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What You Need To Know

By NOVA MORGAN

hen a student steps into a school bathroom at JAMS, there's a 50/50 chance they'll be greeted by that oh-so familiar sharp smell of a vape. It's become commonplace on campus and that's quite a problem. Over the past months, there's been a noticeable rise in onschool vaping. What was once considered shocking or rare has now become increasingly common and it's raising serious concerns among students, parents, and staff alike. In fact, according to the CDC, 10% of middle and high school students reported they used tobacco products like vapes or e-cigarettes in 2023, which is approximately 2.8 million students. That's a problem.

Vaping involves inhaling vapor from a device like a pen or a card. While it doesn't produce smoke, it doesn't make it any healthier. If anything, it just makes it easier to hide. Vapes also come in a variety of flavors, only appealing to teens further. Flavors are one of the many reasons why vaping has skyrocketed across so many middle and high schools around the country, if not the world

The truth is, vapes can contain some seriously harmful stuff. We're talking heavy metals like lead, cancer-causing chemicals, and vitamin E acetate, which has been linked to serious lung injuries.

Vapes contain nicotine, which is a highly addictive chemical. Without a fully developed brain (a human brain doesn't stop developing until 21 years), being exposed to nicotine or any other drug is a risk, even deadly in some circumstances. Using nicotine in such high amounts at such a young age can make addiction much harder to overcome in the future, as well as affecting attention, memory, and retention skills. After someone

There are over 7,000 chemicals inside a vape.

Damages the lungs and brain.

Over 68 deaths caused from lung injury have been tied to vapes.

Over 2,807 cases of lung injury have been associated with vapes.

Over 80% of calls to U.S. poison control have been from nicotine.

SOURCES: John Hopkins Medicine and Center for Disease Control (CDC)

has vaped long enough, they can begin to be dependent on nicotine, which is just a long-winded way of saying addiction.

And it's not just about long-term problems. Vaping can mess with you right now. Some students who vape report coughing, wheezing, or chest pain. Others feel dizzy or lightheaded, or they have trouble sleeping or focusing in class. So even if someone thinks, "Oh, I'll just try it once," they might feel those effects immediately.

Ms. Aguilar, the vice principal of JAMS, agrees that vaping isn't an overwhelming problem on campus. "I would say that most students have never and will never vape at school. Although we have had a few incidents on campus, the overwhelming majority of JAMS students are kind, connected, compassionate, and doing the right thing."

Regardless of how common vaping may seem or how it's portrayed, the risks it poses are very real and very significant. Understanding the facts about vaping is an important first step. If you or someone you care about is struggling with vaping, help is available. You can always talk to a trusted adult at school like your counselor. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW and for help with quitting.

Dr. Chacon Honored with Scholarship for Outstanding Leadership

TAMS Principal Dr. Chacon was recognized for her outstanding leadership in education, earning the 2025 Dean's Superintendents Advisory Group (DSAG) Scholarship in partnership with TELACU. This prestigious award honors educators committed to equity, inclusion, and student success.

Dr. Chacon has spent over two decades shaping students' lives, from teaching chemistry to leading schoolwide initiatives. "This recognition serves as encouragement and mo-

tivation," Chacon shared. "It reminds me that the work I do to remove barriers and create opportunities is making a dif-

terence.

A first-generation college graduate and daughter of immigrants, Chacon is passionate about creating access for all students. Recently earned her doctorate at USC, she remains dedicated to educational leadership and equity.

Congratulations to Dr. Chacon for being recognized by the DSAG.



Dr. Chacon beams with pride as she accepts her award at the ceremony.

June 2025 John Adams Middle School

LEAVING A LEARNING LEGACY

Taking A Deeper Dive Into the Highlights of Ms. Scotland's Career

By ELDEN FUR

ver 30 years ago, Ms. Scotland walked through the doors of JAMS for her first day of teaching. Now, as she prepares to retire, we celebrate the end of a remarkable career. A true icon at JAMS, Ms. Scotland has inspired countless students and fellow teachers, leaving behind a legacy filled with memorable moments and a lasting impact.

Ms. Scotland began her teaching career 39 years ago at ABC Unified, where she spent six years teaching 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade. She then joined JAMS, where she has taught for the past

33 years. Although she now teaches 6th-grade Humanities, she has taught every subject during her time in elementary education.

Ms. Scotland has made many memories at JAMS. One of her favorite parts of teaching is the diversity and uniqueness of each class. She's also faced challenges. "When I first started, I was assigned a group of tough

8th graders. We had our ups and downs. Last year's class was also challenging," she shared. Over the years, she's taught quiet students, outspoken ones, and everything in between. "I have fond memories of students who claimed to be witches and warlocks, those who challenged me daily, and those who never said a word," she said.

Ms. Scotland chose to be a teacher to fulfill her mother's dream that was never achieved "I chose to be a teacher, I think in part

> because it was what my mother wanted to do in her life but didn't get to. In addition, I have family members who are illiterate as well as members who came to America as only Spanish speakers. As I was growing up, I was the person who helped them read mail, translate for them, and go with them to appointments. I almost had it built into me. Ms. Scotland said she

was inspired by Marva Collins, a teacher from Chicago. "I wanted to be like her



daily, and those who In the late '90s, Ms. Scotland attended a spenever said a word," cial event honoring two of her students who she said. had won an award. Photo: Ms. Scotland

when I entered the profession," Ms. Scotland explained. She has also had some very memorable experiences at JAMS and will cherish them through her retirement. "JAMS has always been a diverse school. It was great to see how students of different classes, race, and creed worked to-

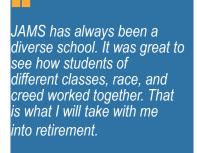
gether. That is what I will take with me into retirement."

Through the years, Ms. Scotland has built strong bonds with teachers at JAMS, especially Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Levin. "Ms. Scotland has been my friend since I first walked onto campus. We taught humanities together early in my career. She was at my wedding and at the hospital after I had my son. If I need anything, I know she's there for me," said Ms. Hale, who was also mentored by Ms. Scotland. "She taught me everything about teaching Humanities. Planning with her was fun, and she has so much knowledge about classroom management and integrating language arts and history."

Ms. Levin shared, "Ms. Scotland took me and my kids to a Dodger game and taught them all about the team. Now that they're older, dinner with her is always a treat. She's taught me to be a better teacher, connecting with students, supporting their needs, staying in touch with parents, and helping kids grow. Former students often return to see her. She truly cares."

Although Ms. Scotland is retiring, her legacy at JAMS will never be forgotten. We wish her all the best in this exciting new chapter of her life.

Ms. Scotland in a collage of JAMS teachers in the 1998-99 school year.



Ms. Scotland
Humanities Teacher



The Magic Behind the Curtain

A Behind-the-Scenes Look At JAMS/SMASH Theater's Awaited Production

By BRYNN WALKER

here's no place like... JAMS/ SMASH Theater! From flying monkeys to glowing emerald towers, Theater 31's production of The Wizard of Oz wasn't just a school musical, it was a full-blown spectacle. With aerial arts, colorful set designs, dazzling costumes, and talented actors, the overall performance transported the audience into the magical land of Oz. The whole performance was a display of all the efforts from cast members, crew, and other adults involved.

After students were cast in their various parts, they started with vocal rehearsals to learn all the songs, a couple lines, and get a feel for the general flow of the show. They moved on after a couple weeks to choreography and blocking rehearsals, while they learned dances, learned lines, and ran through scenes to decide the position of each person for an effortless performance. While actors are focused on

stage management positions are being interviewed and making lookbooks to display the creativity they can bring to the production. "I chose to focus on

blocking, students interested in tech and

the Glinda dress, with her iconic look but with my own twist. I also wanted to add to what I think the Munchkins should look many great jokes. I especially like as well," said 8th liked the song "If I Were King grader, Lila Felson. The of the Forest". The singing and final list for costume, light, sound, projections, and set design teams were determined based upon Addy Ged these interviews and look and Sarah Jane Barney

books. Christina Allen 8th grade are parents who volunteered to be co-heads of the costume department, the main two curators for every character's outfit. They took these lookbooks and started imagining the ensemble scenes, like Munchkinland and the Emerald City, and the challenges of each costume. With tech positions assigned, put on pause for Spring Break.

