MIT MIDDLE SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES & TECHNOLOGY
A VAUGHN NEXT CENTURY LEARNING CENTER CHARTER SCHOOL

The MIT Press

Final Issue! June 2025

SBAC Testing
By: Camila De Los Santos

From May 12 - May 22, MIT took part in SBAC/CAST testing. Students in 6th and 7th grade took English and Math tests. Students in 8th grade took English and Math tests as well, but they also had to take an additional Science test. This year instead of testing all day, we only had to test in our English and Math classes.

7th grader Diego Partida said he preferred this year's testing schedule to last year's. "It helped to have more breaks, and not be testing in every class." Jonathan Barba, 7th grade, agreed and said it was nice to have fewer classes per day during testing.

Before SBAC testing, on Friday, May 9, MIT had an SBAC Kickoff during Advisory. At the SBAC Kickoff the cheerleaders performed and there were also some music students with their instruments.

"It took us about two weeks to practice the routine for the kick-off," says 7th grade cheerleader Katherine Zambrano. She says she enjoyed being part of the performance.

Students could earn points every day during SBAC testing by coming to school on time, having a fully charged Chromebook, and following the 3 Bs. On May 27, after testing was over, students who earned 80% of their points were given ice cream as a reward.

MIT's First Tech Social
By: Mia Lopez

MIT had our first Tech Social ever on April 30, 2025. The tech social was located in the MPR during 5th period. It was for students who had earned the majority of their JAG points by keeping up with their planners and clearing their red stamps. During that time they were able to use their personal devices during school hours. Students who attended the tech social were also given cookies. They were so good!



7th graders (from left) Kimberly Herrera, Izabella Duran, Kaleyann Marquez, and Lylah White enjoy time on their phones at the Tech Social.

Photo Credit: Ms. Marroquin

I asked a few students their opinion on this event. Emily Vieyra said, "It was a little boring because no one was really interacting with each other. Everyone was just on their phones." When asked about improvements we could make for future events, she said she preferred physical games instead of phone time, to help students interact with each other.

Emily Hernandez said, "It was fun because we got to use our phones." I personally think it was cool because I was able to use my phone and I got to skip math class. I think the school should definitely do this again. It was a fun experience overall.

Orchestra Competition at Magic Mountain
By: Karen Armenta

On May 2, the MIT Symphonic Orchestra performed at Hart High School where they earned a Silver Rating, then spent the rest of the day at Magic Mountain. Ruby Dominguez, 8th grade, won an award for Outstanding Musicianship on the double bass. Andrea Plascencia, 7th grade, said they prepared for the competition by practicing over and over during Flex.



Ruby Dominguez wins Outstanding Musicianship

Photo Credit: Mrs. Plotke

"It was pretty overwhelming, because we had never performed in front of judges before, but it was all right in the end," said Sophia Hernandez, 7th grade. "I liked playing arcade games at Magic Mountain after we performed," said Andrea Plascencia.

Mrs. Plotke was proud of her orchestra students, and shared her inspiration for becoming an orchestra teacher. She got a Bachelor's degree in Music Performance and did not plan to become a teacher, but she volunteered teaching trumpet and trombone to elementary kids. "I said, 'Yes,' and I fell in love with teaching," she shared. "My biggest life lesson from this journey is when there is an opportunity to volunteer, TAKE IT! It might just change your life, and at the least give you knowledge for the future."

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Opinion: Should Parents Post Their Children on Social Media?

