

# WELCOME TO THE NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



### From the Superintendent:

Dear Novato Community,

The Novato Unified School District made great gains in several of our goals this past school year. Here are a few highlights:

- Decreased chronic absenteeism and improved student attendance overall
- Made steady gains in local assessment academic scores
- Expanded after school programming for TK-6th grades
- Increased the number of English Learners designated as Fluent Proficient.
- School meals for all students at no cost
- Completed a feasibility study for Educator Workforce Housing
- Air-conditioned classrooms on all campuses

***Dr. Tracy Smith, Superintendent***

### Preparing Future-Ready Learners

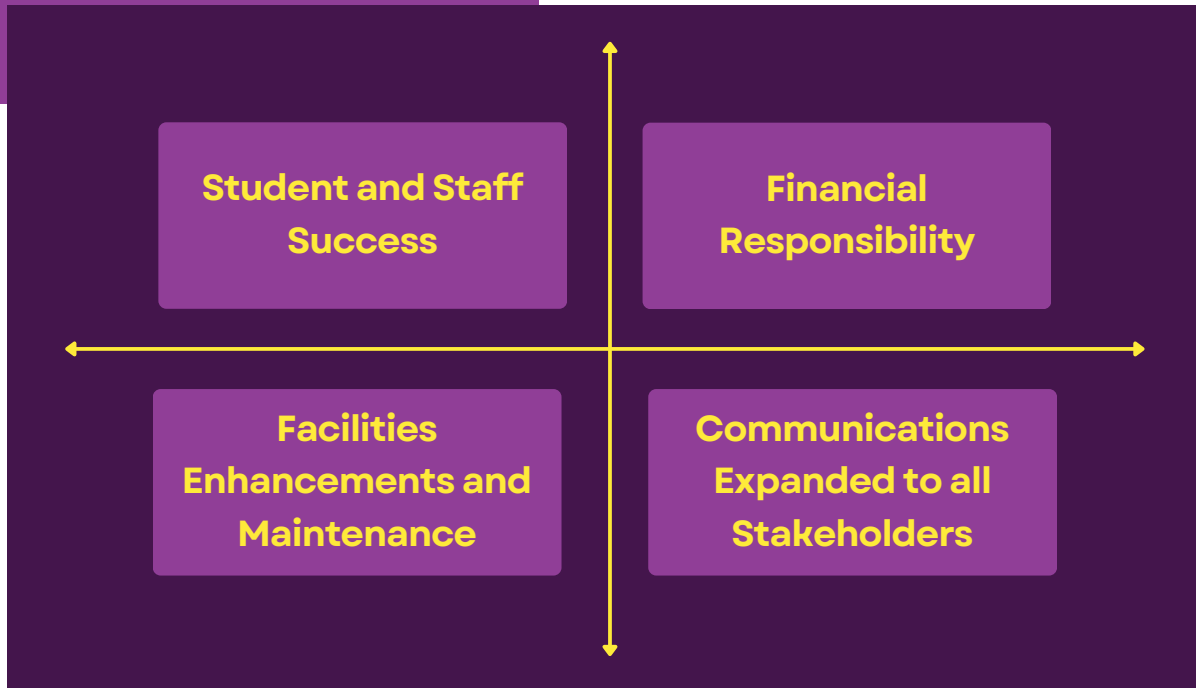
#### NUSD's Mission

Engage, inspire and empower all students, in a rapidly changing world, to realize their life goals.



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# NUSD GOALS



## The Novato Unified School District accomplished a lot this year!

We have many updates to share with you:

- **Expanded Mental Health Services**
- **Expanded Learning Opportunities Program**
- **Career Technical Education**
- **Enhanced Art and Music Through Prop 28 Funding**
- **Workforce Housing**
- **Dual Language Immersion**
- **Expanded Transitional Kindergarten**
- **Special Education**
- **Early Intervention Preschool Program**
- **Parent Involvement**
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## NUSD VISION

NUSD will provide an innovative and personalized learning experience for every student in a caring and supportive environment to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful and productive citizens.