It may seem like Spring Break was a time of inactivity for the JAMS/ SMASH Theater, but that couldn't be more

> wrong! The auditorium was bustling with activity for all of the break. Cast members assembled outfits with Christina and Sarah Jane for their Munchkin and Ozian looks, as well as specific costumes for the more distinctive roles, like the Wicked Witch. Parents were invited to help make big set pieces, like the trees and the house, while students were put to work making smaller set pieces, like the flowers

and the corn field. Because so many people came in to help during spring break, all the actors and crew came back from Spring Break with most costumes assembled, set pieces ready, and the structure on the stage, called the steeldeck, assembled.

After Spring Break came Tech



Portions of the dances were choreographed by students!

Stage Managers were dressed in costumes that fit into the Land of Oz

The Toto puppet was custom made across the country then altered here to change the breed.

The flying apparatus was completely free, thanks to the generous donation from Randy Haynie



The show was funny and had

acting were both spectacular.





students involved in the production go from four hours of rehearsal each week to 20 hours. Dinner is also served by more volunteers to cast and crew during these two weeks. During the first week, the rehearsals are spent perfecting scenes and figuring out how they flow when the set pieces and the steeldeck are involved. As the days leading up to the show decreased, more of the final elements of the show were incorporated, like microphones, aerial arts, special instruments, and props. "This whole process was really fun, especially tech week. It felt so high-budget because there were so many professionals who knew what they were doing and fancy equipment" said 6th grader Sophie Coil, who played the Tinman. Finally, the show weekend arrived; a culmination of all the efforts from the students and instructors across 4 months. "The show was funny and had many great jokes. I especially liked If I were King of the Forest. The singing and the acting were both spectacular", said 8th grader Adelaide Ged after seeing the show. Although it was a middle school production, all the cast and crew put their all into it. They pulled through to deliver a professional production for family and peers to see.

So much went into this musical, four months of nonstop preparation from students, parents, and professionals. This all paid off to create a well rounded interpretation of The Wizard of Oz that was entertaining and enjoyed by children, peers, and parents. Audience members loved the energy of the performers, but many are unaware of the various contributions of students and parents alike.

(Left) From high above the stage, Oliver F-L. runs the lighting cues during rehearsal. Photo: Junki Saita

(Bottom left) Maxime L. learns to manage the projections from a professional during rehearsal. Photo: Ms. Beeman-Solano

(Below) Jalynn C. handles the hammer like a pro while helping build the set.

Photo: Junki Saita



Critic's Corner

Kai Kennel - 6th Grade

I thought that the casting was great. The Tin man in both shows really embodied the sad emotion, and both Dorothy's had this star quality and this feeling that getting lost and almost losing Toto was actually happening to them

$\star\star\star\star$

Ms. Alexopolous - Math teacher Bravo to all of the JAMS Theatre students! I saw all four shows and was blown away by the energy and love that was put into the production. The audience laughed and cried along with the cast and crew as we all journeyed through Oz together. These kids had the brain, heart, and courage all along.

**** Ivv Bell - 7th Grade

The costumes and the set were amazing, and the projections and sound effects made for a completely immersive experience! My jaw was on the floor when Dorothy flew during the tornado and I was impressed with the rest of the other flying done in the play.

OPINION

Is CAASPP Testing Necessary?

By LIEL TEWODROS

n 2024, students from Irvine International Academy earned the highest scores on the CAASPP test. Could Irvine International Academy's top scores on a test often criticized for reflecting inequality more than ability be less about what students know and more about the advantages that come with higher school funding? Schools with more financial resources often offer better test preparation, academic support, and even tutoring, giving their students a clear advantage. On the other hand, students at underfunded schools may struggle to perform as well due to limited access to these resources. This raises an important question: does the CAASPP truly measure what students know, or does it mainly reflect the funding differences between schools?

The CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress) is a statewide test used to evaluate student learning and school performance. It is meant to assess both individual student achievement but also overall school performance as well. One major factor that could influence scores is the level of funding a school receives. Schools with fewer financial resources may struggle to provide students with the same level of academic support as more well funded schools, which could make it harder for students to perform well. Limited funding could result in less access to technology, advanced courses, and opportunities for test preparation which impacts a students ability to prepare for the test.

School funding could play a role in the CAASPP scores, however, it's not the only factor that determines student performance. Some schools with limited resources still manage to achieve high scores. In many cases, smaller schools with fewer financial advantages use a more creative approach when it comes down to teaching strategies. MT Small Schools, a site dedicated to the benefits of small, low budget schools suggests that "One of the most important benefits of small schools is the ability to invest in innovative and creative teaching techniques. With smaller class sizes, teachers have more time to devote to each student, allowing them to explore different

Continued on page 23



By LIZA HALL

'n 2023, a record 4,240 book titles were targeted for censorship, a 65% increase from 2022, with public libraries seeing a 92% surge in targeted titles compared to the previous year. This translates to

students having limited access to diverse perspectives, hindering critical thinking, potentially marginalizing students from certain groups, and potentially impacting their already hear every day from learning and growth.

A "book ban" refers to the act of restricting or prohibiting access to specific books, typically within a school, library, or other institution, due to objections to their content,

ideas, or themes. Books are banned when individuals, government officials, or organizations object to a book's content, ideas, or themes, leading to its removal from li-

braries, school reading lists, or bookstore shelves. Some books in the JAMS library have even been challenged by other school districts before. For instance, 'Parachute Kids' by Betty C. Tang faced challenges because of themes about its portrayal of immigration, particularly its depiction of a family's illegal status and the challenges they face in America. The most

common types of books targeted for bans or challenges often focus on themes of

Examining the Impact of Book Bans on **Education** and Free Speech

LGBTO+ characters or themes, race and racism, and sexual content, with a significant portion also addressing violence and substance abuse.

Eighty percent of students interviewed at JAMS said that book banning was not fair. Even though most people

> don't realize it, book bans have a direct effect on students. According to the New York Times, "Book bans affect students by restraining knowledge. They restrain students different from seeing perspectives and why some people believe what they believe. By banning books, students have a smaller perspective, which could help them understand why some people

disagree with others' rights or how a certain race feels about a stance or customs in that race "

Book bans don't just remove

stories - they limit perspective, understanding, and growth. When students are denied access to diverse voices and experiences, their view of the world becomes narrow and incomplete. For example, 'To Kill A Mockingbird' by Harper Lee is banned in many libraries for its themes of racism and violence. Diverse ideas and cultures are essential for developing empathy and

critical thinking. Banning books doesn't protect students; it holds them back.



Continuing from the March issue, another student-parent duo at JAMS shares their experience of being on campus together.

Ms. Buccioni and her 6th-grade daughter Amelia share the unique experience of going from home to JAMS together, enjoying extra time as a family, though balancing roles can be tricky.

Sida Buccion; Q: Would you like to have your mom as a teacher? A: Yes, it would feel safer in her class. Q: Would having your

mom as a teacher affect your everyday routine, such as when you get to school and how you study?

A: Probably yes, because she would know if I was making excuses.

Q: Would you call your mom Ms. Buccioni, or Mom?

A: Probably Ms. Buccioni because we are in a student-teacher relationship and dynamic.

Q: Would your behavior in class with your mom vary from your behavior in your other classes?

A: I would try to be more focused.

Buccioni

Q: Would you like to have your daughter as a student? A: I do not think that the teacher/student dynamic would work with her as well as my other daughter.

Q:Do you think that she would like to have you as a teacher?

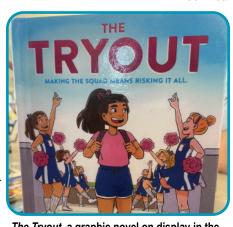
A: Amelia says she would love to be in my

Q: Do you think she would act differently in your class than she would in others?

A: She and I disagree on this point! I think she would, but she insists that she wouldn't. Maybe we will find out in 7th or 8th grade.

Q: Would you have liked having your parent as a teacher?

A: I don't think I would have liked being a student in my own parent's class, but I never had to find out.



Most of the reasons books get

Gwendolyn Morgan

banned are things students

other students at school.