Parents Should Post Their Kids on Social Media; Here's Why

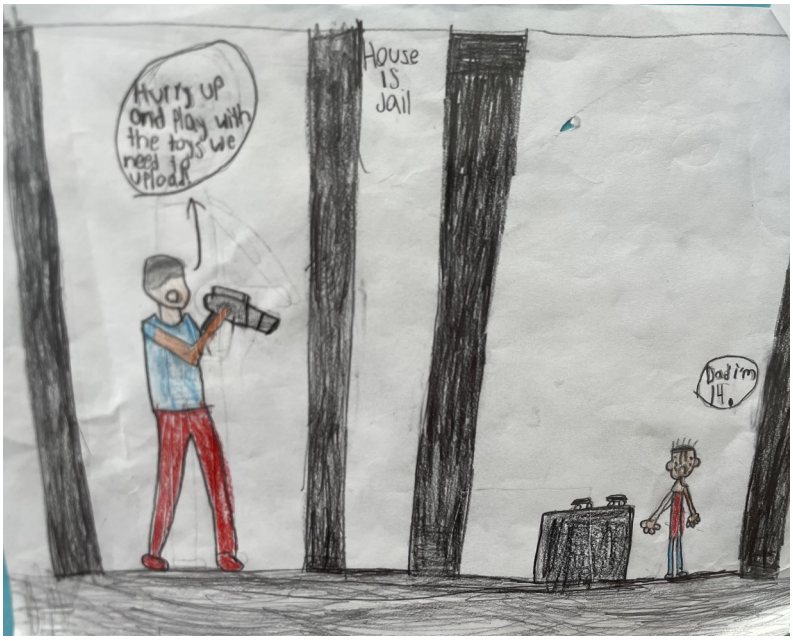
By: Deonna Pollard and Roselyn Cruz

Some parents are active on social media just like teenagers are. They mostly post photos of their kids as they grow, family vacations, and other fun events. There can be some negatives about parents posting their children online but, here are some upsides to parents posting their kids.

First of all, when parents post photos of their kids online, it creates a digital scrapbook that helps keep track of fun moments throughout their kids' lives. Social media provides a more convenient way to save these memories. Social media apps like Facebook and Instagram allow parents to monitor their child's growth, accomplishments, and special events. So this makes it easier for parents to relive these moments and look back at them.

Second of all, parents posting photos of their kids on social media can build a parenting community. Sharing family photos on social media with your kids in the photo can make a platform for parents to share advice, support and experiences. This is good for the parents to get advice and guidance from other parents with more experience on how to raise their child to be the best.

Lastly, parents posting their kids on social media can help their kid to feel confident in themselves. Posting your child's achievements and skills can make the kid feel confident. This would be good for the kid because other parents online will be positive and support the kid. This can build a supportive community online.



Editorial Cartoon
by Miguel Padilla

Caption:
Father: "Hurry up and play with the toys, we need to upload!"

Son: "Dad, I'm 14."

This cartoon shows the harms of parent influencers viewing their children as "content" instead of letting them be kids.

***Description**: A father holds a video camera to film his son as "content."*

Why Parents Shouldn't Post Their Kids Online

By: Jazmane Solis and Jaslyn Castellanos

Parents all over the world post their kids all over social media. They do this because most parents like to show off how cute their kids are. However, some parents use their kids for clout. We believe that parents all over the world should stop posting their under-aged kids without consent.

One reason is what if the kid that the parent is posting grows up and doesn't want to be on the internet for the whole world to see? Having videos of your younger self online could be embarrassing and could even lead to bullying.

Another reason is these pictures and videos could make kids feel insecure about themselves. For example, if a parent is posting their child crying and throwing a tantrum, the child might look back at the video and feel uncomfortable or depressed. Some parents violate their kids' privacy by sharing their personal information, which can lead to the kid feeling unsafe.

A lot of parents that are posting their child are too invested in getting more likes and views. Parents that do this are neglecting their child and it can cause the child to be sad and even depressed. These parents should spend less time on their phones and more time taking care of their children.

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Sports News

Top Soccer Moments of 2025 (So Far)
By: Alejandro Navarro and Andre Martinez

These are some of the most notable moments in soccer this year:

3. Club America made it to the final on May 18 after beating Cruz Azul in the semi final. In the first round Cruz-Azul beat America 2-0, but Club America returned with a surprising comeback, winning in a 2-1 victory.

2. Barcelona beat Real Madrid with a score of 4-3 on May 11. This was very notable because of the fame of both teams. This was a special win because it was unexpected. Real Madrid has won more games against Barcelona in their entire career. Their games usually end in a draw, so to see Barcelona score four goals against one of the best teams with so much talent was very surprising.

