

THE NUEVA CURRENT



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The English team regularly reconsiders which books to select for their classes. Teachers share their rationale for changes to the curriculum. [\[P 12 \]](#)



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OPINION

Students have been careless with the widely-used toaster oven. A call to be more conscientious while preparing a bite. [\[P 16 \]](#)



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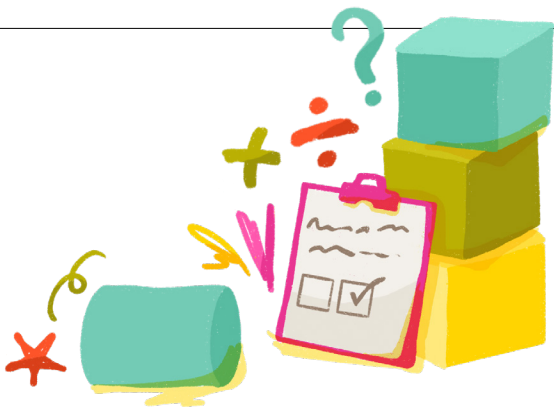
Has the Golden City lost its luster?

The poop map. The smash and grab capital. The doom loop. The reputation of San Francisco has plummeted since the pandemic — hear from residents about their lived experiences in the City by the Bay

Story by Natalie L.
with reporting by Gabe H. & Jordan F.



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Art by Jodie C.

Spill your brains: Unpacking the IQ test at Nueva

For decades, the assessment has been required for Lower and Middle School admissions. Here's a glimpse into how and why it's used

By Owen Y-L.

I. PUTTING GIFTEDNESS INTO NUMBERS

In the 1960s, Karen Stone McCown gathered a group of 17 Nobel Prize laureates with a singular goal: To learn how to create a school that would have fulfilled them in their childhoods. Over half a century later, the product of her work, Nueva, continues that mission of serving gifted learners.

But how does the school quantify and identify giftedness? The first step: the IQ test.

For decades, the Nueva admissions team has used the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI) for evaluating applicants under 6 years old and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) for those 6 years and older. Typically, the IQ score is submitted alongside the first part of the application, which includes basic applicant information, before moving on to the rest of the process.

The "Frequently Asked Questions" page on Nueva's website states, "Our experience has shown that students with a Full Scale Wechsler IQ Score around 130 (98th percentile) and above are more likely to be successful in Nueva's program." If an applicant's score falls below the target range of around 130, the admissions team may recommend the student not to move forward with the process.

For Director of Admissions Melanie Leon, the main purpose of the target score range is to ensure that admitted students will truly thrive in and enjoy a Nueva education.

"We are a school for gifted learners—it's fast-paced and highly verbal. We have found that if students are scoring below our target range, this might be a place where they may not thrive," Leon said.

Specifically, IQ assessments can shed light on aspects like verbal and reasoning abilities, visual spatial thinking, as well as working memory and processing speed, said Dunja Solari, Associate Director of Admissions for the Middle School. "Some of those scores actually tell you quite a bit about who that student might be as a learner."

While the use of a "singular score or a snapshot in time" might appear to be somewhat contradictory, especially for a school that shies away from exams and numerical grades in favor of more project-based, collaborative learning, Head of School Lee Fertig said the test can be "legitimately valuable if we embed it into a much larger framework of assessment."

"[The IQ assessment] doesn't necessarily align with the iterative, nuanced philosophy of education that Nueva espouses," Fertig said. "But, there are certain types of things that Nueva students benefit from when they're immersed in the Nueva experience, and the IQ test, if used properly, has the potential to shed some light on those things."

Particularly, in comparison with more

achievement-based aptitude tests, Nate B. '26, who joined Nueva in preK, believes the IQ test is "a lot better of a predictor of who you actually are as opposed to your environment."

Other standardized tests can be "even more systemically unequal because it's a lot easier for wealthy parents or very present parents to put their kids in tutoring from an incredibly young age," Nate said.

Because of this, Director of Enrollment and Strategic Engagement Taryn Grogan feels that using the IQ test "evens the playing field a little bit more."

However, while it provides some useful data, an IQ score is only "one piece of the puzzle," she said.

"The IQ test doesn't tell us about resiliency, character, how they problem-solve with people in groups," Grogan said. "Those are the things that we look for and can glean from other data points in the admissions process."

Besides the IQ test, the rigorous application process includes on-campus activity sessions (called "My Nueva Day"), conversations with parents, written responses from parents and/or students, and My Page, which allows Middle School applicants to creatively express themselves in a medium of their choice. Teacher recommendations, report cards, and transcripts are also considered.

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