



**PACIFIC
COLLEGIATE
SCHOOL**

A Distinguished Public Charter School

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Santa Cruz, California

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Pacific Collegiate School Acknowledged With High Rankings on State and National Level for Its Successful College Readiness Program

Pacific Collegiate School (PCS) was recently acknowledged as a 2017 California Gold Ribbon School by the California Department of Education, and named as the top public school in California and the #10 ranked public school in the nation by U.S. News and World Report.

“The students, teachers and leaders of Pacific Collegiate School are to be commended for their unparalleled success in public education. To achieve at that high of a level requires true teamwork, collaboration and creativity. The Santa Cruz County Board of Education, the authorizing body for the Charter, is honored to play a part in their accomplishments.” – Michael C. Watkins, Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools

The California Gold Ribbon

The California Gold Ribbon Schools Awards Program honors California's most outstanding public schools. Schools that are selected demonstrate exemplary achievements in implementing state standards as adopted by the State Board of Education. Middle and senior high schools were eligible for the awards in 2017; elementary schools were eligible in 2016. PCS was the only Santa Cruz County school awarded the California Gold Ribbon Award in 2017.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson, made the announcement in Sacramento on April 18, 2017. “These terrific schools are leading the way in embracing our new rigorous academic standards and showing others how to help students succeed on their way to 21st century careers and college,” Torlakson said.

Schools applied for the award based on a model program or practice that includes standards-based activities, projects, strategies, and practices that can be replicated by other local educational agencies. To win the award, PCS presented its model practice of *equity in college preparation*.

While many California students are able to meet standard high school graduation requirements, they still may not be eligible to enroll at a four year university. PCS, however, requires that all graduates complete the coursework to meet the A-G admission requirements of the University of California and California State University systems. Also, within most schools, students that do have access to Advanced Placement and A-G courses are not representative of the overall school population. The model practice at PCS is to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity, with much targeted support, to access this college preparatory curriculum. This model practice relies on a number of strategies that serve to allow access to students of all sub groups and include: college preparatory program in grades 7-12; small class size; vertical alignment of curriculum across departments; study skills and technology classes; robust student support services; access by all students to Advanced Placement (AP) classes; high level of parental engagement; free test preparation classes for all students, and incorporating visual and performing arts and world languages as core components of a college preparatory education.

U.S. News and World Report Rankings

On April 24, 2017 U.S. News and World Report announced its 2017 public school rankings, awarding PCS a gold medal. PCS also garnered the #10 public school nationwide and the #1 public school in California. PCS was also ranked the #6 charter school in the State.

“The PCS Board of Directors, together with the administration and faculty, is honored that Pacific Collegiate School was named one of the nation’s best and California’s best public high school by U.S. News and World Report. PCS was founded on the belief that all students, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, should have access to a high quality, college preparatory curriculum. We appreciate that our educational philosophy and our commitment to our students has been recognized, and we look forward to building on this success.” -Gun Ruder, PCS Board President

U.S. News comprehensive rankings methodology is based on two key principles; a great high school must serve all of its students well, not just those who are college bound, and the school must be able to produce measurable academic outcomes to show it is successfully educating its student body across a range of performance indicators. A four-step evaluation process is utilized. The first three steps ensure that schools serve all their students well, using their performance on the math and reading parts of their state proficiency tests and their graduation rates as benchmarks. Students must be performing better than statistically expected for students in that state and disadvantaged students – black, Hispanic and low-income – must perform at or better than the state average for the least-disadvantaged students. For those schools that make it past the first three steps, a fourth step assesses the degree to which schools prepare students for college-level work. Advanced Placement test data is utilized as the benchmark for college readiness success, measuring which schools produced the best college-level achievement for the highest percentage of their students. Advanced Placement (AP) is a College Board program that offers college-level courses at high schools across the country. PCS achieved the maximum score of 100 on this fourth step, one of only 25 schools nation-wide, verifying that every 12th-grade PCS student took and passed at least one AP test before or during the senior year. In fact, the average number of AP tests that PCS seniors took and passed was 6.

This year, U.S. News and the College Board collaboratively developed a new tiebreaker to avoid ties in the numerical rankings when schools had the same fourth step scores. The tiebreaker measures the breadth of students who took and passed AP exams across multiple disciplines. In total PCS offers 18 AP classes across 6 different disciplines. This final step created PCS’s #10 national ranking.

Pacific Collegiate School (www.pacificcollegiate.com) is an independent public charter school open to any student seeking a rigorous college preparatory education in Santa Cruz County. PCS has consistently earned top honors for its outstanding college preparatory program from *US News and World Report* and other leading news and educational organizations, consistently ranking among the top public schools in the nation. PCS, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, accommodates up to 516 students in grades 7-12. As part of the school’s commitment to pupil diversity, PCS has a multifaceted diversity outreach program, as well as a unique admissions program for students who will be the first in their families to attend college. Admission to PCS is through a public, random lottery, as required by California law.

For additional information about Pacific Collegiate School and its educational program, please contact the school’s principal, Simon Fletcher at 831-479-7785 (school), 831-706-8320 (cell) or simon.fletcher@pcsed.org
Additional photos available upon request.

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