

Optional Scholars Newsletter

2025-2026

Quarter 2



All Optional Scholars are enrolled in Honors courses which help prepare them for High School and College. An expectation of an Honors course is completion of at least one honors project a semester.

Optional Scholars also complete a project each semester as a component of International Studies, which they participate in throughout the year and culminate in the International Festival!

Poster Projects were due January 8, 2026. 😊

Optional Scholars participate in International Studies, learning about the cultures of others in our world. Our focus countries for the year are:

- 6th grade – Egypt
- 7th grade – Turkey
- 8th grade – Trinidad and Tobago
- Memphis in May 2026 – Ireland

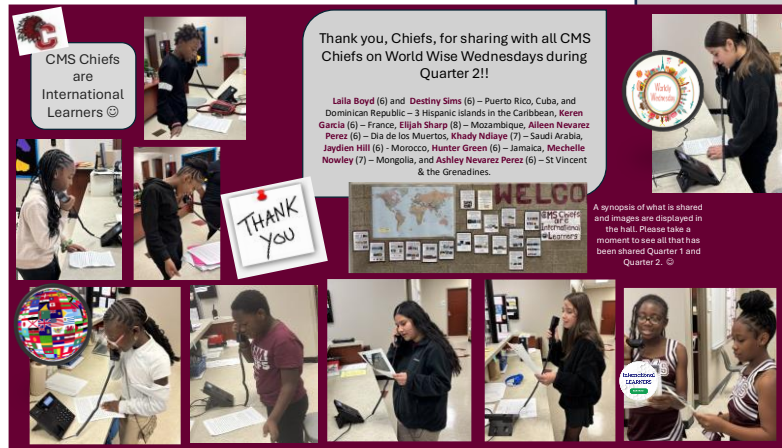


We are...
College and Career Ready
Motivated
Students

Who are...
Collaborative
Helpful
International Learners
Engaged
Focused and
Striving for Success

CMS Chiefs are International Learners! Chiefs learn about other places and cultures in their daily lessons and through World Wise Moments, usually on Wednesdays. Volunteers choose a topic to share with their peers over the intercom during morning announcements. A synopsis of what they share is displayed in the hall if you would like to see what we have learned!

Thank you, Quarter 2 volunteers:
Laila Boyd (6) and **Destiny Sims** (6) – Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Dominican Republic – 3 Hispanic islands in the Caribbean, **Keren Garcia** (6) – France, **Elijah Sharp** (8) – Mozambique, **Aileen Nevarez Perez** (6) – Dia de los Muertos, **Khady Ndiaye** (7) – Saudi Arabia, **Jaydien Hill** (6) - Morocco, **Hunter Green** (6) – Jamaica, **Mechelle Nowley** (7) – Mongolia, and **Ashley Nevarez Perez** (6) – St Vincent & the Grenadines.



“International Bites” for Optional Scholars
 Optional Scholars receive information “bites” about the highlighted country and taste “bites” from the culture. 😊



Tour Guides for **October** were **Kingston Lockett** (8), **Jakylah Payton** (8), and **Kameron Echols** (8) with the destination being **Spain!**



Informational Bites – Barcelona, Spain is home to the Sagrada Familia. The church began construction in 1882 and is still not completed! Did you know? - A magical mouse named Ratoncito Pérez collects lost teeth from children in exchange for a small gift or money in Spain. Madrid (Spain’s capital) is home to Sobrino de Botín, recognized by the Guinness World Records as the world’s oldest continuously operating restaurant, having opened in 1725. On New Year’s Eve, Spaniards eat one grape with each of the twelve chimes at midnight to attract good fortune for the upcoming year. Guernica, a painting by Pablo Picasso, shows the tragedies of war and the suffering it inflicts upon individuals, particularly innocent civilians. The painting helped bring the Spanish Civil War (1936 – 1939) to the world’s attention.



Tasty Bites – Kingston and his mom, **Ms. Morton** (CMS’s awesome Media Specialist!) prepared magnificent

tortilla de patatas, also known as a Spanish potato omelet. It is a national treasure in Spain celebrated for its “rustic simplicity and comforting flavors”. A Spanish tortilla is made from just a few simple, high-quality ingredients: thinly sliced potatoes, eggs, and rich olive oil. Thank you so much, **Kingston and Ms. Morton** for preparing this for all Optional scholars to try! To drink, scholars sampled Horchata. In Spain it is made with soaked, ground, and sweetened tiger nuts (which are actually small, edible tubers from the root of the yellow nutsedge plant!)



Chiefs Believe! Chiefs Achieve!



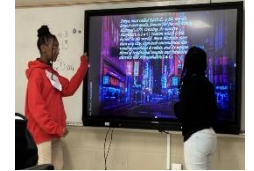
Bryce Johnson (7) and **Deterrio Davis** (7) were our tour guides to **Nepal** in **November**.

Informational Bites - Did you know that Nepal’s flag is the only flag that is not a rectangular shape? Two triangles represent the Himalayas and the two major religions of the country, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Mount Everest and the Himalayan Mountains form the northern border between Nepal and China. Buddhism was founded in the 6th century by Siddhartha Gautama, who is commonly known as the Buddha, meaning "the Awakened One". He lived in Lumbini. Buddhism is one of the major religions in Nepal, and Nepal is where Buddhism originated! The national animal of Nepal is the cow.

Tasty Bites– Scholars tried Thupka soup, special dish served in Nepal that represents warmth, reassurance, and community bonding. Our serving came from Global Café, 1350 Concourse Ave, Memphis, TN 38104. In addition, Mango Lassi was prepared by Ms. Bini using mangos, yogurt, and honey. This refreshing drink is popular during Nepal’s summer months particularly in Kathmandu, where both locals and tourists enjoy it.



December was destination **Tokyo, Japan** with travel agents **Azaya Rich** (8) and **Jordin Tate** (7).



Informational Bites – Tokyo is the world’s largest metropolis, renowned for the bustling Shibuya Crossing (pedestrians) and its massive Shinjuku Station (railway) which is the busiest in the world. Tokyo has more Michelin-starred restaurants than any other city, many high-tech conveniences like vending machines and robots, and its unique blend of traditional temples and futuristic districts.

Tasty Bites - Japanese snack boxes emerged from individuals discovering the unique variety of Japanese treats and wanting to share them globally. We ordered several boxes from Amazon, and scholars tried a variety of Japanese snacks with their peers. To drink, scholars tried Ramune - a popular Japanese carbonated soft drink known for its unique glass bottle sealed with a marble! It comes in a variety of flavors offering a sweet, citrusy, refreshing taste, similar to a light soda.



Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns for your Optional Scholar(s). If you need help with PowerSchool access, please let me know.

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