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## EXPANDED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mental health support services and social-emotional skills are a priority at NUSD. Key initiatives include:

- **Partnerships:** Collaborations with Bay Area Community Resources and North Marin Community Services to provide short-term school-based mental health services at all school sites.
- **Counseling Team Expansion:** Elementary schools will experience an increase in the number of school counselors to enhance mental health and wellness prevention and skill-building from TK through 12th grade.

Specific programs and facilities include:

- **Wellness Hubs:** Established at Novato High School and San Marin High School in the 2022-2023 school year, 2023-2024 was the first full year of implementation funded primarily through the Peter E. Haas, Jr. Family Fund, featuring:
  - A full-time wellness navigator to welcome students and address immediate needs.
  - A wellness specialist (mental health clinician) providing clinical support and liaising between school and community resources.
- **New Wellness Hub at Sinaloa Middle School:** Opened in Spring 2024, funded by the Sinaloa PTSA and Team Burdell from the Leadership Novato program of the Novato Chamber of Commerce, featuring:
  - Managed by a member of the Sinaloa school counseling team.
  - A redesigned classroom by Team Burdell to create a welcoming and calming space for students.







## EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The District implemented the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program for students in Transitional Kindergarten through 6th grade. This program partners with community organizations and NUSD staff to offer additional after-school, intersession, and summer activities focused on enrichment and academic support.

Students participate in programs organized by NUSD staff, the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club of Sonoma and Marin, Play Marin, North Marin Community Services, and RISE Scholars. These activities extend learning beyond the classroom in engaging and fun ways.

The program extends the school day to nine hours, providing services that focus on academic, social-emotional, and physical fitness needs to prepare students for success in school and the future.



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## CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Career Technical Education (CTE) Pathways are a series of rigorous courses that prepare students for both college and career in a specific area of industry, often with the option to receive college credit and/or earn an industry certification. The course of study forms a powerful and positive integrated connection with all other disciplines.

NUSD offers the following CTE courses:

**Novato High School:** Arts and Media and Entertainment: Cinematic Art, Photography, and Video Game Design; Product Design; and Medical Careers Pathways

**San Marin High School:** Multimedia Design, Cisco Networking, Biotechnology, Engineering, Sports Medicine and Stage Craft

**Marin Oaks High School:** Culinary Arts

CTE Pathways are open to all students who strive to achieve at high levels and would like the opportunity to explore potential career options at the secondary school level.



<http://www.nusd.org/cte>

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## ENHANCED ART AND MUSIC THROUGH PROP 28 FUNDING

On November 8, 2022, California voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 28, The Arts and Music in Schools (AMS) Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act.

Proposition 28 supports NUSD through:

- Ongoing state funds beginning in the 2023–24 school year
- Providing nearly \$1 million a year to grow arts offerings for all NUSD students
- Empowering school sites to tailor a plan toward school needs

The funding has certain conditions and requirements: 80% of Prop 28 dollars must be used to hire certified or classified staff for arts instruction, and the remaining 20% is available for training, supplies, materials, and partnerships in arts education.

In the first year of implementation, the District collaborated in new ways:

- The first district-wide Music Festival highlighting bands and choirs from all of our school sites was launched.
- School teams shared staff members and engaged in scheduling best practices.
- A new Arts Integration Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) role was created for the 2024–2025 school year.
- The development of a five-year plan with school input was initiated to effectively and equitably expand the arts programs districtwide.