7th grade

The Tryout, a graphic novel on display in the JAMS library is being challenged because of its themes and language. Photo: Liza Hall

HISTORIC BELMAR PARK

Santa Monica Preserves African American History

By ANDREW LEE

very country, state and even city has its own unique and interesting part of history. Students might even have a historical artifact in their backyard. Historic Belmar Park is in Santa Monica California. The Belmar Triangle was a very important area where black business owners provided services to the community. These business owners served the community for about 40 years.

Santa Monearly Afriica's can-American residents lived, worked and found happiness here. They also took action to end oppression and discrimination. Sadly, because of an "urban renewal" in the 1950s their homes, businesses and more all got burned down. The City burned down can Americans and other popular in that era.

for the expansion of the civic center.

Luckily, many programs and generous people from Santa Monica helped donate and clean up Belmar for the community. According to the Santa Monica Conservancy, "In 2019 the City of Santa Monica embarked upon the Belmar History + Art project, a celebration and commemoration of the historical African American experience around the Belmar and surrounding neighborhoods of Santa Monica." Because Belmar is right in JAMS students' backyard, JAMS teacher Mr. Cierra took his 8th graders on a field trip to Belmar on February 25th. He stated, "All history is local history. I seize every opportunity to bring history to life because I believe experiential learning is essential," Mr Cierra said, "Santa Monica has such a rich past,

> including the African American residents who once called the Belmar community home.

> The Belmar Park and Art Project is right here in our backyard. It's accessible to everyone, yet so few take advantage of the opportunity to learn from it," Students visited historical parts of Belmar like the sand and a sculpture to commem-

orate a stretch between Bay and Bicknell Streets, known as "The Ink Well". The InkWell holds significance in Belmar because it

was known as a refuge area offering a space for African-Americans to enjoy the beach without racial harassment.

As students can see, there's so much to discover about history. Whether it's in the heart of the city or right in the neighborhoods around JAMS, exploring the past is both important and surprisingly interesting.



Esteban O. doing a scavenger hunt homes and businesses both inside a red-painted shotgun house rented and owned by Afri- sculpture. "Shotgun" homes were

cultural groups because Photo: Andrew Allen they wanted to make way

Celebrating Black History and Honoring Identity

By ANDREW LEE

lack History Month was created to focus attention on the contributions of African Americans. ASB organized activities to celebrate Black History Month, and Ms. Beeman-Solano shared, "Black history is American history! Many JAMS students and staff connect with Black culture and heritage, so this is a wonderful opportunity to honor that identity while also inviting others to learn, experience, and celebrate together.



Dancers from UCLA's EASA bring energy and excitement as they prepared for the assembly performance during Advisory period.

Photo: Ms. Beeman-Solano



Vincent E. savoring a delicious plate of soul food in celebration of Black History Month. Photo: Ms. Beeman

Students savored the rich flavors of soul food during the celebration where culture, history, and community came together on every plate. Photos: Ms. Beeman





JUNETEENTH

By ANDREW LEE

ne important holiday that highlights freedom and equality in American history is Juneteenth. What is Juneteenth? Juneteenth, short for "June Nineteenth," is a holiday that commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. It marks the day in 1865 when Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, and announced that all enslaved people were free - more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Though it isn't recognized



Designed by Ben Haith in 1997, the Juneteenth flag symbolizes freedom.

all over the world, in 1979 every US State recognized the holiday but it did not become a federal holiday until 2021 when it was signed by former US President Joe Biden. Today, Juneteenth is a time for reflection, education, and joyful celebrations that often include music, food, parades, and the sharing of African-American history and culture. Juneteenth serves an important reminder of the ongoing struggles of unity and equality.

THE STREET



AMS 8th grader Caralynne Lopez-Manimbo has been named the recipient of this year's Rotary Club Citizenship Award, an honor voted on by the school's 8th grade team.

Caralynne was chosen for her academic excellence, leadership, and kindness. A dedicated AVID and music student, she quietly leads by example, like setting up chairs every Monday in the music room without being asked.

"I was surprised and very honored," Caralynne said. "It felt amazing to be recognized for the hard work I've put into serving my school and community."

Her commitment extends beyond school. She volunteers at the Church on Pearl, helping clean, sort food, and distribute it to those in need. "Even helping one person makes me feel like I've made a difference." she shared.

Inspired by women in her life, Caralynne said, "My mother is generous and always thinking of others. My aunt is very independent, which inspires me to become my own person." That inspiration is matched by her drive: "I always try my best because if I don't, I'll be letting myself down."

Caralynne's compassion, dedication, and quiet strength make her a proud representative of JAMS.

Would you prefer a teacher who's strict or one who's more laid-back?

Some students like teachers who are strict and keep everything in order, while others prefer a laid-back teacher who lets things flow. Which teaching style helps you feel the most successful and comfortable in class?



"Even though I like laid-back teachers more, I think I would benefit more from a strict teacher because they will keep me in line, and prepare me for what it will be like in high school and college."

Olivia Prather 6th grade

"I don't work well when I'm under pressure or yelled at like a strict teacher would do. I don't think anyone likes to be yelled at.' Iris Grunca 6th grade



John Adams Middle School



"They would encourage me to do my best even if I didn't want to, and if I did something wrong, they would try to correct me."

Juan Campos 7th grade

"When I have a laid-back teacher, I feel more comfortable participating, and when I have a strict teacher, it feels like a constricted environment that I always want to get out of."

Delilah Cortez 7th grade





"If I had a laid-back one, I would just talk and play games. If I had a strict teacher, I would pay attention and try to do well."

Kai Kennel 6th grade

"I would prefer a laid-back teacher because they would be more open to ideas and helpful, a strict teacher would force everything to be how they want it."

Elden Fur 7th grade





"A strict teacher has higher expectations, which pushes you to improve. A laid-back teacher allows you to make mistakes, which might not encourage students to do their best."

Maelle Daniels 7th grade

> "Laid-back teachers give students more of a chance for room to work and be creative.

Brooklyn Bell 8th grade





"Strict teachers have control over their classes... laid-back teachers will probably have more chatter and disorder... more distractions = more homework later." **Kaitlyn Nosho**

8th grade

"A strict teacher puts way too much stress on me. A laid-back teacher is what helps students feel happier to come to school." **Brooke Garda** 8th grade





Charlie F. and Eric D. face off in a friendly game in the library during nutrition break. Photo: Elden Fur



Rain won't stop Miles W., he turns the gym into a soccer arena, proving the game never waits for sunshine. Photo: Elden Fur



Victor D. and Otis K. prove that even in the middle of math class, fun + friendship is the real equation. Photo: Nova Morgan



Soleil M.M. gets hands-on with creativity, sculpting her vision one careful touch at a time.

Dignified Dragons

Doing Daily Duties

JUST JAMS

CONNECTED COMPASSIONATE



Alexander T. takes a leap into another dimension, thanks to virtual reality, all during school hours. Photo: Kahlan Roberts

Photo: Kahlan Roberts



Teamwork time, Sylvie L. and Muhsin D. eagerly tackle their latest assignment as they collaborate on finding the answers.

Photo: Liel Tewdoros



Mr. Cierra's students, including Felix A., dove into the past with a field trip to the Inkwell, Santa Monica's historic African-American landmark. Photo: Andrew Allen

The Psychology of Colorful Note-taking and Highlighting

The Pros and Cons of Taking Colorful Notes at School.

By STEFFI GRIFFITH

olorful notes often catch the eye, but do they truly enhance learning, or simply add visual clutter? Before embracing a rainbow of pens and highlighters, it's important to weigh whether

colorful note taking is a clever strategy or a fun distraction. Colors make it easier to remember things, stay focused, and understand information. Highlighting important points keeps notes organized, making studying less stressful. However, adding color can distract students from learning the material. Another drawback is over-highlighting, some students highlight everything instead of focusing on key points.

Colorful notes are a useful tool with many classroom benefits. Using different colors makes learning more fun, helps you see ideas

clearly, and improves memory. Plain notes can be boring and hard to study, especially

before a test. Adding color makes them more interesting, organized, and easier to understand. Experts say color boosts memory and processing.

