



# Palo Alto Senior High School

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Phil Winston  
Principal

## Welcome to the **Palo Alto High School Open House for the Class of 2015**

February 1, 2011  
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
Haymarket Theater

In this packet you will find:  
Student FAQs  
Contact Information &  
Important Dates to Remember  
English Department materials  
Math Department materials  
Science Department materials  
9<sup>th</sup> Grade Course Selection Form

Tonight's presentation can be found online at  
[www.paly.net/guidance](http://www.paly.net/guidance)

## Paly Contact Information by Department

Student Activities	Kindel Launer	<a href="mailto:klauner@pausd.org">klauner@pausd.org</a>
Athletics	Earl Hansen	<a href="mailto:ehansen@pausd.org">ehansen@pausd.org</a>
Teacher Advisor Program	Susan Shultz	<a href="mailto:sshultz@pausd.org">sshultz@pausd.org</a>
Freshman Counselor	Paige Johnson	<a href="mailto:pjohnson@pausd.org">pjohnson@pausd.org</a>
English	Kirk Hinton	<a href="mailto:khinton@pausd.org">khinton@pausd.org</a>
Math	Radu Toma	<a href="mailto:rtoma@pausd.org">rtoma@pausd.org</a>
Science	Michelle Steingart	<a href="mailto:msteingart@pausd.org">msteingart@pausd.org</a>
History & Social Science	Jaclyn Edwards	<a href="mailto:jedwards@pausd.org">jedwards@pausd.org</a>
World Languages	Kevin Duffy	<a href="mailto:kduffy@pausd.org">kduffy@pausd.org</a>
Career Tech Ed	Pat O'Hara	<a href="mailto:pohara@pausd.org">pohara@pausd.org</a>
Visual & Performing Arts	Michael Najjar	<a href="mailto:mnajar@pausd.org">mnajar@pausd.org</a>
Physical Education	Peter Diepenbrock	<a href="mailto:pdiepenbrock@pausd.org">pdiepenbrock@pausd.org</a>
Special Education	Heather Johanson	<a href="mailto:hjohanson@pausd.org">hjohanson@pausd.org</a>
AVID/FOS	Liz Brimhall	<a href="mailto:ebrimhall@pausd.org">ebrimhall@pausd.org</a>
Guidance Office	Jenny Stone	<a href="mailto:jstone@pausd.org">jstone@pausd.org</a>
Library	Rachel Kellerman	<a href="mailto:rkellerman@pausd.org">rkellerman@pausd.org</a>

### **Important Dates to Remember...**

- ▶ Paly Counselor at Jordan, January 31<sup>st</sup> and February 1<sup>st</sup>
- ▶ Paly Counselors at JLS, February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>
- ▶ Paly Counselors at Terman, February 1<sup>st</sup>
- ▶ Parent Information Workshops (optional) – February 3rd, 12 -1pm *or* 7:00 – 8:00 pm in the ERC (library)
- ▶ Paly Campus Tours - Saturday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1 pm - meet outside the Student Center
- ▶ Course selection forms due to middle schools on February 9<sup>th</sup>
- ▶ Paly Counselors return to JLS and Terman, February 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>
- ▶ Paly Counselors return to Jordan, February 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>
- ▶ Paly Counselors available to meet with families new to the district – March 1st, 2011
- ▶ Link Crew Freshman Orientation – August 17, 2011
- ▶ First Day of School – August 23, 2011

## STUDENT FAQs

### ***Most Frequently Asked Questions your children had about Paly!***

Listed below are the most commonly asked questions that were asked of our Counselors when they visited the 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms this week. Enjoy!

#### **1. Does Paly have an Open Campus?**

Yes. The Paly campus is an open campus. Students frequent the Town and Country establishments during the lunch hour and are permitted to leave the campus during prep periods. That said, Paly employs three full-time campus supervisors. The campus supervisors keep a close eye on your student's safety and make sure all visitors to our campus sign-in at the main office. Paly is a very safe campus.

