Endowed by San Francisco entrepreneur James Lick, the California School of Mechanical Arts opened its doors in 1895. Subsequently, the “Lick School” merged with the Wilmerding School of Industrial Arts and the Lux School of Industrial Training.

Lick-Wilmerding High School is a nonprofit, independent, coeducational, college preparatory day school serving grades 9–12 with a tradition of integrating demanding academic courses with technical, performing, and fine arts.

The 528 students at LWHS reflect the school’s strong commitment to cultural, social, and socioeconomic diversity. First generation to college students typically make up between 7% to 14% of a class. The student body is 4% South Asian, 7% Southeast Asian, 17% Latinx, 9% African American, 22% East Asian, 69% White and part white, and 44% White. Overall, 32% of the student body self-identifies as multi-ethnic, which explains why the sum of these percentages is more than 100%.

The Flexible Tuition Program awards over $6.4 million to more than 35% of enrolled students.

The maximum number of courses a student may carry (beyond ninth grade) per semester is seven. In keeping with LWHS’ 124-year tradition, every student is required to complete two years of technical arts courses and participate annually in the Public Purpose Program, a hands-on education/service experience.

LWHS does not offer AP courses; faculty have designed high level and demanding Honors courses that offer rigor and depth over coverage and breadth. LWHS limits the number of Honors courses that a student may take per semester to three in the hopes of creating the balance necessary to nurture each student’s “head, heart, and hands.” The following courses are not counted toward this limitation: Honors English 3, Honors English 4, and Honors U.S. History. Students enrolled in three other Honors courses must limit their total course load to six, unless the seventh course is a Visual Arts, Technical Arts, Performing Arts, Creative Writing, Journalism, Philanthropy, or BlendEd elective.

Grade point average (GPA) is calculated on a 4-point scale using all courses that receive a grade (Body Mind Education, Independent Studies, and Teaching Assistantships are pass/fail), and the GPA is cumulative from fall semester of ninth grade. Grades are unweighted, students are not ranked, and we do not give any academic awards.
Course Requirements and Offerings

H signifies Honors class, A signifies Accelerated class, PPP signifies courses that have additional requirements in serving the Public Purpose Program. Below, please find the courses offered over the past four years; note that every course is not offered every semester. All current course offerings are listed at lwhs.org/curriculum/course-catalog.

**English** (4 years required)
- English 1
- English 2
- English 3H: American Literature
- English 4H: Seminars

**Sample English Seminars for Seniors:**
- Angels, Ghosts & Demons—How Do Metaphysical Beings Reveal Ourselves and Our World?
- Brave New Worlds
- Gender and Sexuality in Literature
- Ethnic Studies Through U.S. Literature
- Race and Mixed Race in U.S. Literature
- This Republic of Suffering, The Civil War and Reconstruction in America PPP
- The Play of Words, Reading and Writing the Short Story
- Coates, Shakespeare, Twain, and Rankine—Art to Awaken Our World

**Mathematics** (3 years required)
- Algebra 1
- Algebra 2
- Algebra 2A
- Applied Mathematics in the Real World
- Calculus
- Calculus H
- Calculus PPP
- Deductive Geometry
- Inductive Geometry
- Precalculus
- Precalculus H
- Precalculus PPP
- Statistics 1 H: Descriptive Statistics and Data Visualization PPP
- Statistics 2 H: Inferential Statistics PPP

**Science** (3 years required)
- Biology (9th grade required)
- Biology H: Anatomy & Physiology
- Biology H: Classical and Behavioral Genetics
- Biology H: Molecular Genetics and Ethics
- Chemistry (10th grade required)
- Chemistry H
- Environmental Science H
- Marine Ecology PPP: Semester Field & Lab Science
- Physics
- Physics H
- Physics H: Astronomy & Aeronautics
- Physics H: Mechanics
- Physics H: Modern Physics
- Psychology: Brain and Behavior