Many people find it a hassle to add color to their notes, but experts have proven color helps memory retention and processing information. " Colour helps us in memorizing certain information by increasing our attentional level," says psychology professor Dr. Donald G. Mackay. Some students notes from math class. have similar views, like 6th Photo: Steffi Griffith grader Giselle Roe who said

" I think it makes my notes more colorful and nicer to look at. It also keeps my notes organized when I highlight the important things." She points out that the colors keep her notes organized so she remembers the important information.

Although as 8th grader Andrea Es-

cobar points out, "Sometimes people just use different colors all over their notes and don't really highlight what's important." This points out the problem that some students focus more on making their notes look visually appealing rather than truly learning the material. Some students also try to make their notes perfect, which can lead to unnecessary stress and take up too much time. It is more effective to highlight only the key points so that the important information is easy to find.

Using different colors in your notes can boost memory, like having

backup files on a computer. Research shows students who use color, especially with a system, often perform better on tests than

> those who stick to black ink or pencil. This method encourages deeper thinking, helping information stick. But there are drawbacks. Spending too much time making notes look perfect can distract from learning. Over-highlighting or marking too much can also dilute key points, making it harder to remember important details later. So next time you take notes, use your highlighter wisely, let it guide your learning, not distract from it.

Smart Ways to Use Color in Notes

If you want to start using color in vour notes here are some tips to help you get started and maximize the effect of this tool.

- 1. Start by only highlighting the main ideas, not the whole page to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- 2. Color Code your notes so they don't get overpowered by all the
- 3. Emphasize the important points to make studying for tests less stressful.

When used correctly, this strategy is a valuable tool all students should use.

Aubrey H. displays her color coded

The Controversies of Subject Colors

By STEFFI GRIFFITH

eople have many different opinions about which colors match each school subject. In a survey sent out to JAMS students, some colors were widely agreed upon, while others sparked strong disagreement. Even though certain colors are more commonly linked to specific subjects, there's no official answer, people associate colors with school subjects in different ways. Most students didn't think the color of the icons in Google Classroom matters, although some believe it does. This survey shows that color choices for school subjects are based on personal opinions and experiences rather than strict rules.

What color is math? 60.4% What color is English? **36**% What color is science? What color is history?

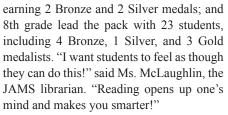
TURNING PAGES, EARNING PRAISE

JAMS Readers Rise to the Challenge in This Year's Medal-Worthy Reading Race

By KAITLYN NOSHO

The Gold Medal Reading Challenge has been a page-turning success this year, with 51 students across all grades participating in the library's effort to build a community of strong, dedicated readers. As of April 2025, Medal Readers

were announced for 6th and 7th grade, with 8th graders were still logging books by May 17. The numbers are impressive: 6th grade boasts 7 participants with 2 Bronze and 2 Gold medalists: 7th grade has 11 readers,



To honor these reading champions, a special celebration took place on May 30th during lunch. All Medal Readers (Bronze, Silver, and Gold) were recognized with a picture display and food to celebrate their accomplishments. Eighth grade readers were honored at the 8th Grade Awards Ceremony in June. Ms. McLaughlin wants to remind students that "it's not too late to take on this reading challenge." She encourages students to read for fun and personal

> growth, and to take pride in their efforts both inside and outside of English class.

> Looking ahead, next year's reading challenge will offer even more opportunities to stay involved. "We are

planning on encouraging students to read and log throughout the year by sponsoring 'Log in the Library' days with food prizes along the way," Ms. McLaughlin shared. Paper notices and email reminders will help students stay informed about monthly celebrations. Whether you're aiming for bronze, silver, or gold, it all starts with one book, so why not turn the page and take the challenge?

March Madness Champions

AVID introduced its first-ever AVID March Madness tournament, Each grade level hosted basketball games featuring teams named after colleges, creating a fun and engaging way to spark meaningful conversations about higher education.



Seventh grade champions of the AVID March Madness Tournament, Photo: Mr. Miranda



Eighth grade champions of the AVID March Madness Tournament. Photo: Ms. Murphy

The Testing by Joelle Charbonneau This book is about Cia. who is chosen (like her father) to compete in a series of brutal tests to select future leaders of a war-torn country. Filled with twists, turns, and cliffhang-

ers, this book is perfect for fans of The Hunger Games.

The Blood of Olympus



6th Grade

Eliotte Drozdz

by Rick Riordan I really liked this book because the author's writing style makes you feel immersed in the story. The best part is that characters from different mythology-based series can overlap,

making them super fun to read.



Soren Forrest 7th Grade

JAMS students recommend these book titles that can be found in the school library. Check them out! - Ms. McLaughlin

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

by Sherman Alexie I enjoyed reading this novel because it was filled with great stories and there was never a part of the book that was boring. It also explained what racism Native Americans

went through.



8th Grade

Olivetti by Allie Millington Both realistic fiction and a mystery, Olivetti tells the story of a missing mom through the eyes of a typewriter and 13-yearold Ernest. This touching tale of loss and discovery is perfect for Mental Health Awareness Month. We have two

copies in the library!



Librarian

EIGHTH GRADE

By ANDREW ALLEN

Planet Earth is about 4.6 billion years old. The first homo sapien is estimated to have lived 300,000 years ago. In the long run, three years is next to nothing. The 8th-graders have been here for years, yet no time at all. However small their time with us may be, the three years spent at JAMS may be the most important in their lives.

We enter JAMS as lambs and leave as teenage lions, transformed by the experiences that have shaped us along the way. The memories we've made here - inside classrooms, on the quad, during games, and through friendships - will stay with us forever. And while it's bittersweet to say goodbye, we're also stepping into a new chapter, full of new beginnings and opportunities. It's hard to believe that 2022 was three years ago; time really does fly when you're having fun. Three years may seem short in the grand story of our lives, yet these moments are ones we'll hold onto tightly. JAMS will always have a special place in the hearts of every 8th grader now, and for many generations to come.

Time Capsule

If one object could be frozen in a time capsule for future historians to show life at JAMS, what would it be? There are many objects that are important to everyday life. She wasn't alone in this sentiment, for several JAMS students had similar answers. However, the most popular items were by far phones and Chromebooks.



weekly schedule, to show the difference on how we go to school now and how students may go to school in the future."

Memories

In each one of us, there's a library, filled with the books and stories of our lives. They have many different genres, from comedy, to romance, and beyond. In the future, when one of these books is read, we can find joy in the past. Yosemite seems to be the trip of a lifetime, with about 22% of eighth-graders reminiscing about it as their favorite memory. JAMS' renowned music program has infiltrated the hearts of JAMS students, with 17% of the eighth-grade population declaring it as their favorite JAMS memory.









Evolution:

Change is one of the hardest things to go through, and middle school is no stranger to change. Between puberty and the dramatic shift between elementary and middle school, and then again to high school, students never leave the same person they were when they started.

"

I'm feel more self-aware, in a way. But I still like a lot of the same things.

Brynn Walker 8th-grade "

The things that are important to me have changed, what mattered the most matters less and vice versa.

Brook Bieber 8th-grade

DEDICATION

Take Two

That was then, this is now.







Matthew D. waved hello in 6th grade, now waving goodbye as an 8th grader.











The Art of High School

According to Ms. Joyce, the art of succeeding in high school is to get organized, check your grades frequently, don't be afraid to ask for help or talk with your teachers, join clubs and activities, get involved, take classes in things and explore what interests you, and approach your work with a "growth mindset". There are a lot of great students in this class and I am confident they can make a difference in our world. We have a lot of challenges ahead and I know we will have some stand out superstars. I can hardly wait to hear about everyone's adventures and accomplishments!

Advice to 6th and 7th graders

Be yourself, don't try to fit in with the crowd, be cause your real friends will love you no matter what. Also, keep up with schoolwork, it only gets harder from here!

- Jade Martinez

You will make new friends and some of your old friends might backstab you. You will survive, trust me.

