT Science:

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

### VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

(2 years required)

*Exploration in the Arts* +  
Ceramic Design I + and II +  
Dance Workshop I + & II +  
(formerly Dance Production Workshop)  
Visual Arts I + and II +  
(formerly Drawing & Painting I and II)  
Photography I # + and II +  
Theatre I + & II +  
Vocal Music Workshop I + & II +  
Advanced Ceramic Design +  
Advanced Dance Workshop +  
Advanced Photography +  
Advanced Theatre +  
Advanced Visual Arts +  
Advanced Vocal Music Workshop +  
**AT:**  
Music: Theory and Musicianship  
Theater: Production +  
Art: Visual Arts (formerly AT: Studio Art)  
Art History # +

### 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 and 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*

# Enhanced Learning Opportunities

**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.

**ANTIRACIST LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMING** is a key component of fostering student leaders' initiative, agility, and purpose. 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 problem strategize with campus stakeholders to co-create a more inclusive school 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 geared to help them develop creative confidence and technical skills, enhancing individual and collaborative learning across the curriculum.

**COMMUNITY-BASED LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMING** connects Castilleja students with local organizations through community action programs that support the guiding principle of reciprocal learning and partnership. Students do not count hours, 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. A few of our local partners include *LifeMoves*, *Planned Parenthood*, *League of Women Voters*, and *Lucile Packard Children's Hospital*.

**GLOBAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMING** explores first-hand the socio-political and economic complexities of globalization. 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 collaborate in reciprocal project-based learning with partners including *Kampung Halaman Foundation* (Indonesia) and *Lemow Collective* (Guatemala).

**GLOBAL WEEK** engages the entire school in a deep exploration of issues affecting the larger global community. The week is designed to examine a globally relevant topic through workshops, projects, and in-depth engagement with speakers. The 2024 Global Week theme is Language We Speak = Identity, Access, and Justice. Past themes have included *Inclusive Journalism: Moving Beyond the Headlines*; *Climate Justice & Indigenous Communities*; *Artificial Intelligence*; *Human Migration*; and *Equity in Education*.

## Class of 2023 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 63 members of the Class of 2023 will follow in the footsteps of Castilleja's previous classes to extraordinary educational experiences, whether in the fall of 2023 or after a gap year. (Bold type indicates matriculation by at least one student.)

American University  
**Amherst College**  
Auburn University  
Baldwin Wallace University  
Bard College  
**Barnard College**  
**Boston College**  
**Boston University**  
**Brandeis University**  
Brown University  
Cal Poly, Humboldt  
Cal Poly, Pomona  
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo  
CSU Bakersfield  
CSU Fullerton  
CSU Sacramento  
Carleton College  
**Carnegie Mellon University**  
**Case Western Reserve University**  
Chapman University  
**Claremont McKenna College**  
Clark University  
Colby College  
College of Wooster  
**Connecticut College**  
Cornell College  
**Cornell University**  
Denison University  
DePaul University  
Dickinson College  
**Duke University**  
Elon University  
Emerson College  
Emory University  
Fairleigh Dickinson University  
Florida State University  
Fordham University

Franklin & Marshall College  
George Washington University  
**Georgetown University**  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Gettysburg College  
**Grinnell College**  
Hamilton College  
**Harvard University**  
Harvey Mudd College  
**Haverford College**  
Hofstra University  
Illinois Wesleyan University  
Johns Hopkins University  
Juniata College  
Kenyon College  
Lafayette College  
**Lawrence University**  
Lehigh University  
Lewis & Clark College  
**List College/Columbia University**  
Loyola Marymount University  
Macalester College  
Marymount Manhattan College  
**Massachusetts Inst of Technology**  
Michigan State University  
**Molloy College**  
Muhlenberg College  
**New York University**  
**Northeastern University**  
**Northwestern University**  
Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences  
Occidental College  
Ohio Northern University  
Peabody Institute (Johns Hopkins)  
Pennsylvania State University  
**Pitzer College**  
**Princeton University**

Providence College  
Purdue University  
Reed College  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Rhode Island College  
**Rice University**  
Rider University  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
San Diego State University  
San Francisco State University  
San José State University  
**Santa Clara University**  
Sarah Lawrence College  
**Scripps College**  
Smith College  
Sonoma State University  
St. Olaf College  
**Stanford University**  
SUNY University at Buffalo  
Syracuse University  
The Ohio State University  
Trinity University  
**Tufts University**  
Tulane University  
University of Aberdeen  
University of Arizona  
University of Auckland  
University of British Columbia  
**UC Berkeley**  
UC Davis  
UC Irvine  
**UC Los Angeles**  
UC Merced  
UC Riverside  
UC San Diego  
UC Santa Barbara  
**UC Santa Cruz**

**University of Chicago**  
University of Colorado  
University of Denver  
University of Edinburgh  
University of Georgia  
University of Hawaii  
University of Illinois  
University of Iowa  
University of Massachusetts  
University of Miami  
**University of Michigan**  
University of Minnesota  
University of North Carolina  
University of Northern Colorado  
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 Francisco  
**University of Southern California**  
University of St Andrews  
University of Tennessee  
University of Texas  
University of The Arts  
**University of Virginia**  
University of Washington  
University of Wisconsin, Madison  
Victoria University of Wellington  
**Villanova University**  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Wellesley College  
Western Michigan University  
Whitman College  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
**Yale University**