1. Tottenham beat Man United, with a score of 1-0, on May 21. Tottenham has not won a single trophy in 17 years, so this was a huge win for them.



Photo Credit: youtube.com

Feature News

Fun Summer Activities
By: Emily Hernandez and Emily Vieyra

When people think of summer, most think of the heat, the beach, and swimming pools. But in reality there is more to summer than just the heat. Here are some activities that you can do this summer.

1st activity: Summer Camp
There are campsites at Sylmar Park, and the price is $90 to get in the camp. Gear Up will also be hosting an academic camp which is totally **free**, where students will go on field trips every Friday to college campuses, aquariums, and other fun locations.

2nd activity: Theme Parks
You could go to Universal Studios, Disneyland, or Six Flags. The prices would range from $109 to $154 dollars per person.

3rd activity: Beach
There are multiple beaches in our area but the most common one is Santa Monica. Some activities to do while at the beach include bringing snacks, playing games, taking pictures, and going in the ocean.

4th activity: Picnic
There are good parks to have a picnic, but we recommend Paxton Park. At the park you can play soccer or volleyball, play games, or have a water balloon fight.

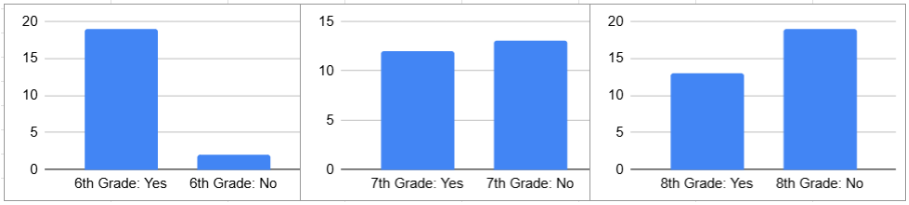
5th activity: Baking
You can bake with friends or family in your house. Some baking ideas are brownies, cookies, or homemade ice cream with heavy cream, whole milk, sugar, vanilla extract, and some salt to make the flavors pop.

6th activity: Sleep Over
Invite your friends for a sleepover. You can play video games, truth or dare, bake cookies or cupcakes, watch movies, make face masks or bracelets, build a pillow fort, do makeovers, and have a great time! This a fun, cheap way to hang out with friends.

Surveys and Polls

Should Parents Post Their Children on Social Media?
By: Valentina Serrano, Aarilyn Cortez, and Leilani Lopez

We surveyed students of all grades on the question, "Should Parents Post Their Children On Social Media?" The majority of students from 7th-8th said 'no,' while the majority of 6th grade said 'yes.'



Jazmane Solis, a 7th grader said, "No, because the kid might not want to (be posted on social media) and it could cause bullying. If the kid is too young, it could cause mental problems."

Local and National News

Trump orders cuts to federal funding for PBS
By: Angela Guerra

PBS supports children and their learning by helping children from ages 2-8 learn lessons that will last them a lifetime. PBS KIDS wants children to see themselves uniquely reflected and celebrated in loveable characters who serve as positive role models.

On May 1, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to cut federal funding for National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), making a longtime conservative complaint about government-funded media even stronger and starting a new fight about whether the press can stay independent and answer to the public.

This is going to impact children and PBS viewers because they will lose their access to programming. This especially impacts low-income families, who can't always afford daycare and benefit from the educational children's shows that PBS provides. If you want to support PBS, you can post stories about PBS KIDS, donate to PBS, call your representatives, or send a message to Congress through https://protectmypublicmedia.org.

Photo Credit: wjla.com



Juneteenth
By: Angela Guerra



Photo Credit: southshorecva.com

Juneteenth is a day of celebration and reflection on African American history and culture, marking a significant step towards freedom and equality. It is a time to honor the contributions of Black Americans, while also acknowledging the ongoing struggle for justice and equity. Juneteenth has become a widely celebrated holiday. Juneteenth commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans in the United States, specifically the arrival of Union troops in Galveston, Texas, in 1865, announcing the freedom of enslaved people there. It is also known as Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, and Juneteenth National Independence Day. This event occurred two and a half years after president Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, signifying the effective end of slavery in the Confederate states.