- Karla Ruiz Alvarez





Stop acting like you re in high school.
Just be a kid.
- Zoe Carmicheal

Enjoy the little things in life.
- Oliver Scott





Students played fun games, won prizes and candy, all while learning valuable lessons about mental health. Photo: Mr. Miranda



Students explored mental health through therapy dogs and crafting succulent pots - calm minds, happy hearts. Photo: Mr. Miranda

JAMS Celebrated Mental Health Awareness Month in Style

By KAHLAN ROBERTS

n Friday, May 2, JAMS students came together in the quad to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month with an uplifting and interactive event during an extended lunch. The afternoon was filled with music, activities, and opportunities to reflect on emotional well-being and self-care.

Students enjoyed DJ music, drumming with Beat the Odds, arts and crafts, origami, and mindfulness exercises. One of the most popular attractions was the pet therapy dogs, where students could relax and connect with friendly furry visitors. Parent volunteers served up freshly made quesadillas, adding a delicious touch

to the festivities. Information booths from local organizations offered valuable mental health resources, and ASB students helped guide their peers through the day's activities.

The event aimed to promote positive coping skills and introduce students to a variety of wellness strategies in a fun, welcoming environment. Everyone was encouraged to wear green in support of mental health awareness, and the quad was a sea of positivity and community spirit.

Special thanks go out to our dedicated parent volunteers and ASB leaders, whose efforts made the event safe, smooth, and memorable for all. Mental wellness matters and at JAMS, we celebrate it together.





Encuentro Literario: A Celebration of Language and Creativity

By LIZA HALL

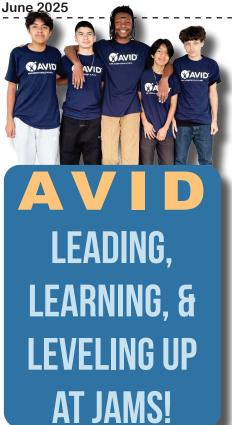
The Immersion Program at JAMS hosted Encuentro Literario: Novela y Poesía, a literary festival highlighting students' bilingual brilliance in May. Sixth graders showcased their growing language skills through poetry recitations and novel-inspired projects. As part of the festival, students created original poetry booklets, writing haikus, diamante, limericks, and concrete poems. Drawing inspiration from historical events and characters in novels, they connected their studies in History and Reading to creative expression. Attendees were invited to witness these young authors bring literature to life; proving that poetry speaks powerfully in any language.

Photos: Elden Fur and Ms. Cruz











Seventh grader Marisol B. presents her AVID project, showcasing the college she hopes to attend. Photo: Alena Cox



By ANDREW ALLEN

he AVID program at JAMS wrapped up an exciting and impactful spring semester filled with events that supported student growth, connection, and college readiness. From team-building experiences to high school preview days, AVID students were given countless opportunities to lead, learn, and level up.

The semester kicked off with the AVID Meet & Greet, the program's first-ever pre-school-year gathering. Designed to build community, the event helped students connect with each other and learn about the AVID mission. "Our goal was to create a sense of belonging and togetherness from the start," said 8th-grade AVID advisor Ms. Murphy.

In the spring, AVID 8th graders participated in Shadow Day at Santa Monica High School. Students spent a day with a SAMOHI AVID student, attending classes, eating lunch, and even completing a scavenger hunt across campus. "It gave our students a fun and real glimpse into high school life," said Ms. Murphy. The experience was so impactful it was even featured in a SAMOHI article.

Sixth-grade recruitment also took place this semester. Seventy promising students with strong academics, behavior, and motivation were invited to apply to AVID. The process included an application, teacher recommendations, interviews, and concluded with a proud Contract Signing Ceremony for the incoming AVID Class of 2027.

To top it all off, March brought the first-ever AVID March Madness tournament. Each grade level held basketball games with teams named after colleges. It was a fun and creative way to spark conversations about higher education. "We wanted students to start recognizing college names while having a blast," said Ms. Murphy.

With a successful semester behind them, AVID at JAMS continues to thrive building leaders, strengthening scholars,

LEFT: Enzo V. and Sammy R. connect during AVID Shadow Day at Samohi, a day filled with inspiration and a glimpse into high school life! Photo: Ms. Murphy

RIGHT: Aiden C., Andrew A., and Bella D. made waves by giving back, joining the Heal the Bay beach clean-up and helping protect our coastline. Photo: Ms. Murphy



Laylani M. and Ellowyn S. work together to discuss their notes on a video about plastic consumption in AVID class. Photo: Alena Cox



Nicolas F. Liel T., Roxie D., and Mia P.R. team up with Ms. Murphy to set the stage for AVID 6th Grade Recruitment Day. Photo: Ms. Murphy



Betanya D. volunteers at Grant Elementary's 3rd Annual World Cultures Festival, proudly supporting community and cultural celebration. Photo: Ms. Murphy



SMMUSD's 74th Annual Stairway of the Stars Shined Bright

By KAITLYN NOSHO

he Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District celebrated its 74th Annual Stairway of the Stars event with a powerful display of talent, unity, and musical excellence. Held this spring, the concert featured more than 800 student performers from every elementary, middle, and high school in the district, bringing the entire SMMUSD community together under one roof.

JAMS proudly sent some of its most talented student musicians to participate in the amazing night, representing the school with skill, spirit, and dedication.

This long-standing tradition was more than just a concert, it was a celebration of the district's strong commitment to music education. The event gave students a rare opportunity to perform in a professional setting, showcasing months of hard work and artistic growth. Audiences were treated to an unforgettable evening filled with vocal and instrumental performances that highlighted a wide range of musical styles.

From beginners to advanced musicians, every student played a vital role in making the event a success. The sheer scale and coordination of the performance stood as a testament to the dedication of SM-MUSD's music educators and the creative spirit of the community.

Stairway of the Stars continued to inspire audiences, reminding everyone of the importance of arts in education, and the magic that happened when young musicians came together to share their gifts.



Ryan G., Emile T., Mateo R. (above) and Katherine R., Penelope A., Josie L., Indy G. (below) full of excitement as they prepare to shine at the musical event. Photos: Ms. Woo



Ms. Woo Honored with Prestigious Award



Ms. Woo celebrates with her students in the music room. Photo: Ms. Woo

By ELDEN FUR

usic teacher Ms. Woo has been recognized with the 2025 Outstanding Middle School Educator Award by the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association (SCSBOA). This prestigious award honors her dedication to music education and her impact on students throughout her 30-year career.

The award covers a large region, from Kern County to San Diego County, making it a significant achievement. Ms. Woo expressed her deep appreciation for the recognition, especially since SCSBOA has played a major role in her own musical journey. As a young pianist and violinist, she participated in SCSBOA events, which



Ms. Wood receives her prestigious award from Tom Plunkett, Vice-President of SCSBOA. Photo: Ms. Woo

helped shape her passion for music.

"It is a distinctive and special honor to receive this award," Ms. Woo said. "The power of music connected me to a community that allowed me to explore musical artistry through live performance practice."

Ms. Woo's impact goes beyond the classroom. Over the years, she has helped many students develop a love for music and guided them in their musical growth. She believes teaching music is more than just learning notes, it's about connecting with students and inspiring them.

"This award is a reminder of how music education influences students and families," Ms. Woo said. "I have been privileged to foster the joys of music with hun-



Always dedicated, Ms. Woo invests countless hours supporting her students. Photo: Ms. Woo

dreds of young students and help them on their journey of playing an instrument."

This is not the first time Ms. Woo has been honored for her contributions. In 2024, she received the California Music Educators Association (CMEA) Middle School Music Educator Award, further proving her dedication to music education.

Principal Dr. Chacon praised Ms. Woo's achievements. "Her dedication and commitment to music education are truly exceptional. We are incredibly lucky to have her at JAMS."

The JAMS community celebrates Ms. Woo's achievements and her passion and leadership continue to inspire students, ensuring that music remains an important part of education.



Speaking Up About Innappropriate Language at School

The use of inappropriate language at JAMS isn't just a bad habit, it's a growing issue that's impacting our school community. Whether it's racial slurs, threats, or any other curse word, any kind of negative language creates an unsafe environment that impacts not only mental health, but also the overall safety and comfort of students and teachers. A recent JAMS survey found that about 96% of students feel that inappropriate language is normalized on school grounds, and 57% of students feel that normalizing inappropriate language on campus has some impact. In order to maintain a safe environment for everybody at JAMS, students must learn how to fix this profanity problem.