**Performing Arts**
- Acoustic String Band
- Acting Intensive: On Camera Acting
- Acting Techniques 1
- Advanced Combo
- Advanced Stagecraft
- Advanced Stagecraft PPP
- Big Band
- Chamber Orchestra/Advanced Chamber Music
- Chamber Orchestra/Advanced Chamber Music PPP
- Creative Project in Music Production
- Dance 1
- Dance 2
- Dance Ensemble
- Directing
- Improv PPP
- Musical Theatre Showcase
- Musical Theatre Technique
- Songwriting 1
- Songwriting 2
- Stagecraft
- Vocal Ensemble PPP
- Vocal Point

**History & Social Studies** (3 years required)
- Modern World History
- U.S. History H
- Modern U.S. History Seminar
- Modern World History Seminar

**Sample History Seminars for Seniors:**
- America in the 1960s
- Bearing Witness, Holocaust & Genocides
- Construction of Whiteness
- Cultural Encounters and Anxieties in Modern Latin America
- Define American, An Exploration of Immigration
- Patterns in Urbanization

**Technical Arts** (2 years required)
- Circuits and Electronics: Analog and Digital
- Circuits and Electronics: Device Invention
- Graphics and Game Design
- Community Computing PPP
- Design & Technology (9th grade required)
Digital Fabrication: From Algorithm to Object
Fabricating with Fabric
Fabrication with Fabrics 2
Jewelry 1
Jewelry 2
Metal Fabrications: Kinetics
Private Skills for a Public Purpose PPP
Rethinking Furniture
Wood: Joinery and Turning

**Visual Arts (1 year required)**
Advanced Architectural Design
Architectural Design
Contemporary Media and Art (9th grade required)
Drawing & Painting
Drawing & Painting the Mural PPP
Film: Cinematic Storytelling PPP
Mixed Media
Photography 1
Photography 2
Printmaking

**World Languages (3 years of one language, or 2 years each of 2 languages required)**
Chinese (Mandarin) 1, 2, 3, 4, 4H, 4H PPP, 5H
French 1, 2, 3, 4, 4H, 4H PPP
Spanish 1, 1A, 2, 2A, 3, 3H, 3 PPP, 4, 4H, Spanish for Heritage Speakers 1

**Blended** (Electives that combine online learning with face-to-face interactions)
Advanced Computer Science H
Bay Area Cinema & Filmmaking

Beats, Rhymes & Life: An Exploration of Hip Hop
California Coastal
Oceanography
Comic Book Literature
Creative Writing: Very Short Stories
#Entrepreneurship
#Entrepreneurship & Design Thinking
Introduction to Organic Chemistry
Introduction to Psychology
Multivariable Calculus
Organic Chemistry
Public Health & Vulnerable Populations PPP
Race, Place and Toxics
Seismic Studies and Earthquake Engineering
Web Design & Development

**Other Opportunities & Requirements**
Body Mind Education (9th grade required)
Creative Writing: Memoir, the Art of the Personal Story
Creative Writing: Poetry
Freshman PPP (9th grade required)
Independent Study
Independent Study/Cohort PPP
Internship PPP
Journalism PPP
META
Philanthropy Initiative PPP
Sophomore PPP (10th grade required)
Student Leadership Training in a Technical Arts Environment PPP
Teaching Assistantships

Lick-Wilmerding High School is more selective than any other Bay Area independent high school, with 850-950 applications for the most recent incoming classes. The 122 students in the class of 2020 are highly motivated, in most cases graduating at the top of their middle schools, and have continued to thrive in LWHS’ unique “Head, Heart, Hands” program. Differences in GPA are often miniscule and influenced by factors outside of a student’s control such as course availability, prior educational preparation, neurodiversity, personal health/well-being, and family context.

As the school’s curriculum evolves into the 21st century, it becomes increasingly clear that GPA is a superficial, inadequate measure of the achievement and potential of LWHS students. Therefore, LWHS has chosen not to publicize GPA distribution in order to more closely align transcripts with the school mission, to encourage colleges to maintain the integrity of the holistic review process, and to celebrate individuality.

**STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES (Class of 2019)**

**SAT AVERAGE SCORES (102 TEST TAKERS)**
1415

**ACT AVERAGE COMPOSITE SCORE (39 TEST TAKERS)**
32

Advanced Placement Scores: In the spring of 2019, 28 students took 49 Advanced Placement exams; 94% of the scores were 3 or higher.

