NuNu

HIGH SCHOOL



NuVu High School

School Profile 2026-2027
CEEB: 388682

Founded 2010
Independent, Private High School

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Cambridge, MA 02139
617-945-7716 | nuvuschool.org

Leadership

Saeed Arida, PhD: Head of School
sarida@nuvustudio.org

Karen Sutton: Director of Admissions
ksutton@nuvustudio.org

Nada Elsonni: Creative Director
nada@nuvustudio.org

Jon Turnquist: Dean of Students
jon@nuvustudio.org

Jeremy Adams: College Counselor
jeremy@nuvustudio.org

NuVu Statistics

98% Matriculate to college

48% Receive financial aid

10:1 Student-to-faculty ratio

Gender Identity Distribution

60% Male

20% Female

20% Non-binary

Grades Enrolled

8th - PG

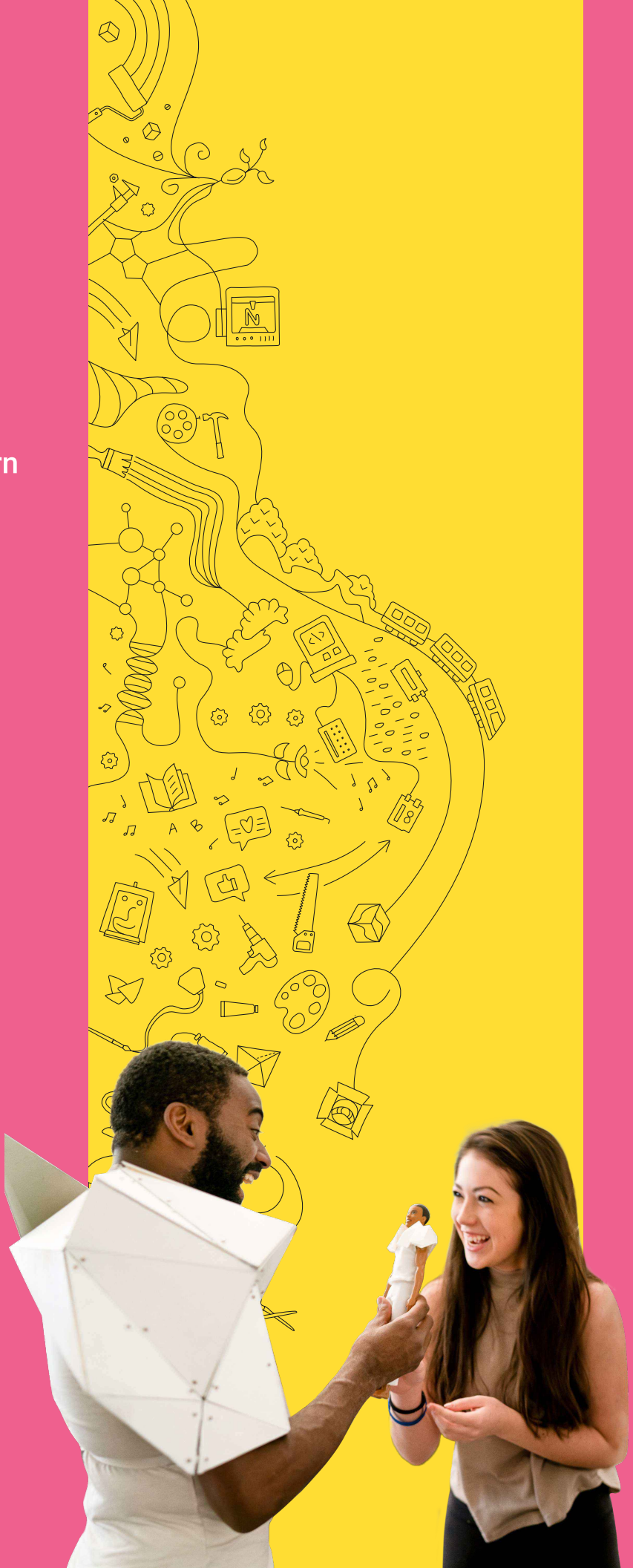
Our Mission

NuVu High School offers a project-based learning experience that empowers students to become innovative problem solvers and empathetic leaders. Instead of traditional classrooms, students learn in intensive, hands-on studios that revolve around **design, engineering, art, and technology.**