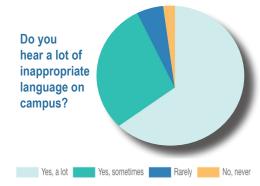
A recent JAMS survey was released, showing multiple statistics and information towards why students use inappropriate language at JAMS. A whopping 82% of students at JAMS believe that inappropriate language, whether it's cursing, slurs, or threats, have been normalized on school campus. 7th-grader Mustafa B. said, "Since everybody uses inappropriate language at this point, others feel pressured to act the same, and the consequences are not fitting for the impact that it has on students' mental health." This is true, for many websites show that using inappropriate language at school (mostly cursing), can negatively impact one's mental health. According to the survey, there were three main factors as to why so many students at school use inap-

By KAHLAN ROBERTS

propriate language. 60% of those who answered believed that students use inappropriate language because it is "out of habit", 53% of the votes were leaning towards the idea of using inappropriate vocabulary "just to be cool", and 47% thought that students use inappropriate language to express anger and let out emotions.

Any time that kindness is not shown, then connection or compassion are lost, or at best, significantly reduced.

Ms. Mathews
English teacher



Another reason that the use of inappropriate language is so normalized is because of conformity. Around middle school age, many kids worry about standing out, or being different from others. This could lead to bigger consequences, like self consciousness and being influenced to do other bad things. 7th-grader Maelle D. said, "I feel like as a community we are focused on conforming with others and not standing out as an individual or being unique. So, as a result people try to fit in with the people around them based on social cues like what they hear around campus, like profanity and drama. This causes people to start using these words more commonly in conversation, normalizing it."

Swearing on campus is not just a personal choice, it's a choice that can impact everyone school-wide. While some believe that inappropriate language doesn't hurt anyone, the numbers and voices coming from our community can prove them wrong. With only 33% of students claiming that they never use inappropriate language at school, it's clear that this problem is more common than many think. From racial slurs to everyday curse words, offensive language has become so normalized in hallways, classrooms, and common areas. If we want JAMS to be a place where kindness, connection, and compassion is fostered, we must start by cleaning up our language - because words matter.

Do you think that inappropriate language affects student learning?



"I think normalized inappropriate language does affect student learning. I'm noticing students use the same language in class as they do outside, and some

struggle to develop their academic language skills."



"I think each student might have a different perspective on how they are or are not affected by inappropriate language. Addressing inappropriate

language requires a collective effort from all adults on campus so that we can ensure safe space for learning."



"I believe inappropri ate language affects student interactions and this affects student learning. Also, it can easily devolve into bullying

and then school becomes unsafe for some."



How Reading Diverse Stories Builds Empathy, Understanding, and a Global Perspective

By FEVEN BELAY

ne powerful way to introduce students to different cultures is through literature. Cultural diversity in novels allows students to explore new perspectives and experiences beyond their own. Books that feature multicultural characters can open doors to empathy, awareness, and a deeper appreciation for others. Unfortunately, many books still lack this important representation, leaving students without the opportunity to see themselves (or others) reflected in the stories they read.

Many books and novels contain obvious stereotypes that are hard to ignore. The fact is that almost all of the protagonists written in it are not diverse. One trustable news source called Reading Zone conducted a study, and the results were as follows: In 2018, the percentage of books that were about African Americans alone was only 10%. In the same boat, only 7% of characters in books were Asian. This is a recurring situation that keeps happening in these books. The percentage of the books published that featured a white protagonist was over 50%, with the exception of 25%

being about animals/other. "It is definitely I feel kind of connected to important for characters in books be diverse in who represent daily life or novels. W e issues that I can relate to. have a diverse population at JAMS, so it's Dalia Parvez important for 8th grade students to see characters

that mirror themselves to help them relate. It is also so that students can identify characters with similar backgrounds, or learn about different characters from themselves and their perspective, " stated Mr Sailing, an English teacher.

Reasons for why books are like this could be because authors themselves

cannot expand on inclusive ideas, since a majority of them

> not experienced what it is like to be in a minority group.

Diverse books are important because they help people feel seen and help readers understand

others better. Learning about these things in school can show us what life is like for different people. It helps students be more open-minded, think before they speak, and break down stereotypes in friendships. Teachers at JAMS have strive to include these ideas in the school curriculum as well. "For example, in 7th

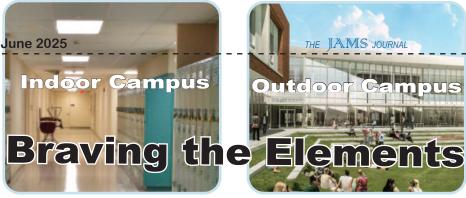
grade, the three class novels that we are reading represent different cultures, and in 8th grade, the four class novels tap into cultural experiences, especially white and black as it relates to the civil rights movement, " stated Ms. Beeman, an English teacher. Some examples of diverse books that Ms. Beeman and other English teachers have implemented into their curriculum are The Absolute True Diary of a Part Time Indian, which discusses topics like inclusion, poverty, identity, cultural loss, and grief. Brown Girl Dreaming, which expands on racism and discrimination, family troubles, personal growth, and real life encounters from the author, growing up in the 60s/70s.

The books we read in school really affect how we think. To help students have better attitudes toward different groups, we need books with diverse characters and stories. These books help us see life through other people's eves and also see ourselves. They show us new problems, different ways of living, and make us think about what others go through. Teachers have shown how important these books are, and we shouldn't miss out on the culture and lessons they share.

can not identify within these groups. In 2021, a study was conducted in the U.S. It was discovered that about 83% percent of authors are white. The rest of the percentage (17%) are the minority of groups that are either Asian, African American, or Hispanic. Delving deeper into the numbers revealed that only 6% of authors total were women. Many books cannot elaborate on inclusivity because the authors have

erse Books Matter in School





🧨 The Pros and Cons of an Outdoor Campus 🦇 **By ANDIA BACAJ**

The average American student spends 7 hours and 38 minutes per day indoors using electronics both at school and at home, according to Back to School Full Report. Schools can help fix that with outdoor campuses where the hallways are open to one side. Open hallways get students to be outside braving the elements just to get to their classes. If students don't spend enough time outside they can miss out on Vitamin D, which the Cleveland Clinic says causes fatigue and depression which leads to social problems. Being in nature has been shown to boost students' mental health, reduces stress, and enhances confidence according to Outdoor Education - Research Summary. Although there are a lot of benefits of attending an outdoor campus, there are also disadvantages.

The ups and downs of weather on an outdoor campus

On an outdoor campus students often have to adjust their day depending on the weather. One advantage is that when it rains, P.E. class can't be held outside so the kids get free play because space is limited. Another benefit is that students don't need to dress out for P.E. which can save time and make things easier. Lunch is usually flexible; it can be eaten indoors or outdoors but rainy days force kids to seek refuge from the rain and find a new place to eat lunch. On the other hand when the weather's nice, classes besides P.E can be held outside. This is a great chance for the students to get vitamin D which humans need to stay healthy.

Rain has a negative effect on

outdoor campuses. People get wet going between classes. Students also have to wear rainboots to stay dry, especially if walkways are likely to have puddles. "When it is raining the entire school floods," said sixth grader Afet Yonas. The library is a shelter for students when it rains with students sitting on any surface causing a noisy environment.

Nature's perks and problems

One of the great features of an outdoor campus is its connection to nature. Mother Nature has many benefits such as plants which make shade for students to relax under. Trees also help students because nature gets rid of fear and reduces stress according to the University of California. "I like an outdoor campus because of the fresh air, modern environment. [There is] no stress for finding a place to eat, feels nicer than being stuck indoors," according to 7th-grader Zooey Markowitz. Not all people feel that way even if nature helps children to relax.

From bugs to birds, there are many things to deal with on an outdoor campus. One disadvantage, according to 7th-grader Natalie Marti, is that "when it rains, it floods a lot and it gets really hot in the summer." It's also easier for bugs to get into the classrooms.