#### **2. What is the attendance policy?**

All absences from school must be explained by a phone call from the parent/guardian to the 24-hour office number (650-329-3711). If attendance office personnel do not answer, leave a message on the answering machine, clearly stating your student's name, grade, time/day(s) of absence, and briefly, the reason for the absence. Absences must be cleared within 48 hours of the student's return to class. Failure to do so will result in the student receiving a cut for the class, and the possible loss of the opportunity to make-up work or tests and/or being dropped from the class. Students who receive 3 or more cuts will be required to attend Saturday school. The school does not accept notes or email for the reporting of absences and does not issue passes to class. Please see the student handbook for more information regarding our attendance policy at [www.paly.net/info/handbook.pdf](http://www.paly.net/info/handbook.pdf)

#### **3. Is there a dress code?**

Appearance and dress must be within the limits of decency, cleanliness, and appropriateness for school, and shall not interfere with teaching and learning. Shoes and shirts must be worn at all times. Any clothing advertising or displaying alcohol, illegal substances or activities and all gang-related apparel are strictly prohibited.

#### **4. Are phones and iPods allowed at Paly?**

Yes, but in the classrooms, cell phones need to be turned off and put away. Failure to turn off your phone during class will result in the phone being confiscated by the teacher and turned into the Assistant Principal for pick-up at the end of the day. Individual listening devices (iPods) may not be used in any classroom or building without express permission from a teacher or staff member. As with all valuables, we encourage students to keep a close eye on their belongings. Theft, vandalism and all incidents involving tampering with personal or school property should be reported to the main office.

#### **5. We heard a rumor that Paly is going to have a 4 year PE requirement. Is this true?**

Not true. Paly has a 2 year PE requirement.

\*\*\*\* For more information about all of Paly's policies and school rules, please see our Student Handbook which can be found online at [www.paly.net/info/handbook.pdf](http://www.paly.net/info/handbook.pdf)

## **6. What is “0” period P.E.?**

“0” period P.E. is a class that runs in the morning before school starts, typically 4 days per week from 7:10 – 8:00 am. Freshman who take “0” period P.E. will have a prep period scheduled in their school day (freshmen are not permitted to take 8 classes). Once students sign up for “0” period P.E., they are required to remain in the class for the entire semester. This is a serious commitment.

## **7. What is contract P.E.?**

Contract P.E. information is available through the Physical Education Instructional Supervisor. Typically, students need to be a **nationally-ranked** athlete in his/her individual sport to qualify for contract P.E. As you can imagine, there are very few students who qualify for contract P.E. given this condition. Please contact Peter Diepenbrock at [pdiepenbrock@pausd.org](mailto:pdiepenbrock@pausd.org) for more info.

## **8. Do I need to register for P.E. if I play a sport and will get a prep?**

Yes, all freshmen will be registered for P.E. and it will appear as one of your seven classes in your schedule. All freshmen attend the first three weeks of P.E. class before being released for their prep if they participate in a fall sport. When your season is over, students must return to their P.E. class. Athletes are strongly encouraged to use this prep period to work on homework or study in the library!

## **9. How does World Language placement work if I’m fluent in another language?**

Please contact World Language Instructional Supervisor Kevin Duffy at [kduffy@pausd.org](mailto:kduffy@pausd.org) to arrange placement testing. Testing will take place in May. For some students, taking the SAT II subject test might be an appropriate option for receiving college credit, depending on the language. For information regarding the SAT II subject test, please contact the College and Career Center.

## **10. How does World Language placement work if I study another language at an outside language school?**

Outside coursework must be completed at schools that are WASC accredited in order to be granted credit on the Paly transcript. Pre-approval of such coursework must be obtained by the Instructional Supervisor and Assistant Principal of Guidance. Please contact World Language Instructional Supervisor Kevin Duffy at [kduffy@pausd.org](mailto:kduffy@pausd.org) for more information.

## **11. What is the policy regarding backpacks and lockers at Paly?**

Backpacks are permitted inside the classroom. Students who wish to use a locker must purchase a Paly lock (\$5.00) from the ASB auditor. All non-Paly locks placed on school lockers will be cut off. Students may share lockers. The locker cages are open Monday-Friday from 7:30 am – 7:30 pm. If students wish to change lockers for any reason they should speak directly to the ASB auditor. Lockers can be renewed at the end of the school year. Valuables should not be left in lockers. The school is not responsible for theft, damaged or vandalized personal property.