Our Approach

NuVu centers on teaching the creative process to develop critical thinking. We continually refine tools and resources to support this. Key elements include:

- **Focus** on design, engineering, art, and technology
- **Learn** through interdisciplinary studios
- **Build** hands-on projects with real-world impact
- **Grow** beyond the classroom



Academic Program

Design Studios

At NuVu High School, the design studio is the school's primary course of study and the structure through which all academic content is delivered. Students complete eight four-week studios, each centered on a real-world design challenge that they research, analyze, prototype, test, and refine. Every studio includes sustained written work such as research summaries, design proposals, testing and iteration logs, and reflective analyses, comparable in rigor to research papers and lab reports in a traditional curriculum. The studio concludes with a formal public presentation in which students defend their process and design decisions before peers, faculty, and outside guest critics, a requirement that develops applied writing and oral defense skills. **Through this process, students build critical thinking, evidence-based reasoning, and interdisciplinary problem-solving skills consistent with the habits of mind expected in college-level coursework.**

Applied Learning

NuVu students graduate with experience applying a broad range of design, creative, technical, analytical, and communication skills to authentic, interdisciplinary challenges. During their design studios, students develop skills in **research, storytelling, representation, material exploration, fabrication, computation, engineering, and programming**. Through an iterative and collaborative process, they work with peers, experts, and community partners to design for real-world impact.



Students move from research and brainstorming to prototyping and testing, receiving and synthesizing feedback to inform decisions and refine their ideas. Over four years, students build a portfolio that demonstrates growth, experimentation, creative and technical range, collaboration, and an ability to develop thoughtful, human-centered design solutions.

