



Model Program and Practices Overview

❖ Description

NOVA Academy is driven by an unyielding resolve to instill, support, and further the ambition, character, and success of its students. In order to fully address the academic, social-emotional, and vocational needs and ambitions of its students, NOVA utilizes two key program models as the foundation of its academic and developmental strategies: Early College High School and The Whole Child.

NOVA's use of the Early College High School offers students the means to pursue their college dreams while fueling confidence and long-term success. Through mindfully crafted academic support systems and relationships with neighboring colleges, NOVA inspires and fosters academic excellence among its students, both in early college courses as well as challenging AP and Honors classes. This value is promoted by all facets of NOVA's work through the convergence of rigor and support, thus creating an environment that promotes a love of ideas while encouraging discovery, creativity, and engagement.

In addition to the Early College Model, NOVA Academy's philosophy and methodology are guided by The Whole Child - a holistic approach to education that centers on the development of each student's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical well-being. This model repositions the NOVA staff beyond the role of traditional faculty, utilizing instructors and administrators as the facilitators and pillars of a safe and engaging environment to challenge and nurture its students. In recognition of the critical role of the family in creating a sense of belonging and security, NOVA Academy not only operates a multitude of family engagement programs but provides a "Family" class to its students - engendering close personal connections and mutual understanding among NOVA students and teachers. By emulating a familial support system within the context of an academic environment, NOVA Academy seeks to instill compassion in its students, inspiring hope, building bridges, and developing a community of caring individuals.

❖ Model Program and Practices

A convergence of the Early College High School and The Whole Child models has been the foundation of all NOVA Academy programming since its inception in 2005. Recognizing the transformative power of a college education and seeking to address the alarming rates of poverty and unreached academic potential in Santa Ana, founders Dr. Donald Verleur and Renee Lancaster meticulously constructed a new and innovative approach to education – simultaneously addressing the social-emotional needs of its students and catalyzing their academic and postsecondary success.

Early College High School: In order to empower NOVA students for success in post-secondary education and prepare them for a future of professional achievement, NOVA provides early college access through dual enrollment in high school and college courses. NOVA Academy's College Opportunity Program permits all NOVA students meeting program admission requirements to enroll in college courses while earning their high school diplomas. Prior to enrollment in an early college course, students are counseled as to the nature of the class, and advised of whether a specific course is fully transferable to University of California baccalaureate programs as Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) or a career-based exploratory course.

Classes are offered each semester through neighboring post-secondary institutions including the University of California at Irvine, Concordia University, and Santa Ana College. Programming consists of courses offered both on the NOVA campus and college site taught by university professors, and online college courses available at NOVA Academy via

campus-wide Wi-Fi. In addition to tuition-free enrollment in early college courses, NOVA provides students with college textbooks and materials, transportation to and from Santa Ana College, and exam and application fees for eligible students. Last year, NOVA Academy students completed over 300 college credits across 120 different early college courses.

NOVA Academy also provides students with the opportunity to earn college credits outside of the dual enrollment program through 10 different Advanced Placement classes. In addition to AP courses, NOVA offers honors classes at most grade levels to increase academic rigor and encourage student enrollment in AP and college courses.

To ensure the success of its students in these challenging courses, NOVA provides several academic support programs, with specific activities designed for Early College students. Support programs include: LINK/Tutorial—a school-wide supplemental instruction and tutoring program implemented as part of the standard campus schedule; summer school credit-recovery and enrichment courses; and the Summer InNOVAtion program—an orientation and skill-assessment program for incoming students, wherein freshmen are provided with an extensive roadmap to best achieve early college success at NOVA. Ongoing efforts to augment these programs and best promote academic excellence is a top priority for NOVA Academy. Another major focus includes further implementation of Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and math.

In order to be better prepared for success both professionally and in post-secondary academia, all NOVA students also enroll in Seminar, a unique class designed to augment each student's study skills, academic discipline, and learning methods. Seminar includes a dedicated College Pathways section, instructing students in college admissions and preparation, application procedures and essays, and FAFSA student aid and scholarship acquisition.

The Whole Child: This educational approach is intertwined with all aspects of NOVA's work, both within the context of Early College High School and throughout its endeavors to engage with students' families and provide a secondary "Family" as part of the NOVA experience. In addition to offering academic and social-emotional support, NOVA Academy enriches students' academic careers through compassionate faculty trained in Social-Emotional Learning, and a curriculum designed to incorporate social-emotional support.