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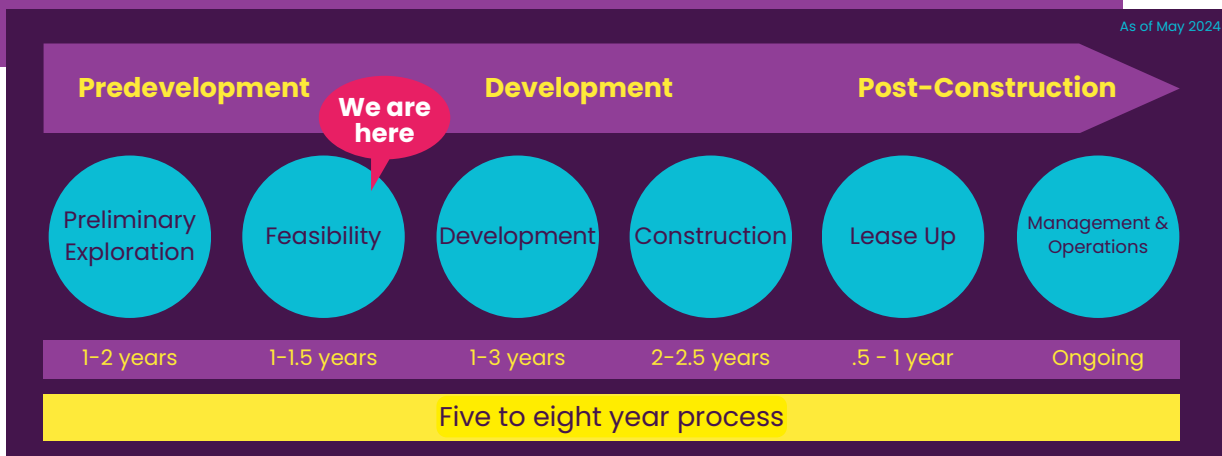
## WORKFORCE HOUSING

To address the challenges of attracting and employing people who share NUSD's vision to engage, inspire and empower students, the Board of Trustees made a commitment to explore the possibility of workforce housing.

We see workforce housing, customized to meet our needs and to fit into our community, as one of several strategies being used to retain, attract and employ exceptional and dedicated talent.

This project is currently in an exploratory stage. After receiving all of the necessary information, if the Board directs the District to move forward, a typical timeline might have construction beginning in three years; though that is strictly an approximation. There is much that needs to happen prior to breaking ground.

As of May 2024



<http://www.nusd.org/workforce-housing>

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## DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION

The Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program at Lynwood Elementary offers native Spanish and English speakers the chance to excel academically in both languages while fostering cultural understanding and high self-esteem.

The Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program starts in TK or kindergarten and continues through at least 5th grade, focusing on bilingual proficiency. Classes include both Spanish-dominant and English-dominant students, with an ideal split of 50% each. Spanish-dominant speakers should make up 30-70% of the class to serve as models for English-dominant learners.

DLI continues at San Jose Middle School where students will have the option to enroll in dual language courses as the program develops.

## EXPANDED TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN

The Novato Unified School District has offered Transitional Kindergarten (TK) since 2010 and currently provides TK at all NUSD elementary schools.

TK is part of the K-12 public school system and is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate.

For the 2024-2025 school year, TK is available to children whose 5th birth-date falls between September 2, 2024, and June 2, 2025.



# SPECIAL PROGRAMS



## SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

NUSD serves approximately 900 students with mild to severe disabilities through various services and programs to ensure targeted supports for individualized student needs:

- **Push-in/Pull-out Services:** Support students within regular classroom settings or through small group instruction.
- **Self-contained Special Day Classes:** Offer specialized instruction in dedicated classrooms.
- **Regionalized Classrooms:** Cater to specific needs across different schools.
- **Non-public Schools:** Partner with specialized institutions.
- **Residential Treatment Centers:** Provide comprehensive care and education.

The District focus is on serving students in the least restrictive environment, emphasizing inclusive school communities where strengths are celebrated and differences are valued.

For the 2023–2024 school year, we have expanded services to meet individualized needs, including:

- **Professional Development:** Rigorous training for administrators, service providers, and staff.
- **Student Transitions:** Increasing movement to less restrictive environments within NUSD.
- **Community Engagement:** Parent information nights and advisory committee involvement.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Surveys including the Youth Truth Survey and NUSD Special Education Parent Survey for continuous improvement and family engagement.



