

The CAMS Chronicles

VOLUME I

Friday, December 19, 2024

ISSUE I

Two Weeks Overdue: Help or Harm?

Teachers, students respond to district move—for better or for worse

By MILAN MATSUMOTO
Staff Reporter

CARSON — Late assignments on teacher's desks. Students retaking tests after school. Talk of shifting due dates. These new topics are buzzing around CAMS since the groundbreaking grading policies were made official this year.

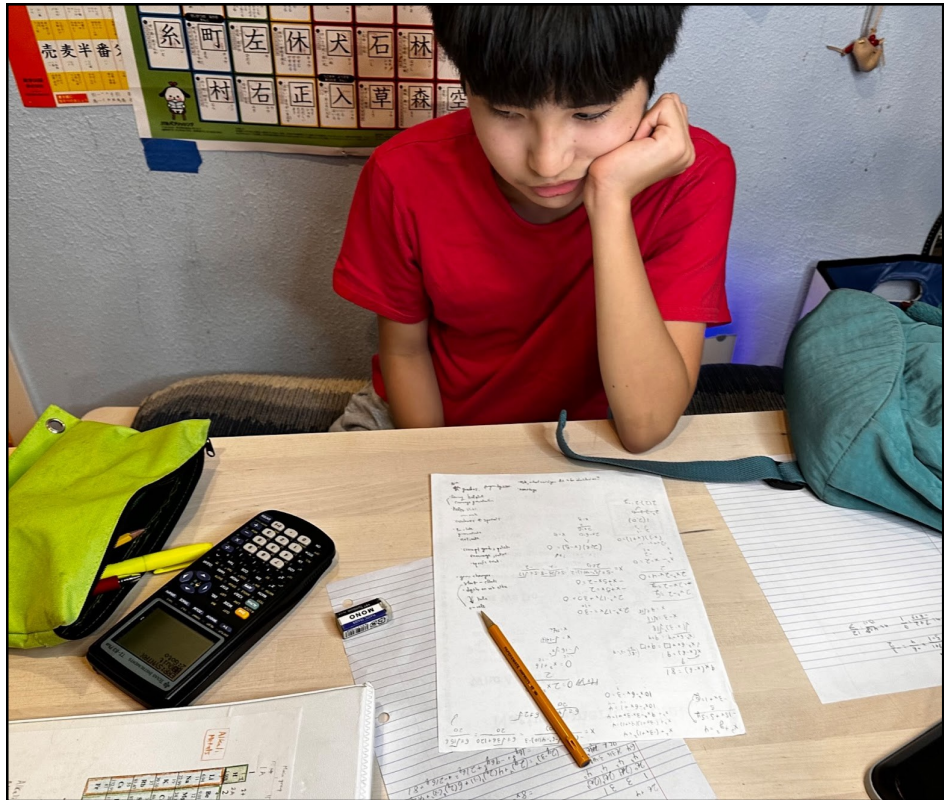
Under the new rules, students may turn in assignments two weeks past the due date, retake tests up to 75%, and receive at least 45% on missing work.

Teachers and students express support and caution towards Long Beach Unified School District's zealous decision.

"Once you turn in an assignment late and you don't feel any repercussions for it, I think it just opens the door to others," says one CAMS teacher, who wished to remain anonymous. They emphasized concern that student priorities and work health will slip with the new changes.

"You think that you're gonna have more time in the future to do what you need to do now."

Others have different views. "As we're a couple months into it now, I haven't felt the impact at all," said one upperclassman, pointing out that their work rigor hasn't changed and that most of their tests are quizzes, which can't be retaken. One student simply shrugged. "I've abused the



Students find their work backing up more and more with the recent policy change (Photo by author)

See Inside for

Student Life: De-stressing.....2

CAMS Student Trips With Mr. Almeida.....4

The SAT: How to do Your Best.....6

Join Us!.....8

(See Grades, Page 3)

The C.A.M.S Chronicles

VOLUME I

Friday, December 19, 2024

ISSUE I

Student Life: De-stressing

Statistics reveal top stress factors for students at CAMS

By CONAN ENARI
Staff Reporter

With a quarter of the school year complete, many students have, one way or another, gotten used to their new environment. For some, they're adjusting to the harder, more rigorous classes they have this year, such as their AP classes; for others, new extracurricular activities provide plenty to do throughout the week. Upperclassmen may be putting their efforts towards their academic futures by taking the SAT exam or completing the college admission/application processes. Regardless of grade, these experiences have led students to develop stress and a form of tightness. Hence, knowing how to and when to relieve the tension within our bodies is what allows us to persevere through difficult and nerve-racking experience.