All NOVA students are assigned to a "Family" class at the start of their enrollment, serving as the anchor of their high school/early college careers. Over the course of four years, students form meaningful and supportive interpersonal relationships with their peers and receive guidance from a dedicated teacher—offering them mentorship and counseling throughout their time at NOVA Academy. Through this support and encouragement, NOVA students develop a greater sense of pride and personal investment in their academic careers, furthering their academic progress and college success.

In addition to its Family class, NOVA is dedicated to maintaining active involvement in its community, and engaging with the parents and families of its students. Consequently, NOVA's devotion to The Whole Child inspires the frequent and ongoing efforts of its faculty to create accessible and immersive opportunities for NOVA parents to participate in campus programs and outreach events.

NOVA Academy's goals and projected 2019 outcomes for the Early College High School model include: the achievement of high levels of academic success among NOVA students, as indicated by early college course and AP/Honors course enrollment (LCAP Goal #4 – Priorities 4,7,8); improved academic performance across all student populations in English Language Arts and Math; and expanded professional development/implementation of NGSS and CCSS content standards across all departments (LCAP Goal #1 - Priorities 1,2,4,7).

Goals and projected 2019 outcomes for The Whole Child model include: increased parental involvement in NOVA programs via expanded outreach and enrichment opportunities, and increased parental input and satisfaction with NOVA Academy's academic and extracurricular programming (LCAP Goal # 2 – Priority 3).

❖ Implementation and Monitoring

In order to ensure that NOVA students receive the highest level of academic and emotional support possible for the enrichment of their scholastic careers and college pursuits, NOVA is committed to engaging with students' parents and families.

Stakeholder engagement procedures for NOVA Academy's programs and models include: monthly "Parent University" meetings addressing methods and tools available to parents to better support their child's education; the annual NOVA College Fair; and a new Director of Family Engagement & Community Involvement staff position. To accommodate the large population of English Learners among NOVA families and the surrounding community, NOVA Academy provides translated informational and enrollment documents and retains the services of translators during outreach events. In addition to these events and services, NOVA Academy engages in ongoing family involvement efforts including: Coffee with the Counselor events; Back-to-School Night and Open House events; a dedicated Free Application for Federal Student Aid event - FAFSA Night; and the recruitment of members to its "Parent Advisory Council" - volunteer group supporting school functions and campus enrichment projects.

NOVA receives a valuable feedback on NOVA programming and The Whole Child model from parent and student surveys and monthly School Site Council Meetings. This data and feedback allows the administration to evaluate and improve academic, extracurricular, social-emotional, and parent engagement programs.

Beyond the public-facing efforts of its family engagement programs, NOVA Academy applies its resolve for growth, progress, and collaboration internally, within the practices of its faculty. As both facilitators of an academically challenging Early College High School and supportive champions of The Whole Child, NOVA staff members engage in professional development efforts addressing a variety of matters crucial to the success and wellbeing of its students, including: departmental content standards, social-emotional learning techniques, and interpersonal communication with adolescents. In addition to their roles as instructors and contributions to professional development programs, all NOVA teachers serve on a faculty committee, each dedicated to a specific field of school improvement, such as technology, academic support, data, and testing.

The monitoring and assessment of students' academic progress within the Early College Model is largely completed through multi-year analysis of CAASPP, AP, ACT, SAT, and PSAT scores and enrollment records of Early College, AP, and honors courses.

❖ Results and Outcomes

NOVA Academy's hybrid approach to The Whole Child and Early College High School model has resulted in remarkable academic success for its students. California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) scores indicate that NOVA students meeting or exceeding state standards in English Language Arts (ELA) has been consistently 20-25% higher than the state average for the past three years, and 38-40% higher than the Santa Ana Unified School District (SAUSD). NOVA's 2018 CAASPP scores in math also indicate increased student proficiency from the prior year, and 2017-18 student enrollment in AP and Honors courses nearly doubled that of 2016-17. Over the last three years, NOVA's graduation rate has increased 3.8% and consistently exceeded both the state and SAUSD averages.

Due to expanded family engagement and community involvement efforts conducted in service to The Whole Child approach, enrollment at NOVA Academy has increased by 6% from the previous year, and new afterschool programs are currently being implemented.

Based on these trends in student performance and participation, projected 2019 outcomes for the Early College High School model include: student eligibility of at least 50% for dual enrollment in college courses, student enrollment of at least 50% in AP and/or Honors Courses, increased CAASPP scores across in Math and ELA, and an average feedback rating of at least 90% "overall satisfaction" with NOVA programming across annual parent and student surveys.