Is dealing with the weather worth it to enjoy the benefits of an outdoor campus? The benefits of spending time outside during the day far outweigh the hardships of rainy days. While winter is cold and wet forcing students to have extra gear like umbrellas and sweatshirts for the winter months. Summer brings sunshine and warmth with students enjoying more comfortable clothing.

Students Win Big in Sustainability Poster Contest





Mia P.R. took home the grand prize, while Eloise A. earned second place in the poster contest, pictured here with the Santa Monica mayor. Photos:Ms. Joyce

AMS students Mia Patricio-Ramirez and Eloise Alexopolous were named winners in the 17th Annual Sustainable Santa Monica Student Poster Contest. The event, hosted by the City of Santa Monica and Sustainable Works, honors student creativity and environmental awareness.

This year's theme, "Think Globally, Grow Locally," focused on the benefits of community gardens and urban farming. Students were encouraged to show how local food efforts can make a global difference.

Mia and Eloise were two of 17 winners selected from 458 posters. Nearly 800 students participated in related presentations across Santa Monica schools. Way to go, Dragons!

What do you like about an outdoor campus?



"I like the access to fresh air when opening our doors." Ms. Guirguis, science teacher



"It feels more connected to nature."

- Felix C., 7th grade



"It gets kids out in a nature and away from computers." - Olive A., 6th grade

JAMS Students Reveal What Lies Within Their Backpacks.

By KAITLYN NOSHO

s the school year ends and you finally get to unpack your backpack, everyday essentials are uncovered first, as they lie in accessible pockets and are sitting at the top of the bag. They are the evidence of the things that got you through the year. Forgotten and lost items are at the bottom. There are returned assignments, excessive amounts of pencils, candy wrappers, and more things you didn't even know were there. You ask yourself, "Where did that even come from?"



8th grader Brooklyn Bell shows off her Sweet Tooth perfume.



6th grader Elizabeth
Ferrera with the
carabiner for her
school supplies and PE
clothes.



6th grader Thomas
Hall uses an old
prescription bottle for
his water to soak his
basson reeds.



Students really have everything inside their backpacks. Sixth graders Elizabeth Ferrera and Thomas Hall have shared carrying carabiners and music supplies with them. Elizabeth carries a carabiner to help her stay organized. She said, "The carabiner helps me carry school project supplies and my P.E. clothes on Monday and Friday." Thomas carries his bassoon reeds and some water in an old prescription bottle in his backpack every day. He has one instrument at home and another at school, so he only needs to carry his music supplies back and forth. When asked about his choice of container for his water, he said, "I have my reed water in a prescription bottle because it is light and small."

Multiple students have expressed their daily essential items being cosmetics like lip gloss and perfume. Seventh grader Zooey Markowitz's essentials include Summer Fridays and E.L.F lip gloss, which she carries around campus with her every day. She uses these lip products because they are fun and keep her skin nourished. "School air can make your skin, especially your lips, dry." she commented. Similarly, 8th grader Brooklyn Bell carries lotion and perfume to use before and after PE. She stated, "I bring these items so I smell presentable and so that I'm not ashy." Lotion is a common item for students to bring to school. There are multiple reasons for this, like personal preference and dry skin. A PCU Blog said, "With washing your hands a lot and putting sanitizer on, your hands can get very dry."



Of course, there are also tons of things that end up in backpacks that end up and are forgotten about. Students have numerous lost assignments and food in their backpacks. Eighth grader Skyler Hughes often loses papers in his backpack. He usually loses up to three per week, and estimated losing around 80 papers in his backpack over the course of the year. He said, "When I lose the papers, I don't usually go looking for them because I don't figure out that I lost them until I really need them. When I do lose them I never see them again." Seventh grader Oliver Frost-Lorenzo had won a Twix bar at the beginning of the year, but he lost it in his backpack. He hadn't realized for a while that he had lost it, but when he did, he didn't think it would still be in his bag. He commented, "I felt surprised when I found it because I hadn't realized that it was in my backpack melting for such a long time."

JAMS students have tons of fun things in their backpacks that reflect who they are. Every bag is a mystery concealed in zippers and fabric. While papers, pencils, and supplies may disappear for weeks at a time, collections of memories and treasures lie inside of each bag. Whether it be for good luck or organization, everything is there for a reason. Those are just some of the curiosities in JAMS' bags; what's in yours?

ach year, JAMS students choose from a variety of electives, many ✓ are drawn to the vibrant world of visual art. Unlike music, acting, poetry, or comedy, visual art is experienced with sight, this lets students express themselves in bold, creative ways that are seen rather than heard. Ms. Joyce, the art teacher, runs the visual art program and assists talented students who create powerful pieces that show emotion and talent. Students have many opportunities to create different types of art such as painting, sculpture, sewing, printmaking, and others. Through this art program students make impressive pieces of art that should be shown and celebrated.

Inspiration plays a big role in creating art. Students can find it through people, places, feelings, and objects. Art teacher Ms. Joyce says she tries to inspire students by giving them creative control. "I believe in giving students choices in how they approach their artwork, helping them find their own artistic voice. Beyond just making art, I emphasize communication, art is a language of ideas, emotions, and storytelling." She wants students to connect with their art. Finding inspiration can be hard, but many find it in everyday life. Students recently created Bas Relief Tiles, a 3D project inspired by natural plants.

Competitions are a good way for students to show off their talent in art. Every year, there are many art competitions that students can participate in. Some are run by the school, while others are organized by the district or state.

Every year, there is a yearbook cover contest where students can create artwork for the cover. 8th graders can also design the 8th-grade sweatshirt. These school-run contests don't offer prizes, but the winner's work gets used. For prize-based contests, students can enter state-run events like the "Santa Monica Sustain-

Spotlight
On student
Art

By ELIZABETH MELBOURNE

ability Poster Contest."

Another way to display student art is through shows. Throughout the year, there are events where students share their work. Some include art from many schools and grades, while others feature only

JAMS. For example, some shows at SAMO include work from SMASH, Lincoln, and other nearby schools.

This year, visual art students have worked on many projects, creating unique pieces. They've made watercolors, prints, realistic drawings, and

felt pillows. Each project takes time, money, and effort. JAMS students often find

inspiration in their everyday lives, leading them to create powerful pieces that reflect their own experiences.

Competition motivates student artists and often leads to strong, expressive work. It's a great way to showcase skills. With time, effort, and the right tools, JAMS students are given the chance to reach their full artistic potential.

Dolls

Presented during Black History Month, this project introduced students to the work of African American fiber artists Faith Ringgold and Nick Cave, whose vibrant, textile-based art tells powerful stories about identity, community, and culture.

Artists: Eloise Alexopoulos 6th grade (Inej Ghafa Doll), Kevin Franco 8th grade (Mr. Scott), Darien Mahir 7th grade (Ye), Simona Cipresso 6th grade (Melani Martinez Crybaby Doll), and Layani Moore 7th grade (Spider Man)



Support the art department by scanning the QR code.

The warm colors helps this piece stand out among a crowd.

Artist:
Cameron C.



Water color was used to create these delicate flowers. Artist: Josie H.





This fun wave art piece was created using clay in a medium named ceramics. Artist: Riley L.









the JAMS Awards, where students voted

By ALENA COX

for the most popular songs, movies, shows, and artists. What movies are peers watching, and how do they make students feel? The same goes for songs, shows, and music artists - how do they affect JAMS students? Are the movies popular or less well-known? So grab your popcorn and turn up the volume- JAMS students are watching, listening, and vibing to anything from chart-toppers to hidden gems, and they've got a lot to say about it!

In a recent survey, 23% of students said Disney movies were their favorite out of eight movie options. Disney movies include movies like 'Star Wars', 'Indiana Jones', 'Disney princess movies' (Moana, Repunzel, Tiana, etc.), and 'Toy Story'. Eighth grader Irene Lee said, "My favorite movie is Moana because the movie makes me feel adventurous and Moana faces challenges during her exploration." Through many years they came out with many hit movies and series like: 'The Lion King', 'Aladdin', 'Beauty and the Beast', 'Toy Story', and 'The Little Mermaid.' Marvel movies were second most voted by 22% of students. Movies made by Marvel include some like 'Avengers Endgame' and 'The Black Panther'. 6th grader, Ross Sulivan thought, "The movie is good because it doesn't follow the usual movie plot where the good guys win and bad guys lose."