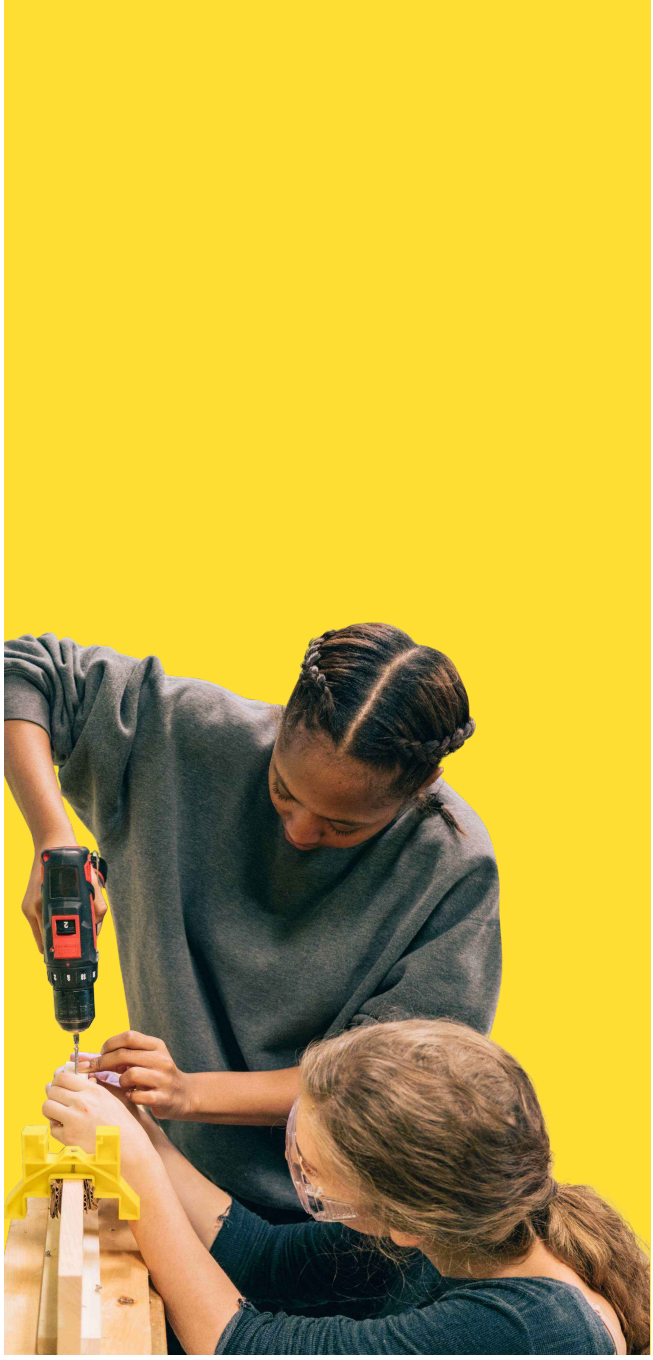
Professional Coaches

NuVu students are guided by **faculty and practicing professionals** who provide mentorship, individualized instruction, and ongoing feedback throughout each design studio. Thanks to regular critique and iterative refinement, students strengthen their critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills while developing the independence, intellectual confidence, and resilience expected in college-level learning.

Academic Domains

Every NuVu design studio is intentionally built to cultivate knowledge and skills across **seven Core Academic Domains**. Rather than teaching disciplines in isolation, students engage with concepts from multiple fields as they investigate complex, authentic problems. These domains provide the academic framework for the curriculum and guide both instruction and assessment throughout each studio.

The seven Core Academic Domains are highlighted here:



Design and Innovation

- Build empathy through a human-centered design approach
- Cultivate deep understanding of design methodology, iterative process, and user testing
- Explore fields such as architecture, art, industrial design, mechanical engineering, and digital fabrication
- Research and learn through making

Scientific Inquiry and Systems Thinking

- Integrated sciences: biology, chemistry, physics, all applied through projects
- Systems thinking: how biological, ecological, and technological systems interact
- Emphasis on sustainability, climate science, bio-engineering, and health tech

Mathematical Thinking and Quantitative Literacy

- Geometry, algebra, precalculus, and calculus used in authentic problem solving
- Applied math through engineering, business modeling, and environmental data
- Statistics, probability, and data science embedded within projects
- Financial literacy and economic systems analysis

Communication and Expression

- Critical reading of diverse sources (literature, nonfiction, media)
- Analytical, narrative, creative, and persuasive writing
- Public speaking, exhibiting, and storytelling
- Visual communication: graphic design, photography, film

Social Systems and Civic Engagement

- Integrated history, sociology, political science, and ethics
- Deep dives into social justice, human rights, governance, and activism

Technology and Digital Citizenship

- Coding (Python, Arduino, web development)
- AI, machine learning, and robotics explorations
- Ethical technology use: privacy, bias, environmental impact
- Digital making: VR, AR, game design, app development