Juneteenth this year is celebrated Thursday, June 19, 2025. You can celebrate Juneteenth by attending local event, supporting black-owned-businesses, learning about the holiday's history, and engaging in community activities.

Cardinal Robert Prevost becomes Pope Leo XIV
By: David Rivera

On April 21, 2025, Pope Francis died at the age of 88. He was the head of the Catholic church for 12 years. On May 8, 2025, the new pope, Leo XIV (Cardinal Robert Prevost), was elected as the first American pope, after two days of decision by the top cardinals in the Catholic Church.

Pope Leo XIV was born in Chicago and is 69 years old. Some issues that he cares strongly about are church unity, synodality (meaning all members of the church are called to participate, not just the cardinals and bishops), and church reform. One of the quotes that shows what he values as pope is a quote he gave to the Order of St Augustine: "Do not be afraid to say yes. Do not be afraid to open your heart to the possibility that the Lord is calling you to religious life. . .or to other forms of service in the Church."

Pope Leo XIV is expected to move into the papal apartments in the Apostolic Palace. Pope Francis did not live in these apartments, because he preferred to live in a more simple room at the Vatican Hotel, for his psychological health.

In the NPR article, "U.S. cardinals react to the new pope being from Chicago," NPR religion correspondent Jason DeRose said that Catholics feel "a respect, fidelity and love. . .toward the pope, whether from the U.S. or from elsewhere."

Photo Credit: cnn.com



Vaughn Profiles

M.I.T Social Studies Teacher, Ms. Danayan, Finishes Her First Year at Vaughn
By: Andrea Plascencia

"When I was young, my family didn't have a lot of money, but I did have teddy bears. So I used to pretend that I was a teacher, and I was teaching them," says Ms. Danayan.

Ms. Danayan is a 7th grade history teacher and leadership teacher. I asked her if she likes being a teacher. "Yes, I like making a difference in people's lives and I like teaching history," she says. Ms. Danayan likes teaching at Vaughn. Some of the challenges are student absences and the times when students don't make the best choices, but she likes her students and the staff here.

Ms. Danayan is also a leadership teacher. Her students in leadership have made many fun events that we've had over the school year. I asked Ms. Danayan what her favorite leadership events were. "I think when we had themed lunch activities for every day of Hispanic Heritage," says Ms. Danayan.

In Ms. Danyan's class she has "class jobs," where she offers students in her class options of jobs that they can choose. Some jobs are Table Captain (making sure the tables are neat and straight), Attendance Helper, T.A (teacher's assistant), and many more. After each trimester the helpers get prizes for their hard work, then Ms. Danayan chooses other people to have jobs for the next trimester.

Ms. Danayan is a very nice, funny, hardworking teacher and tries her best on everything. Over all, Ms. Danayan is a great 7th grade history and leadership teacher.



Photo provided by Ms. Danayan

What to Expect From 8th Grade: Tips from Cristian Martinez
By: Andre Martinez

"Do the assignments and don't let them get late. Also try getting extra credit in classes."

Cristian Martinez is an 8th grader about to finish his time at MIT, and he is also my brother. This is his best advice for incoming 8th graders.

I asked him how he feels about culminating and he said, "Nervous but nice." He is excited for high school and looking forward to "Having a good future and getting good grades."

I also asked him what 7th graders could expect during the 8th grade and he stated, "They need to try harder in i-Ready and in their grades because they count for high school and getting a good career."

I asked him what were some fun activities that he did in 8th grade, and he said he liked going to the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, and going to Grad Nite. "8th grade was pretty fun," he said. "Although there were lots of assignments I had to do, there were events which compensated for it. We had an event where we got to have our phones out, and we had an event where there were tons of inflatables. Sometimes it was boring, such as staying in class for i-Ready and the CAST test. Although they are important, you are sitting and answering the questions for two straight hours, which does become boring after some time. But overall, 8th grade was pretty fun."