In the same survey there was also a question about what shows are students favorites.

The show 'Young Sheldon' was the most popular by a large percent. Thirty four percent voted that



Young Sheldon was their favorite. The next most voted show is 'Stranger Things' with 23% of votes. Stranger Things premiered in July 2016, followed by three more seasons. Season 4 aired in May and July 2022, and the show was most popular that year. Season 5 will debut in two parts: the first six episodes on October 10, 2025, and the final two episodes on November 27, 2025.

The survey asked students to choose their favorite song from a list of eight options, with 23% voting for 'Luther' by Kendrick Lamar, it takes first place. In 2024, Luther was released on Kendrick

Chart Topping Songs

Like Him (feat. Lola Young) -Tyler, The Creator

BIRDS OF A FEATHER - Billie Eilish

Back To Friends - Sombr

Juno - Sabrina Carpenter

APT- ROSE, Bruno Mars

Die With A Smile - Lady Gaga, Bruno Mars

Anxiety - Doechii

EVIL JORDAN - Playboi Carti

The Giver - Chappell Roan

Pink Pony Club - Chappell Roan

NOKIA - Drake

Messy - Lola Young

That's so True - Gracie Abrams

Sticky - Tyler, The Creator, GloRilla, Sexyy Red. lil Wayne

Lamar's famous album 'GNX'. GNX is now the #1 album on the billboard 200

albums chart. Kendrick is also famous for making songs against or 'dissing' other famous rapper Drake.

The second most popular song is 'Like Him' by Tyler, the creator and Lola Young with 21%. In the hit album 'Chromakopia' Produced by Tyler, the Creator a popular song named 'Like Him' was released on the album. The song features famous artists 'Lola Young' and artists who sing popular song 'Messy.'

Lastly, when asked about favorite artists, the top answer was Kendrick Lamar with 17% of the votes. Kendrick has achieved major milestones, including 22 Grammy Awards, five of which he won at the most recent ceremony for his hit "Not Like Us," a song tied to his public feud with Drake, as both released diss tracks. The second most popular artist was Billie Eilish. Sixth grader Amelia Wolfe shared, "Billie Eilish is a popular music artist, and I think that her best album is HIT ME HARD AND SOFT. The songs have varied emotions depending on the vibe and lyrics." Billie's new album, HIT ME HARD AND SOFT, came out in May 2024. She's been a major figure in music for years, with her most famous album, When We Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?, released in 2019. Billie has won 10 Grammys and two Golden Globes. The survey results reflect shared tastes that help students form strong, trusting bonds. Media is such a big part of life at JAMS

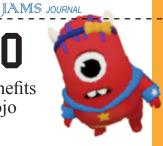


that favorite songs, shows, and movies often fuel friendships and fun conversations.



DOJO'S MOJO

JAMS perspectives on the benefits and drawbacks of Class Doio **By DELFINA CORDERO**



n the past, a good smack on the hand with a ruler by a teacher kept kids in Line. Thankfully, today's classrooms use technology to help students stay on task. One way is the app Class Dojo. While many teachers use it in preschool or kindergarten, fewer use it in middle school. At JAMS, only a couple of teachers use Class Dojo, so why is it still important?

Class Dojo offers a hands-on way to help kids focus and is enjoyable and interactive for students and parents alike. A survey showed most students think Class Dojo sounds fun, and many without it said they'd want it in their classrooms. However, sounding fun doesn't always mean it's beneficial.

Students raised three main concerns: it can make them feel inferior to peers, seem too childish for middle schoolers, and become a distraction. Some also found it unnecessary. Sixth grader Simona C. said, "There's more you can do with Google Classroom and other resources than Class Dojo." Eighth grader Savannah B. added, "It may seem immature or unnecessary and could take away from class time."

This may be true, but there are not many apps that help students focus in such an engaging way that inspires them to appreciate school. Seventh grader Yovani H. stated, "It separates everyone in the class and has the option to give or take away points. It's a little reminder to the teacher on who's acting good and who's not."

One main reason Class Dojo is so beneficial is because of the point system. For example, if you answer a question correctly, get to class on time, or listen to the teacher, you could earn Dojo points. Once you have enough points, you can redeem them based on your teacher's rules, for things like eating a snack, sitting with a friend, turning off Go Guardian, and more. This encourages better behavior because students know they'll be rewarded. It may seem childish, but who wouldn't want to sit with their friends?

So if Class Dojo is so great, why don't more teachers use it? First, it was only recently introduced at JAMS, so many teachers may not even know about it. Second, it's a different approach, and some teachers may hesitant to try a new classroom man-

agement tool. Mr. Cierra said, "Anytime students refer to Class Dojo, there's a lot of excitement, so I think it would be cool to learn more and see if it would be fun to use in my classroom."

Class Dojo also helps students and parents stay informed about what's

happening during the school day. Parents don't always know what their children are doing at school, but Class Dojo gives them a window in. Teachers can post photos of class activities, allowing parents to stay connected. This might even encourage teachers to plan more engaging lessons.

Is Class Dojo necessary? Maybe not, but it can definitely be useful. Many students find it fun, motivating, and a great way to stay engaged. Its interactive features help create a positive classroom environment and make learning more rewarding. While not all students feel it's essential, there's no doubt that for many, Class Dojo adds a fun and valuable layer to daily learning.

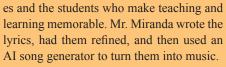
Mr. Miranda Dropped a Country Album Using Al

Seventh grade English teacher and journalism advisor Mr. Miranda has released a 10-track country album titled

18 MOON

Room 87 Blues and Hues. complete with a bonus track called "I Can't Play Fortnite". BLUES & HUES

The songs were inspired by his class-



He said he enjoyed the process and hopes his students will remember both the songs and their 7th grade year for a long time.

Scan the QR code and listen to the album

OPINION: Is CAASPP Testing Necessary?

Continued from page 5

approaches to teaching and learning"

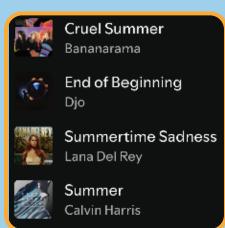
Another main factor for the CAASPP results is whether the test itself is the best measure of a student's abilities. Standardized tests like the CAASPP are designed to provide an objective measure of student performance. These tests often tend to fail to account for the diversity of students' learning styles and also students' backgrounds. For instance, a student's ability to perform well on a timed test may not reflect their full potential or knowledge, especially for those with learning differences or language barriers. "I think it gives you a piece of the information but I don't think any one test or one score can fully reflect all that a student has learned," Ms. Aguilar suggests. Moreover, the focus on testing can lead to a narrowed curriculum, where teaching becomes centered on test preparation rather than fostering valuable skills.

The CAASPP is one way to look at how students are doing. When we also consider how students learn and grow in different ways, we can create a fairer and a more complete picture of their success. But if we rely too heavily on one test to define achievement, are we overlooking the full potential of students and the deeper issues that are affecting their education?

JAMS Jamz

The JAMS Jamz playlist is a student-made collection designed to capture the perfect summer vibes.





24 June 2025 John Adams Middle School

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE!





AVID's March Madness heats up as Cooper S., Noah A., and Daniel M. battle for control of the basketball during the championship game.

ANSWER KEY

Look closely and see if you can find all 15 changes between the two pictures. Can you find them all? Look carefully; some are sneaky! into a scoreboard. 12/ Daniel is now wearing goggles. 13/ Daniel is also wearing a het. 14/ An arm on the left side of the picture is now robotic. 15/ Ms. Chacon is now wearing a hat.

1/ A clock has been added to the wall. 2/ Ms. Asher has been changed into a cheerleader. 3/ The logo on Nosh's hoodie has been removed. 4/ Nosh is now wearing a glove. 5/ Vincent has been changed into an old man. 6/ One student's hair color is now different. 7/ Cooper s hair has changed from curly to straight. 8/ Cooper s pants have changed into jeans. 9/ A tribal tattoo now appears on Cooper s forearm. 10/ A line that used to be next to Daniel has been removed. 11/ The exit sign has been changed

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