To What Extent do Students Experience Stress?

Since the start of the school, the majority of people have either stated to have been pretty stressed, not as stressed, or a level in between. These responses characterize that while there are some students with a moderate stress level, there are also the same amount of students who do not feel as stressed.



Photo by Mateusz Dach from Pexels <https://www.pexels.com/photo/pair-of-red-and-white-low-top-sneakers-914929/>

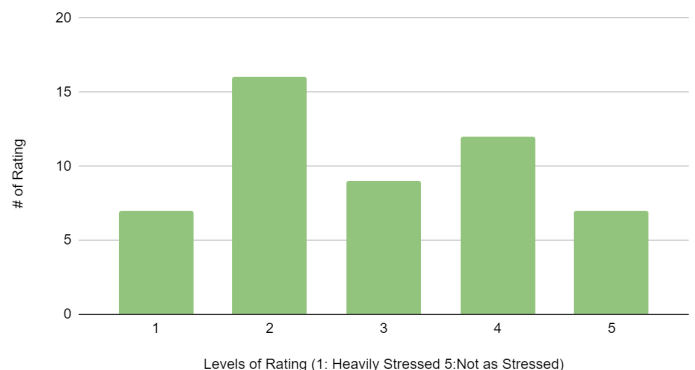
The data — gathered from students in C.A.M.S through Google forms — shown on the chart above, pictures a significant number of responses (16 out of 51 responses) reflecting students with stress to some degree. However, an almost equal amount also replied with a lesser degree of stress. In fact, 12 out of the 51 respondents had replied stating that they had a lower stress level. In addition, both extreme responses (Rating of 1 or 5) had the same number of responses. 7 responses stated being heavily under tension and 7 responses stated being under light stress. These counter opposing numbers show that while some students may be under stress, the same number of students can also be free of stress. This leads to the question...

What led to the different ratings from the students at our school?

When looking at the students who had rated a 3 or lower (more stressed), most had referred to the following

- An overwhelming volume of homework.
- Multitude of tests/exams.
- Managing extracurriculars with the limited time available.

Stress Levels: Rated 1 to 5



The CAMS Chronicles

VOLUME I

Friday, December 19, 2024

ISSUE I

- College preparation (applications, SAT, PSAT, etc).

Most students who had included these responses had also indicated their worries had then led to fluctuations in their grades, leading many students to develop a higher degree of distress.

When looking at students who had responded with a rating of 4 or 5 (less stressed), their activities had consisted of:

- Holding a positive mindset.
- Preparing themselves for their best.
- Placing anything they think under action:
- Applying self reflection.

- Understanding their passions very clearly.

While these students also agree upon the activities which induce stress, the characteristics above have helped them maintain lower levels of stress.

Even if we understand how students are experiencing more stress or maintaining a lower stress level, what should we do? How should stressed students act?

Advice from Fellow Students:

As a student in this school, I understand that there may be differences to the extent in whether us students can overcome these struggles and place our thoughts into action. It may be much easier for one student to maintain a certain status,

while it may be increasingly difficult for another.

The important aspect is to understand yourself. Knowing your current state, your passions, your strengths and weaknesses, and ultimately yourself can help you in tough times that will come and maintain your motivation.

To close this discussion up, here is some advice from students at our school on their ways to deal with stress.

Try the best to stay organized on assignments and other objectives; incorporate something to keep you aware in your routine.

Enjoy your present by engaging in hobbies, pas-

sions, and/or doing something that soothes your mind.

Find something beneficial to yourself, something you can work on yourself for.

Prioritize your mental health. It is okay to take a break; a single test score may not be worth risking your happiness for.

Refer to someone who you feel comfortable with and is willing to talk things out.

(Friends, Family, Teachers, etc)

Finally...

There are others who are going or have gone through the same thorny path!