Personal Growth, Wellness, and Professional Skills

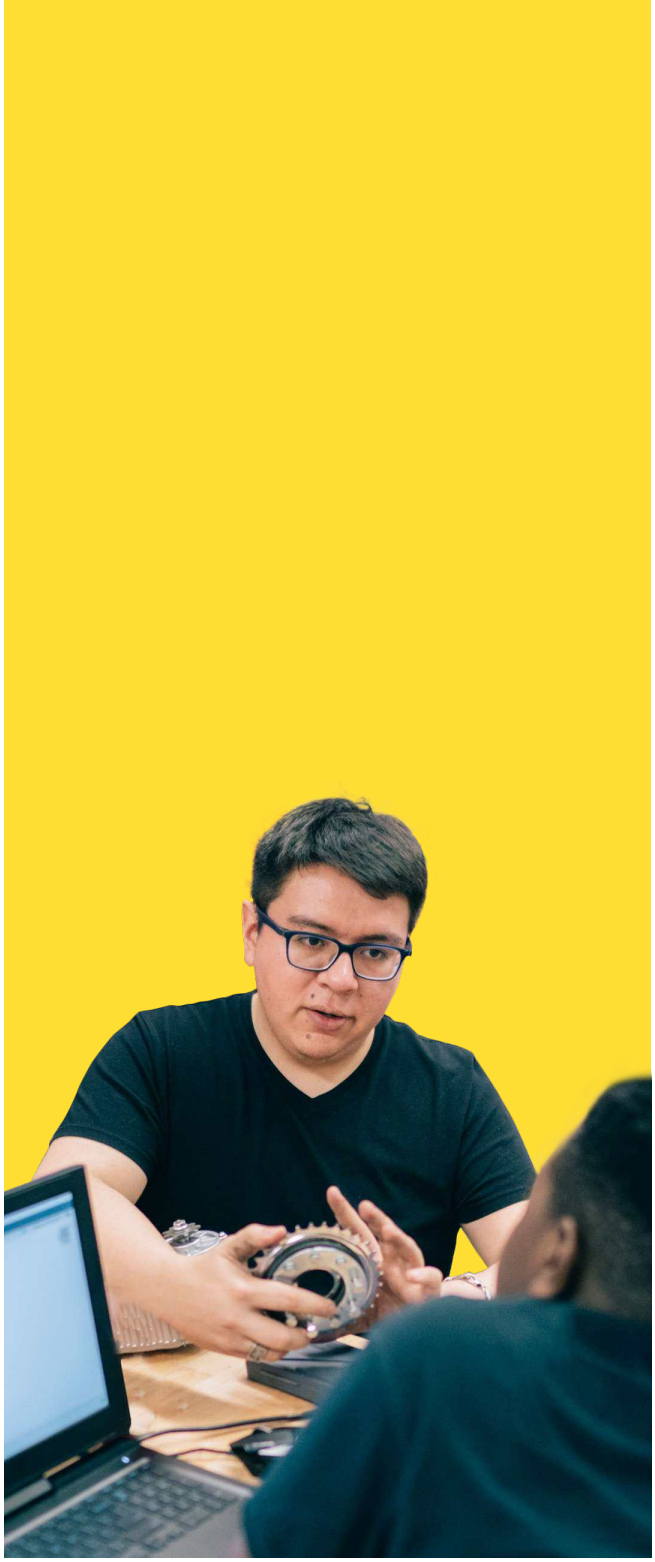
- Emotional intelligence, self-awareness, resilience building
- Collaboration, leadership, feedback literacy (giving and receiving constructive critique)
- Career exploration through internships, mentorship, and real-world clients
- Physical and mental wellbeing woven into daily practice





Beyond Design Studios

- **Math Seminars:** Students are placed according to their math level following the Massachusetts curriculum sequence for Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Precalculus, and Calculus. The seminars are organized into nine units, which are built around real-world themes that connect mathematical concepts to meaningful problems and encourage inquiry-based learning.
- **English Seminars:** "Literature by Design" uses elements of the NuVu creative process and funnels traditional English class structures through those filters. Students gain experience with multiple types of texts (novels, plays, film clips, songs, newspaper articles) and, as in a studio, build and synergize them toward tangible project outcomes. The seminars are divided into cohorts based on grade level and contain both formal and informal writing/reading/public speaking assessments.