## **12. Does having a prep really mean I can hang out at Town and Country every day?**

Not really....students have the option of attending Town and Country during lunch, but it is strongly recommended that students use the library or Academic Resource Center facilities during their prep period to complete homework instead.

# Paly 9<sup>th</sup> Grade English Selection

## ***Exploratory Thinking 1 or Critical Thinking 1?***

**Exploratory Thinking 1** is the **standard** college preparatory course for freshman English. Most course reading is assigned as homework, with nightly assignments typically ranging from 10-20 pages. Extended pieces of revised and edited writing are assigned every 2-4 weeks, and average 2-3 pages per assignments. Shorter pieces of writing may be assigned more frequently, or completed in class.

**Critical Thinking 1** is the **accelerated** college preparatory course for freshman English; while it does move at a faster pace, it does not receive honors or weighted credit. Papers are graded more rigorously than in Exploratory Thinking I. Most course reading is assigned as homework, with nightly assignments typically ranging from 20-30 pages. Extended pieces of revised and edited writing are assigned every 2-4 weeks and average 2-4 pages per assignment. Shorter pieces of writing may be assigned more frequently, or completed in class.

All freshmen are required to take one full year of English. Freshmen have two choices for fulfilling the 9<sup>th</sup> grade English requirement: Exploratory Thinking I and Critical Thinking I.

- Both courses are college preparatory
- Both courses satisfy the UC and CSU English “b” requirement
- Both cover the same district core works: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *All Quiet on the Western Front*.
- Students who enroll in TEAM self-determine their level of study (Exploratory or Critical) and read the same core works as the other sections.

The English Department’s complete reading list is available at:  
<http://www.paly.net/academics/english/readinglist.php>

**Q: *How should my student determine which course is best suited for him/her?***

**A:** Students should follow the recommendation of their eighth grade English teacher. Students who opt into the accelerated course should love reading and writing for its own sake and should be comfortable with working independently on assignments. Please take the recommendation of your 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher seriously since mid-year switches are sometimes impossible due to class sizes.

**Critical Thinking 1 is best suited for students who:**

- Enjoy English Language Arts- reading, writing and discussions
- Read independently, with comfort and confidence
- Enjoy writing and are confident drafting independently at home
- Can revise and edit their own writing
- Enjoy moving at a fast pace through materials and assignments
- Take pride in work that is thoughtfully and thoroughly completed
- Have the time in their schedules to dedicate to English Language Arts

**Exploratory Thinking 1 is best suited for students who:**

- Benefit from more support and in-class time to complete assignments
- Prefer reading texts as a class rather than independently
- Use class discussions to facilitate comprehension
- Benefit from drafting and revising written assignments in class, under teacher guidance
- Wish to work at a less accelerated pace, allowing for more time outside of class to dedicate to other passions

**Q: *What kinds of adjustments to the high school English classroom should my student expect?***

**A:** Incoming freshman are sometimes surprised by the rigor of grading standards, especially on writing assignments. Students should expect that effort alone will not guarantee a high mark. The work must also meet the standards set for the assignment. Top marks are reserved for work that well exceeds standards.

**Q: *How much homework a night should my student expect?***

**A:** All students should expect to have nightly homework, as well as work over the weekend, especially in Critical Thinking I. **In general, students in Critical Thinking I should expect to have significantly more homework than students in Exploratory Thinking**

Further questions? Please email Kirk Hinton at [khinton@pausd.org](mailto:khinton@pausd.org)

# Paly 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Selection

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: *What courses are available to 9th grade students in math?***

A: Algebra 1, Algebra 1A, Algebra 1A/Geometry A, and Geometry/Alg 2A

**Q: *My child comes from Jordan/ Terman/ JLS. What course should he take at Paly?***

A: PAUSD students are placed in one of these courses by their 8th grade math teacher, who best knows the students' ability level, motivation and potential, the district curriculum, and the group of peers.

**Q: *My child comes from a private school/another district. What course should he/she take?***

A: Students entering the district are placed in one of the courses above based on their performance on one or more readiness test. These assessments will be administered in May. Please contact Jenny Stone (650-329-3712 or [jstone@pausd.org](mailto:jstone@pausd.org)) to schedule an appointment.