Grading, continued

two week grading policy, and I'm loving it."

The new policies at CAMS are the largest grading change made to LBUSD's rulebook in the last twenty years. They reflect a nationwide conversation to reform how teachers handle A's and B's.

The changes are intended to make the system fairer for all students, especially people of color and people with disabilities. The district adopted the policy after being inspired by the book *Grading for Equity* by Joe Feldman, which argues certain students receive bias from teachers and can easily be failed under traditional grading. The District believes their Board Policy 5121 will address that.

For some, the policy has been the blessing the District was

hoping for. "Life changing," explained Brooklyn. "It's a great opportunity to keep my grades up."

Others hesitate. "I think the concept is good, I think [the District] just needs to polish it a bit more," said an underclassman. "I do think that it helps students quite a bit but it doesn't help teachers because they have way more work turned in during a certain period of time."

Grade reform is nothing new—talk of reforms has been bubbling around for the past decade, and rose to prevalence after many students got record low grades during distance learning. Many districts have already adopted new policies. Monterey Unified converted to a four point system over the traditional 100 percent, and across California

districts are considering dropping D and F grades from the gradebooks.

However, LBUSD is the first to make a bold and definite move—to explicitly require test retakes and strictly enforce late work acceptances across all secondary schools. That makes it the first and only one in LA.

Down at the school level, teachers and students must adjust to the new philosophy. "I thought it's a nice leeway in case you ever do mess up," mused one underclassman, "but I do think it encourages late work, because it takes some stress and urgency off of the students."

When asked how this will affect Long Beach, their friend replied "I think it's really hard to say because obviously

there's going to be changes since this is new." They admitted that they do procrastinate, but for other students "there could be a negative or a positive effect, depending on their work ethic."

"Life changing...a great opportunity."

Since 2021, LBUSD has endeavored on several policy making and activities—from counseling to diverse employment to community input—in pursuit of "excellence and equity." The grading policy is just one piece of the District's effort. Leveling the playing field for all students regardless of race, gender, or any other characteristics is a major goal of the district. They especially want to phase out practices that have been "racist, oppressive, and exclusive for specific individuals or

The CAMS Chronicles

VOLUME I

Friday, December 19, 2024

ISSUE I



Student Trips

By NAVIN
KARTHIKEYAN
Staff Reporter

CAMS students can travel abroad with Education First Travel, enriching their experiences. In an interview, Mr. Almeida, our AP World History and Psychology teacher, discussed how these trips enhance cultural understanding and personal growth by connecting classroom lessons to real-world experiences. He explained the impact of travel and why students should explore.

groups of students,” namely Black, Indigenous, people of color, and those with disabilities.

It’s unclear where CAMS will go after this fall. Teachers will get a chance to redefine their lesson plans to include “minor” tests (i.e. quizzes), which are not eligible for retakes. Students will also have time to restructure their work style around the new deadlines and expectations.

The interviewed teacher ended the conversation with a forethought: “I still haven’t seen a positive effect, but maybe it’s still too new. We’re still seeing how it’s being played out. Maybe in a year or next year, we’ll start to see a trend... and then we’ll have a clearer picture.”

One thing is for sure: used or abused, Board Policy 5121 is here to stay, for now.

Q. What student trips does Education First Travel offer?

A. “First, we went to Ecuador because it provided a service-learning component and that was once a high school requirement. I thought that it would be interesting to conduct service abroad, like the Peace Corps, but in a short stint, not a year-long commitment. After that, we did some excursions to Europe which are mostly tourist-driven. Now, the programs I offer have a strong STEM, Robotics focus. The recent trips to Tokyo and Seoul offer students a glimpse into the future of robotics and science in those countries. Now, other teachers have gained interest in student travel too and we currently have offerings to Europe and Latin America, as well.”

Q. What are some benefits of going to these trips?

A. “I think the biggest benefit is exploring the world and seeing different cultures, or ways of doing things elsewhere. Secondly, students gain confidence in traveling and becoming more independent in their lives. Of course, there is a big educational component and students learn a lot about the places they visit. Museums are often a place of quick learning, but also just getting around a new city, speaking a different language, and enjoying new cuisines broadens our horizons and makes us more tolerant, compassionate human beings.”