We believe that standardized testing limits educational equity and does not accurately predict educational outcomes. Nevertheless, we include our average scores here because they remain useful for some colleges in understanding context.
Commendations and Recognitions
Over the past 4 years, 127 students have earned National Merit commendation, and 21 have been named Finalists. Five students have been selected for the National Hispanic Recognition Program.

College Matriculation
Each year, 98–100% of LWHS graduates attend four-year colleges or universities; others will take a gap year or attend a community college. LWHS students from the past four years attend the following schools:

1 Allegheny College
1 AMDA College and Conservatory of the Performing Arts
2 American University
3 Amherst College
1 Arizona State University
1 Art Center College of Design
2 Bard College
5 Barnard College
1 Bates College
1 Baylor University
3 Berklee College of Music
6 Boston College
9 Boston University
2 Bowdoin College
1 Brandeis University
1 University of British Columbia, Canada
16 Brown University
1 Bucknell University

University of California
25 Berkeley
3 Davis
3 Irvine
12 Los Angeles
2 Merced
4 San Diego
5 Santa Barbara
11 Santa Cruz
2 California College of the Arts (San Francisco)

California Polytechnic State University
5 Pomona
7 San Luis Obispo

California State University
1 Los Angeles
1 Sacramento
3 San Francisco
2 Sonoma
2 San Jose
1 Stanislaus
5 Carleton College
1 Carnegie Mellon University
1 Chapman University
9 University of Chicago
1 City College of San Francisco
1 Claremont McKenna College
1 Colby College
4 University of Colorado, Boulder
2 Colorado College
6 Columbia University
2 Cooper Union
11 Cornell University
5 Dartmouth College
1 University of Denver
1 DePaul University
1 Dominican University
1 Duke University
2 Elon University
1 Emerson College
1 Fordham University
3 George Washington University
2 Georgetown University
1 Georgia Institute of Technology
1 Gettysburg College
1 Goldsmiths, University of London, UK
1 Gonzaga University
2 Grinnell College
2 Hamilton College
5 Harvard University
4 Harvey Mudd College
1 Haverford College
1 College of the Holy Cross
1 Howard University
1 University of Illinois
1 Indiana University
6 Johns Hopkins University
1 Johnson & Wales University
1 Juniata College
1 Kalamazoo College
1 Kenyon College
1 Lafayette College
2 Lehigh University
2 Lewis & Clark College
2 Loyola Marymount University
1 Loyola University New Orleans
7 Macalester College
7 Massachusetts Institute of Technology
1 University of Massachusetts
1 McGill University, Canada
7 University of Michigan
2 Middlebury College
1 Minerva Schools at KGI
2 University of Minnesota
1 Morehouse College
1 Mount Holyoke College
1 New College of the Humanities, London
12 New York University
5 Northeastern University
8 Northwestern University
1 Oberlin College
1 Oberlin Conservatory of Music
3 Occidental College
4 University of Oregon
1 Oxford College of Emory University
1 Pacific Union College
5 University of Pennsylvania
1 Pepperdine University
8 Pitzer College
5 Pomona College
1 University of Portland
1 Pratt Institute
5 Princeton University
1 University of Puget Sound
1 Purdue University
1 Quest University, Canada
1 University of Redlands
3 Reed College
2 Rhode Island School of Design
1 Rice University
2 Saint Mary's College of California
1 University of San Diego
2 University of San Francisco
4 Santa Clara University
1 Santa Monica College
3 Sarah Lawrence College
1 Savannah College of Art and Design
7 Scripps College
3 Seattle University
3 Skidmore College
1 Smith College
10 University of Southern California
1 University of St. Andrews, Scotland
13 Stanford University
1 Stevens Institute of Technology
2 Swarthmore College
5 Syracuse University
6 Tufts University
4 Tulane University
1 Union College
1 United States Air Force Academy
1 Vanderbilt University
4 Vassar College
2 University of Virginia
2 University of Washington
1 Washington and Lee University
9 Washington University in St. Louis
2 Wesleyan University
3 Whitman College
1 Whittier College
2 Williams College
1 University of Wisconsin
10 Yale University

Lick-Wilmerding High School is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools, the National Association for College Admission Counseling, People of Color in Independent Schools, and A Better Chance.