<http://www.nusd.org/special-education>

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## EARLY INTERVENTION PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

The Early Intervention Preschool Program offers special education services for identified students aged three to five years. Key aspects of the program include:

- **Credentialed Education Specialists:** Engage young students in developmentally appropriate, purposeful, and playful learning.
- **Curriculum Framework:** Follows the California Department of Education's Preschool Learning Foundations.
- **Child-Centered Activities:** Provides play and enrichment activities that support social-emotional development, language, literacy, and mathematics.
- **Instructional Methods:** Utilizes whole group and small group specialized instruction.
- **Foundational Skill Development:** Helps students gain skills essential for continued educational success.







## Parent Involvement

Family involvement is key to student success in Novato. Many of the programs and activities our students enjoy would not be possible without the efforts of volunteers through:

- Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
- District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)
- English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)
- School Fuel, Novato's Education Foundation

**School PTA or PTO** organizes volunteers who work to enhance programs and activities and build school communities, assume leadership in parent outreach and student support.

**DELAC** is a district-level committee composed of parents, staff, and community members designated to advise district officials on English learner programs and services. ELAC is a similar committee at the school-level.

**School Fuel** is the fundraising foundation for Novato public schools. State funding alone is not sufficient to ensure a well-rounded education for our students. Each year parents, community members and businesses donate funds to help bridge the gap between state funding and the actual needs of our students. Donations may be made at <https://www.novatoschoolfuel.org/>.

*Education is  
always a  
collaboration.*



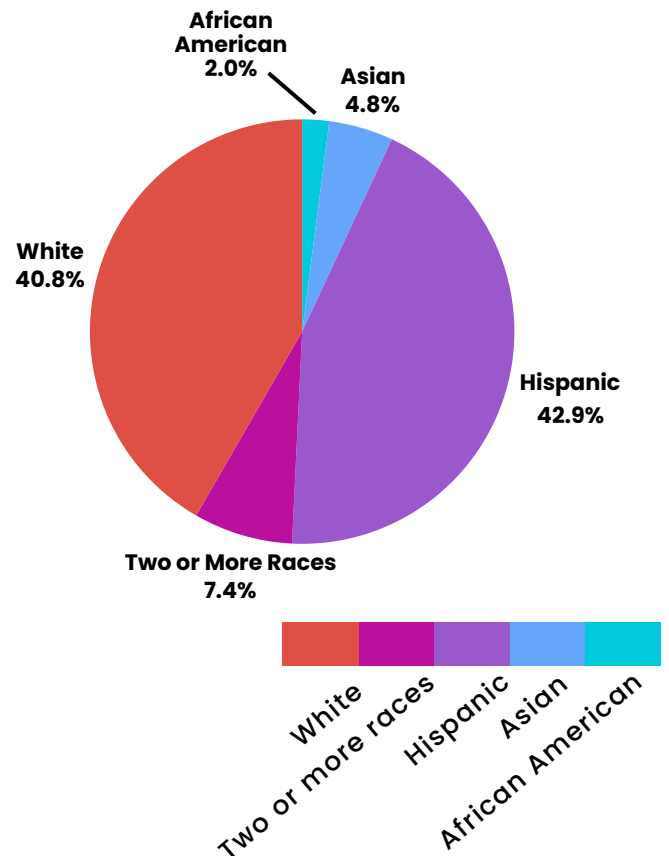
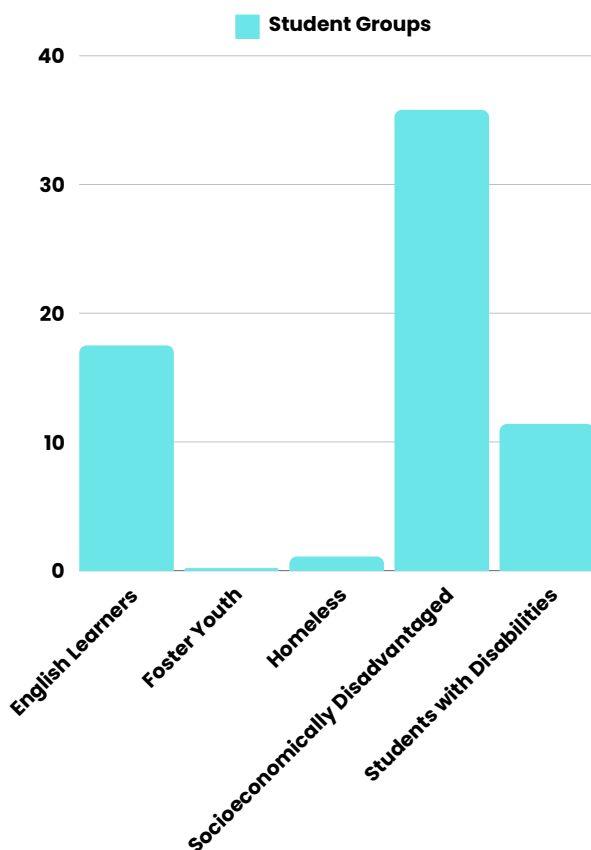
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# >>> ANNUAL REPORT 2023–2024