The CAMS Chronicles

VOLUME I

Friday, December 19, 2024

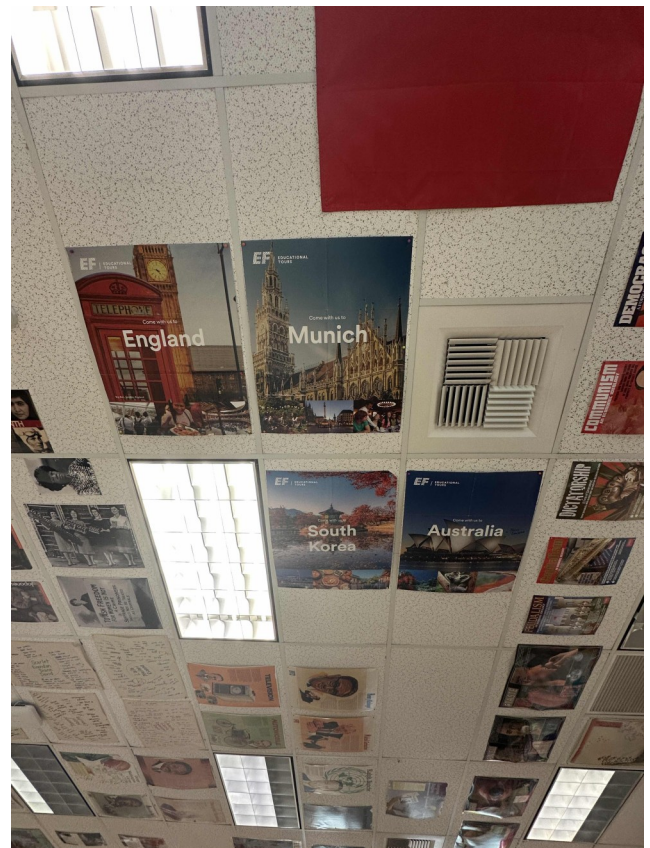
ISSUE I

Q. When do these trips happen, and for how long?

A. “All these trips are during the summer. CAMS students have lots of options to do many things during their summer months. Now, they can consider travel. Travel has many benefits which will be summarized below. The trips are 11-14 days long, so there is still plenty of summer time to do internships, summer classes, and go to the beaches.”

Q. Talk about your experiences in previous student trips.

A. “The last trips to Tokyo were very educational. We saw robots, learned about bullet trains, visited many science museums, and traveled around a completely nicely-run city, like Tokyo. It gives us ideas about our cities and how they can improve. We also visited the DMZ, the border between North and South Korea, and saw up close the tensions of past war and conflicts still simmering in this region of East Asia. All the students dressed in traditional Korean outfits and took lots of pictures. It was a hot day, so I did not do it, but everyone had a great time posing and wearing atypical clothes. Recently, we went to Australia and New Zealand and it was adventurous and fun. Depending on where you go I think determines the theme and focus of the trip. Down under, we relaxed, hiked, snorkeled, surfed, zip-lined, and went on several boat rides. The highlight was black water rafting in dark tunnels with only the luminescence of the glow worms above us in the dark caves.”



The CAMS Chronicles

VOLUME I

Friday, December 19, 2024

ISSUE I

EDITORIAL

By NOAH ABELLA
Staff Reporter

*Note: Editorial pieces are opinion pieces written by our staff. Not all ideas represented in an editorial are held by all members on our staff.

Why The SAT is Important

Throughout the modern history of college admissions, SAT scores have always been a major factor in deciding whether you get into your dream college or shot down by a cold hearted admissions committee. And throughout the decades, the American population of high schoolers who plan to attend college has increased by a great deal. Although times have changed since then and SAT scores aren't the massive deciding factor they used to be, it's still important to do well enough where colleges take you seriously. My first piece of advice is to...

Pace Yourself

The SAT is a timed exam, meaning that time management is crucial in determining whether or not you can do well. The English portion of the SAT is 65 minutes long and has 54 questions, and the Math portion is 70 minutes long with 44 questions. With this in mind, you should be spending about 1.2 minutes on each reading question and 1.6 minutes per question on each math question. Although I recommend this, keep in mind that there is

The SAT: How to Do Your Best



no need to track every single minute, the test makers gave you the amount of time you have for a reason, you shouldn't have much difficulty finishing. In fact, you should...