**Q: *What will be the most advanced math course my student will take at Paly, if he/she starts in one of the courses above? What electives do you offer in math?***

A: They typical lanes are shown in the attached PAUSD flowchart. Transferring between lanes is possible from year to year based on student performance, teacher recommendation, and potential summer mathematics coursework.

**Q: *How many years of math should my student take at Paly?***

A: The graduation requirement in PAUSD is presently 2 years. However, since the CSU/UC networks require 3 years of math for admission and recommend 4 years, we strongly believe that in order to be college ready and successful after high school, our students should take 4 years of math.

**Q: *My student has never been good at math. What kind of help can he get at Paly?***

A: We have a solid support structure for struggling students. All our teachers are available for extra help during their prep periods. We have an after school drop-in tutoring program 3 days a week. Students can schedule a free peer tutor in the Academic Resource Center. We also make available lists of paid peer and adult tutors.

**Q: *My student is gifted in mathematics and enjoys participating in competitions. What venues can Paly offer her?***

A: We offer twice a week in the afternoons two different Problem Solving classes specifically designed for advanced students at all grade levels interested in participating in math contests. We also have a math club that meets once a week.

**Q: *What is the homework amount for math classes at Paly?***

A: All math classes assign homework daily.

- In Regular Level Courses the total weekly average is 2-3 hrs.
- In A-Lane Courses the total weekly average is 3-5 hrs.
- In Honors-Lane and AP the total weekly average is 4-6 hrs.

**Q: *What about summer school opportunities?***

**A:** Even the best summer school courses are crash courses that are not comparable in depth or breadth to the course work in our Honors or Advanced lane. Consequently, all summer courses earn just regular lane credit.

- Summer courses offered by PAUSD will include Algebra 1, Geometry and a bridge class to Algebra 1A/Geometry A.
- Students who are interested in taking summer school courses at accredited schools in the area for credit (including community colleges like Canada, Foothill, and De Anza if they are 16 or older) must obtain pre-approval from the Dept IS and the Assistant Principal of Instruction.

**Q: *What happens if my student is not performing well in his/her math class?***

**A:** To automatically continue to the next level math course, students need a C- or better both semesters. Students earning a D in S1 in the advanced or honors lane must score at least a B- 2<sup>nd</sup> semester to stay in the same lane the following year. If not, they have the option to repeat the 1<sup>st</sup> semester the following year and stay in the lane, or drop to the lane below and continue without repeating the D semester.

- Due to the sequential nature of the subject, passing 1<sup>st</sup> sem is a pre-requisite for enrolling in the 2<sup>nd</sup> sem in math courses.
- Students earning a D in S1 in the regular lane and at least a C in S2 *may* be able to continue in that lane the following year with the teacher's recommendation.

**Q: *Can my student change lanes or teachers once at the high school?***

**A:** Students or parents can request a lane change during the first quarter or at the semester break by speaking directly to the instructor. Changes require teacher and IS approval. If granted, the student carries the HW grade over.

- Issues we consider when recommending/approving lane changes:
  - *Does the student exhibit effort by scoring 80% or better on homework?* If not, the student has not worked hard enough on being successful in the course and a lane change is inappropriate.
  - *Is the student putting in an unusual amount of time on the homework and studying (on his or her own) with no discernable gain on assessments?* If yes, a lane change may be appropriate.
  - *Has the student sought additional help from his/her teacher and/or a tutor?*
  - *What is the student's schedule? Has the student done any extra summer work?*
- We do not move students to a course if they will not be challenged at all. They would distract those students who are appropriately placed in the course.
- The most selective colleges may not consider applicants with grades of C on their transcript. As a consequence, hard working students who earn Cs in a course can request to switch down a lane if there is space available.
- We cannot accommodate any change of teacher requests based on preference, teaching or learning style for obvious reasons: with 1800 students in the school, if we did, we'd never be able to set up a feasible schedule.
- Rare teacher changes occur for serious disciplinary reasons only. They must be approved by both teachers and are based on a strict behavior contract enforced by the Assistant Principal.

If you have any questions about Math at Paly, please email the Instructional Supervisor, Radu Toma, at [rtoma@pausd.org](mailto:rtoma@pausd.org)

# Paly 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Selection

## Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### **1. Does my child have to take a science during their freshman year at Palo Alto High School?**

Yes. All students are expected to take a science class during their freshman year. The courses offered provide foundational experience in both the content areas of science as well as in academic skill sets that are helpful for successful further study in the department.