## NUSD TODAY



NUSD has 13 schools, 7,300 students and 800 staff members and is well prepared to meet the needs of of our TK to grade 12 students.



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# >>> ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

## FUNDING

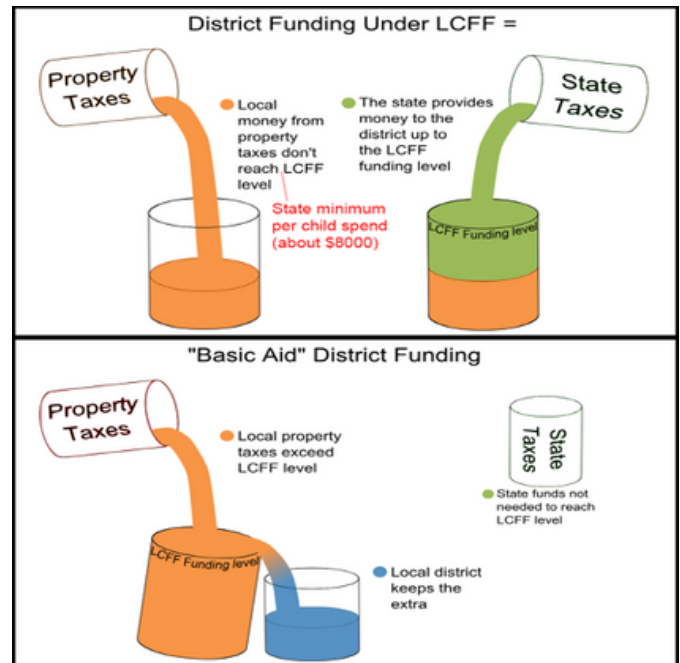


### Local Control Funding Formula vs Basic Aid

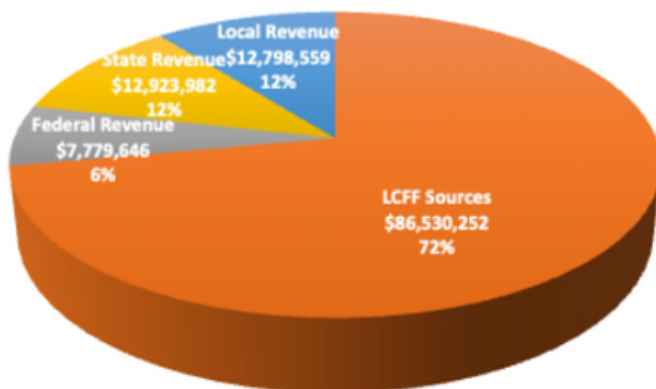
NUSD is one of three districts in Marin County that receives funding through the State of California under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Districts that are LCFF funded do not generate enough local property taxes to qualify for the specific funding threshold. School funding is solely based on a student's actual attendance (ADA - average daily attendance): if a student attends school, the district receives funding.