Take a Breather if You Need One

It probably sounds wrong to take a break in the middle of a timed test, but if you're feeling highly stressed, it may actually be beneficial to lean back and relax for a little. It's worth losing a minute or 2 of time if it helps you perform better throughout the test as a whole; in fact, it may

even help you finish quicker so you can go back and check your answers. To effectively refresh your brain, you should take a few deep breaths, close your eyes, and imagine something calming. (It sounds stupid, but it works.) Just make sure to...

Study Right

Studying is the best way of all to assure you get a good score. After all, all the mental conditioning in the world can't help you if you don't have the basics on lock. To learn these basics, I

recommended studying SAT Prep Books in the months or weeks before the test and making use of online practice tests. Khan Academy's SAT courses are especially helpful to strengthen your fundamentals. These practice tests and resources help, but what can help even more is...

Knowing the Test

The SAT is a standardized test, meaning that it will always test the same basic domains each year. For Mathematics, those domains are Algebra, Advanced Math, Problem Solving/Data Analysis, and Geometry/Trigonometry. For English those domains are Craft/Structure, Information/Ideas, Standard

"The difficulty of the SAT comes down to the person"

The CAMS Chronicles

VOLUME I

Friday, December 19, 2024

ISSUE I

English Conventions, and Expression of Ideas. Although this is important, equally important is...

Knowing Your Strengths and Weaknesses

The difficulty of the SAT comes down to the person, especially when determining which portion of the test is harder than the other. Since this is the California Academy of MATH and Science, most students here perform quite a bit better in Mathematics than English, but you as an individual may be different. If you see you are weak in a specific area, practice that area until it becomes one of your strengths. If you do all of this properly, you can...

Just Relax

Odds are, if you're a student at CAMS, you're quite capable when it comes to academics. There's no need to panic; as long as you work earnestly, you can achieve your goals. I earnestly believe that there is nothing we can't accomplish if we set our minds to it. Also keep in mind that you can try...

Advice From Upperclassmen

1. "Try taking an ACT!!! Depending on your test-taking style (it's not pseudoscience trust) you might do much

better on the other standardized test. For a personal anecdote, my best SAT of 3 tries is 1520, but on the first try without studying I got 35 (all subjects 35) ACT."

2. "Depends on person but anywhere from 5-20 tests On reading/writing, I personally start with grammar (Q15-27) before doing comprehension"

3. "Generally, you want to prepare for the SAT by doing multiple SAT practice tests in the weeks leading up to the exam. As you study and review you may notice that you are strong in one area but weak in another, study areas you struggle in."

4. "Khan Academy is Your Best Friend. Reviewing Algebra 1/2 and Geometry before the test is EXTREMELY helpful."

5. "Ideally you should be able to finish all of the questions in half of the time the section allows; though sections like Math module 2 can be difficult to do that quickly. Lastly, watch out for weird point slope form/parabola vertex form equations in math where you need to plug things in for x, they can be pretty unintuitive to solve at first."

6. "Practice practice practice! After reading one or two good strategy books (I recommend the Black Book), everything else comes down to how much

practice you do and how much time you spend reviewing your answers. (I've taken ~20 tests between practices and actual sessions)"

7. "One last thing from me, make use of..."

[How to Deal with Test Anxiety](#)

[Pictures of Dogs](#)

Helpful Resources

[SAT Score Percentiles](#)

[Khan Academy](#)

[SAT Math/English Domains](#)

[SAT Practice Test](#)

Our Staff

Isaiah Choung
Editor-in-Chief

Reporters

Noah Abella

Conan Enari

Navin Karthikeyan

Milan Matsumoto

Layout Design

Milan Matsumoto

The CAMS Chronicles

VOLUME I

Friday, December 19, 2024

ISSUE I

JOIN OUR TEAM!

Interested in writing articles?
Want to have your creative works
featured in the next issue?

Contact Isaiah Choung, *CAMS Chronicles*
Editor-in-Chief, here:

Email: 201200995@lbschools.net

Discord: hiseongjeong

Text: (424) 475 - 3148