### **2. What courses are available to 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in science?**

Integrated Science 1, Biology 1A, Biology AC

### **3. My child comes from Jordan/Terman/JLS. What course should he/she take at Paly?**

PAUSD students are placed in one of these courses by their 8<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher, who best knows the student's ability level, motivation, and potential. We request teachers to consider the following when making a decision as to which class is most appropriate for your student: the student's willingness to commit to the required weekly homework hours, their grades in prior core subjects, such as math, sciences, social sciences and English, and the degree of independent learning and academic responsibility shown by a student. Each course will properly prepare students for higher levels of science. Adjustments will be made after the first few weeks of the year should the 9<sup>th</sup> grade teacher see that a student is incorrectly placed. Please see the Palo Alto High School Program of Studies Course Description book (found at <http://www.paly.net>) for the specific prerequisites and course descriptions of each class.

### **4. My child comes from a private school/another district. What course should he/she take?**

Students entering the district will be placed in one of the courses above based on their math placement as well as grades earned in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Adjustments will be made after the first few weeks of the year should the 9<sup>th</sup> grade teacher see that a student is incorrectly placed. Please see the Palo Alto High School Program of Studies Course Description book (found at <http://www.paly.net>) for the specific prerequisites and course descriptions of each class.

### **5. What science classes should my son/daughter take at Palo Alto High School after their freshman year?**

The Science Department offers a variety of courses that address and meet the needs of students with a wide range of levels of academic achievement. The Science Department highly recommends that all students take a full year course of biology, chemistry & physics while in high school. Our hope is that all students will take four years of science at Paly. Although graduation requirements for Palo Alto High School only require 2 years of science, most colleges expect their applicants to have successfully completed all three core science areas. Our Advanced Placement curriculum includes Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, and Physics C for those high achieving students who are capable of undertaking the rigors of college level work during their high school years. For students interested in science but not desiring to undertake the rigors of the Advanced Placement work, we currently offer Biotechnology, Geology, Marine Biology, Science Research Projects and Astronomy as options in their junior and senior year. These choices will be discussed with your student in more detail when the appropriate time comes.

**6. How does Paly come up with the pre-requisites for our Freshman science course offerings?**

We have looked at the success of our students by evaluating science grades, math grades, and math lanes and have made observations about how often students participate in class. We have found that a student's confidence and success in science is closely linked to their success in math. Our recommendations are based on current student data. We ask that you strongly consider our recommendations, but should you find after your student's first test that they are in the wrong class, please have the student speak with their 9<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher, and we will work with your student to find a better placement.

<b>PREDICTORS FOR SUCCESS IN EACH SCIENCE COURSE – 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE</b>			
<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Integrated Science</b>	<b>Biology IA</b>	<b>Biology AC</b>
<b>Commitment to hours of required homework per week</b>	1-2 Hours	2-3 Hours	3-5 hours
<b>Prior grades in core subjects of math, sciences, social sciences, and English</b>	Successful Completion	A's and B's	A's
<b>Degree of independent learning and academic responsibility</b>	Requires Guidance	Limited guidance needed	Self-motivated

**7. How will I know if my child is successful in their science class?**

The key to any successful endeavor consists of three essential factors: time, motivation and ability. In the Science Department we consider a successful grade to be a passing grade of a "C" or higher. Students who are enrolled in a particular course and who are struggling, putting in more time than they should be, or who are generally not happy with the course and are getting a "C-" or below are most likely not taking an appropriate course for them, and a reevaluation of their placement is recommended. Instructors are constantly monitoring their students' performance and evaluating those students who appear to be struggling. In general, a student will know within the first few weeks in a class if the fit seems to be right. The first exams are generally given three to four weeks into the first semester, and those results can be an initial indicator of how well a student is performing. Teachers will communicate with students after this first test if they have questions about whether a student is in the right class. We encourage students to communicate with their teachers if they have concerns about the class in which they are enrolled.

If you have any questions about Science at Paly, please email the Instructional Supervisor, Michelle Steingart, at [msteingart@pausd.org](mailto:msteingart@pausd.org)