Other districts in Marin County are community funded or 'basic aid' where they are able to keep their property tax collected, which is above the state's required funding amount, and do not rely on student ADA.

The majority of the 1,000 school districts in California are funded by ADA and LCFF. Approximately 80 districts in California are Basic Aid and 17 of those districts are in Marin County.



2023-2024 NUSD Revenue



Funding for the Novato Unified School District comes from four sources:

- Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)
- State funding other than LCFF - Special Purpose Funding (includes one-time funds)
- Federal Funding - Special Purpose Funding, e.g., Special Education
- Local Funding - Parcel Tax, Grants and Donations

This year, NUSD saw an increase in LCFF funds through a 6.56% cost of living adjustment and one-time funds (state funds other than LCFF) due to the state's increase in overall revenue.

SOURCE: NUSD 2023-2024 Second Interim Budget Report dated 3/19/2024



<http://www.nusd.org/business-services>

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## FUNDING

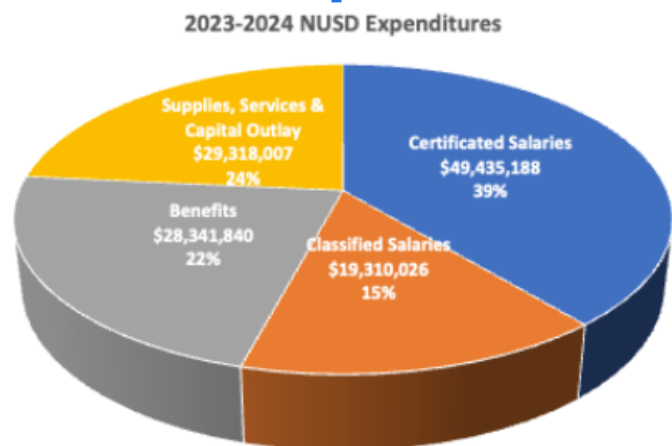


### Balanced Budget and Expenses

NUSD's budget consists of:

- Teacher (Certificated) Salaries
- Classified Salaries
- Benefits
- Supplies, Services & Capital Outlay

In the 2023-2024 school year, a Budget Advisory Committee comprised of community and staff members was convened to address the district's budget concerns.



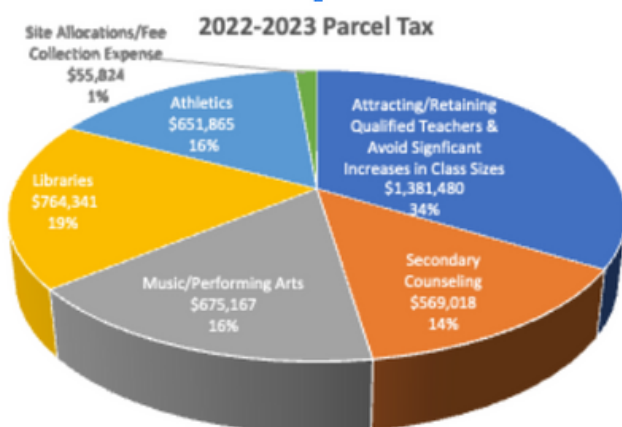
SOURCE: NUSD 2023-2024 Second Interim Budget Report dated 3/19/2024

## Parcel Tax

Since 1992, the Novato community has renewed local parcel tax funding to support academic programs, retain highly qualified teachers and protect the overall quality of our schools. This year was no different. In 2023, the Novato community overwhelmingly voted to renew the district's parcel tax with 83.31% support!