Cristian Martinez (back row, third from left) and his classmates
Photo Credit: Vaughn Instagram



Arts & Entertainment

***Red Dead Redemption 2* Overrated?**
By: Miguel Padilla



Photo Credit: npr.com

Red Dead Redemption 2 is one of the biggest and best games of all time. It earned this title because of how realistic it is, its story, characters, action, beauty, and just how fun it is to drag people with a rope on your horse. I have played the game for hours and finished the story many times and I just love it. It is one of my favorite games ever. It's a long story, it 's entertaining and really fun because you can really do anything. The game doesn't force you to do the story mission, and you can play for hours just starting gun fights or running from the law while riding on top of a train shooting a machine gun. Its high graphics and fun characters make it an addictive game. I like *Red Dead* and it will always be one of my favorite games.

Some people say this game is overrated or overly hyped. In the beginning the game can be a little slow, so some people don't even try the rest of the game, which leads them to say that the game has boring gameplay. They don't like how realistic it is because they want crazy and wild explosions and don't want the game to look like real life. I don't really understand why people don't like the realism. It's just cool to see how real it looks.

In conclusion, you should try out *Red Dead Redemption 2*. Just get through the first two hours. Trust me, it's worth it, because it has a great story and great characters that you will both hate and love.

Captain America: Brave New World
By: Sophia Hernandez



Photo Credit: movieposters.com

Each time a new Marvel movie comes out, I will be willing to watch it no matter what. A new movie came out 4 months ago and I just watched it a few days ago. *Captain America: Brave New* World is a movie about Sam Wilson (the new Captain America) who has found himself in an international incident. The main characters are Sam Wilson, Joaquin Torres, Sabra, Thaddeus Ross, and Sterns. Three things that I enjoyed about the movie were the funny moments, the CGI, and the acting. I thought that there were some jokes and it made me laugh. I also thought that the CGI and acting were very impressive. It seemed like the events were actually happening. There were a lot of action scenes, but the fighting scenes were too slow, even though Sam Wilson could have taken two villains at a time. This movie continues the Marvel lore, but it just doesn't feel the same without Steve Rogers. I would recommend this movie for pre-teens that are at least 13 and up. Overall this movie was a 3.5 out of 5.

Metal Singer Poppy Launches Variety Show, *Improbably Poppy*
By: Kayla Guevarra



Photo Credit: variety.com

Former YouTuber and current metal singer-songwriter Poppy launched her show, *Improbably Poppy* on October 11th, 2024. This show will stream on platforms such as Veeps and YouTube. The show is directed by Poppy herself and former Bring Me the Horizon member, Jordan Fish. It stars Poppy and her puppet friends, Alma, Mo, Owl, and Zuzu.

Improbably Poppy is described as, "A complex knot of comedy, subversive commentary, and music. A show where we'll learn, listen, live, laugh, and love probably," according to Poppy. She already has a couple of episodes out already that include, "Taking Risk," "Education," "Free Will," "Hygiene," "Growing Up," and "Nature."

The episode, "Taking Risk," which happens to be my favorite episode, is about Poppy going into the streets of Los Angeles and offering fortunes, talking about her beef with Grimes (singer and former wife of Elon Musk), and teaching her viewers about taking risks.

Poppy has stated that this show means a lot to her because it celebrates her recent tours such as, "They're All Around Us Tour," "Zig Zag Tour," and "Concrete Forever Tour."

Poppy fans, also known as "Poppy Seeds," are very excited to see what Poppy has to offer next.

Is *God of War: Ragnarok* Worth Your Money?
By: William Diaz and David Ramirez

God of War: Ragnarok takes place in Norse mythology, after the events of *God of War* (2018). We love the way the *God of War* franchise is fast paced but does not feel like the story is rushed. The same is true for *Ragnarok*.

Another thing to love about *Ragnarok* is how unique and creative the environment is. One hour you're sledding in the snowy mountains of Midgard, and the next you're in Svartalfheim, the humid realm of the dwarves, looking for a god to save the nine realms.

This game is amazing, from the story and the emotional side of the game, to the impressive voice acting and mechanics. All the boss fights in this game have a very heavy impact on the story of the game. Overall this game is an all around 20/10, and you should definitely spend your money on this game.