Career Readiness

In addition to preparation for post-secondary options, graduates leave with a professional portfolio and a wide range of technical and creative skills applicable to jobs, internships, or further study:

Real-World Partnerships

NuVu students collaborate both locally and globally with clients in design, tech, healthcare, and social innovation fields, gaining hands-on experience and professional skills. Recent partnerships include:

- **MIT Soft Robotics Lab** (Project: Ribbon casting exploration)
- **The Ahimsa Collective** (Project: Re-entry Housing)
- **Cambridge Montessori School** (Project: DexiBlocks)
- **Cambridge Preschool of the Arts** (Project: Connectrix)
- **City of Cambridge** (Project: Playground structure design)
- **Heidi Latsky Dance** (Project: Performative wearable)
- **Perkins School for the Blind** (Project: Tactile Tuner)
- **BETA Technologies** (Project: Optimized Motion)

Graduation Requirements

By graduation, students must demonstrate fluency in NuVu's Creative Process as both a method and a mindset for lifelong problem-solving, innovation, and self-expression. Mastery is evidenced through the following required artifacts:

Credits Requirement — Students must complete **240** total credits over their four-year experience at NuVu, while also meeting the *minimum* credit requirements within each Core Academic Domain:

- **Design & Innovation: 72** credits
- **Scientific Inquiry & Systems Thinking: 14** credits
- **Mathematical Thinking & Quantitative Literacy: 25** credits
- **Communication & Expression: 40** credits
- **Social Systems & Civic Engagement: 15** credits
- **Technology & Digital Citizenship: 16** credits
- **Personal Growth, Wellness & Professional Skills: 4** credits

Capstone Project — A culminating, student-driven experience completed in an extended twelve-week studio during the spring of senior year. It demonstrates rigor through interdisciplinary, critical inquiry and an academic research paper addressing a real-world challenge. Through iterative design, prototyping, and evidence-based, data-driven decision making, students develop innovative solutions that reflect intellectual depth, creative independence, and real-world impact.

Digital Portfolio — A curated, public-facing record of projects that showcases processes, outcomes, and reflective learning.

Components:

- **Narrative Reflection** — Personal essay connecting the student's journey, growth, and creative identity that highlights strengths, interests, resilience, originality, and collaboration
- **Standards Alignment** — Clear documentation connecting studio work to NuVu's academic domains and graduation standards
- **Longitudinal Growth Record** — Evidence of progression over time (e.g., sketches, design briefs, prototypes, testing notes, and reflective annotations) showing the evolution of ideas and skills



Student Growth and Assessment

At NuVu, assessment is rooted in process, growth, and authentic demonstration of learning rather than traditional tests or quizzes.* Instead of letter grades, students receive narrative feedback and portfolio-based assessments evaluating their engagement in the design studio process. These tools measure growth in creativity, technical skill, systems thinking, personal development, and progress across NuVu's seven academic domains.

Through NuVu's internal **Goals for Growth (G4G)** system, students set personal learning goals aligned with studio objectives, complete weekly reflections on their progress, and write a formative self-assessment of their growth, while faculty coaches meet with them regularly to support progress and ensure accountability. Students graduate with a comprehensive record — narrative evaluations, a capstone project, and a digital portfolio — that documents their evolution and demonstrates who they are as designers, thinkers, and agents of change.

**NuVu does not offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and it does not level or rank students.*



College Matriculation

2015-2026

ArtCenter College of Design • Babson College • Brown University • **Carnegie Mellon University** • Case Western Reserve University • Clark University • Cleveland Institute of Art • Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art • **Cornell University** • Culinary Institute of America • Drexel University • Harvard University • Istituto d'Arte Applicata e Design (IAAD) • Johnson & Wales University • **Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt)** • Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) • Massachusetts Maritime Academy • **New York University (NYU)** • North Carolina A&T University • Northeastern University • Oberlin College • **Olin College of Engineering** • Pitzer College • Pratt Institute • Reed College • **Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)** • **Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)** • Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology • Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) • Simmons University • St. John's University • **The New School (Parsons School of Design)** • Think Tank Training Centre • Tufts University • School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA) at Tufts • Union College • University of Cincinnati College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (DAAP) • University of Massachusetts-Amherst • University of Massachusetts-Boston • University of New Hampshire (UNH) • **University of Southern California (USC)** • University of Vermont (UVM) • **Wentworth Institute of Technology** • Wesleyan University • **Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI)**

***Schools with multiple attendees are listed in bold.**