This ongoing source of locally-controlled revenue supports:

- Academic instruction in core subjects like math, science, reading and writing
- Supports school library staff and operating hours
- Provides academic college and career counseling
- Expands mental health counseling services
- Maintain athletics, music and art programs



SOURCE: NUSD 2022-2-23 Annual Parcel Tax Report



<http://www.nusd.org/parcel-tax-information>

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## MEASURE G BOND PROJECTS

At the time of this report's publication, several Measure G projects are scheduled during the summer of 2024:

- Hamilton TK-8 School is set to receive a new air-conditioning/HVAC system.
- San Marin High School will also be equipped with a new air-conditioning/HVAC system.
- San Ramon Elementary School and Pleasant Valley Elementary School are both scheduled for air-conditioning/HVAC system installations, with administrative operations temporarily relocated.
- Loma Verde Elementary School will undergo a roof replacement project.
- Rancho Elementary School and Hill Education Center will benefit from new exterior paint and signage.
- Olive Elementary School will have some of its sewer lines replaced.

Additionally, security camera installation is planned at 14 NUSD sites.

THANK  
YOU!

## COMPLETED PROJECTS

In 2016, Novato citizens approved Measure G Bond. Major projects completed include the following:

- New performing arts buildings, new science buildings and field renovations at Novato High and San Marin High Schools
- New administration building at Olive Elementary School and campus-wide classroom modernization
- New kitchen and campus-wide classroom modernization at Lynwood Elementary School
- Air conditioning installed at Loma Verde, Lynwood, Olive, Rancho Elementary Schools and San Jose Middle School
- Information Technology infrastructure update and classroom toolkit for all schools
- Roof replacement or repair at Hamilton TK-8 School, San Ramon Elementary School, San Jose Middle School and Gordon Gym at Novato High School
- New Food & Nutritional Services distribution center
- New Grounds, Maintenance & Operations facility



<http://www.nusd.org/project-updates>

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# NUSD SCHOOLS



## San Marin High School

San Marin High School (SMHS) provides an extensive academic experience that offers a specialized STEAM program (science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics) for interested students. The STEAM program allows students to explore the Engineering and Biotechnology pathways, while exposing students to a variety of future career options. The school also offers a wide array of courses to meet all student needs and academic goals. SMHS supports a Robotics Team that competes both locally and regionally, and opened its Wellness Hub at the end of the last school year to serve students' social-emotional needs.

## Novato High School

Novato High School (NHS) offers a comprehensive academic program with a specialized program in arts education. NHS features the Marin School of the Arts that supports students in 13 arts disciplines, including Career Technical Education programs. Students thrive at NHS as they are able to explore their artistic passions or pursue other academic pathways to prepare them for college and/or career opportunities. NHS also opened its Wellness Hub to support student well being last school year.

## Marin Oaks High School

Marin Oaks supports secondary students in a smaller learning environment that promotes individualized student learning with a strong focus on social-emotional well-being. Marin Oaks offers a variety of courses including Culinary and Visual Arts, and allows students to explore their music talents in the music studio program. Marin Oaks personalizes its approach to ensuring students are succeeding academically and socially.

## San Jose Middle School

San Jose Middle School (SJMS) fosters an inclusive and engaging atmosphere that promotes student learning and growth. The school offers a Dual Language Immersion Program to help students become both bilingual and biliterate in Spanish and English. SJMS provides students with numerous course electives including in the visual and performing arts, and a wide array of extracurricular activities at lunch and after school.

## Sinaloa Middle School

Sinaloa Middle School engages students academically while providing an abundance of opportunities for students to experience enrichment activities during lunch and after school. Students participate in the Mathletes program and enjoy student leadership activities. Sinaloa opened its Wellness Hub in the spring after much planning.

## NOVA Independent Study

The NOVA Independent Study (NOVA) program supports students and families seeking an alternative educational experience. Students work independently and meet with dedicated staff members to reinforce their learning. NOVA received state recognition as a Model Program.

## Hamilton TK-8 School

Hamilton TK-8 School offers students a unique experience as the only neighborhood TK-8 school in the district. Students are supported through their elementary academic journey by staff who literally watch the children grow into young adults. With a robust academic program, extensive extracurricular opportunities, and a state and nationally recognized chess program, Hamilton is preparing students for success in their future educational experience.



<http://www.nusd.org/explore>

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# NUSD SCHOOLS



## NUSD Elementary Schools

NUSD has seven neighborhood elementary schools serving students from Transitional Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. Each is unique and they all are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment where children can grow and thrive. We prioritize the well-being of our students through comprehensive safety measures, inclusive practices, and a strong emphasis on social-emotional learning.

### Loma Verde Elementary

Loma Verde Elementary School provides a safe and nurturing environment for students to engage in learning through play, collaborative group work, and individual support. We also offer programs such as Odyssey of the Mind and Math Olympiads. This year, Loma Verde had 6 teams compete in Odyssey of the Mind competitions with 2 teams advancing to the California State Competition.

### Lu Sutton Elementary

Lu Sutton Elementary School's garden is a place for students to explore, learn, and build healthy habits. TK-5th grade students visit the garden weekly and plant, harvest, and cook the crops. Through the exquisite garden program, students are given hands-on opportunities to connect classroom curriculum with the real world.

### Lynwood Elementary

Lynwood Elementary School is home to NUSD's TK-5th grade Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Program. The DLI Program provides both native- and Spanish-dominant speakers and native- and English dominant speakers the opportunity to learn to read, write, and communicate effectively in Spanish and in English while achieving high levels of academic achievement in both languages.

### Olive Elementary

Olive Elementary School students are given the opportunity to develop meaningful STEAM skills through a program that brings together literacy, art, and engineering. Instructors lead classroom activities that spark imagination and problem solving through storytelling. Students are taught specific art skills that are used to build or create something to support solving a problem the character faced in the story. Students, TK - 5th grade showcase their work at the end of the year to their families during Open House.

### Pleasant Valley Elementary

Students at Pleasant Valley Elementary School enjoy an art program with a dedicated arts instructor exploring and experimenting a variety of mediums. Students also enjoy exploring and learning about their garden. Students are taught about healthy eating, environmental science, and the natural world.

### Rancho Elementary

Rancho instilled a sense of belonging and inclusion through multicultural celebrations that represented the families in the community, including: Hispanic Heritage Month, Diwali, Day of the Dead, Hanukkah, Lunar New Year, Black History Month, Ramadan, and Holi.

### San Ramon Elementary

San Ramon Elementary School values its collaborative community, offering individualized instruction through initiatives like Dolphin Lab for creativity and problem-solving, and the Universal Access program for tailored small group learning opportunities.



<http://www.nusd.org/explore>

## #NUSDROCKS



Great things  
are happening  
at NUSD!

The Novato Unified School District (NUSD) is composed of:

- Seven Elementary Schools
- One TK-8 School
- Two Middle Schools
- Two Comprehensive High Schools
- One Continuation High School
- One Independent Study Program
- One Adult School

Elementary class sizes are 24:1 for Grades TK-3 and 28:1 for Grades 4-5.

All NUSD schools provide special education services and Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), with additional support for English learners. Adult Education classes, including diploma programs, General Education Development prep, and English as a Second Language, are also offered. Volunteers and parent groups, such as School Fuel, enhance athletic and fine arts programs throughout the district.

## **NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**1015 7th Street**

**Novato, California 94945**



**[www.nusd.org](http://www.nusd.org)**

## **OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY**

Equity education is achieved when all students receive the resources they need as they graduate, prepared for success after high school.

### **NUSD Areas of Focus:**

- Closing the achievement, access, and opportunity gap
- Ensuring mental health support
- Providing a safe learning environment