



Mendez Minutes

Mendez Fundamental Intermediate School

Edition 15 Tuesday, April 14, 2026

WELCOME BACK FROM SPRING BREAK!

Quote of the Month

By: Lylah Lamas



I would like to offer you this quote for the month of **April**: *"Life is a test. It's all a test. Sometimes you have to get through it, and then later everything makes more sense."* – James Patterson

Meet the Journalism Staff:
Ms. Yolanda Elmore, Editor
Mrs. Yvette Cortes, Co-Editor
Stacy Colin
Daisy Fernandez
Diana Gallegos
Alyssa Garcia
Paola Guillen
Lylah Lamas
Abygail Leon
Tobias Lopez
Mia Lua
Jacob Martinez
Joseph Martinez
Ariannie Mendez
Darian Mendoza
Guadalupe Merino
Guadalupe Pintor
Melina Romero
Hanna Salagado
Juliana Vargas
Mila Zamarripa
Yoselin Zuniga

Feature Article

"One Question at a Time"

By: Mrs. Tiffany Tran

You've got this! 🦊 When it comes to math tests, remember that **preparation + a positive mindset** go a long way. Take your time, read each question carefully, and don't panic if a problem looks tricky at first. Try your best strategy, eliminate wrong answers, and move on if you need to—then come back to the problem later with a fresh mindset.

Feeling nervous is normal. Test anxiety just means you care. Take a deep breath and remind yourself: *I've practiced this, and I will try my best.* One question at a time is all you need to focus on.

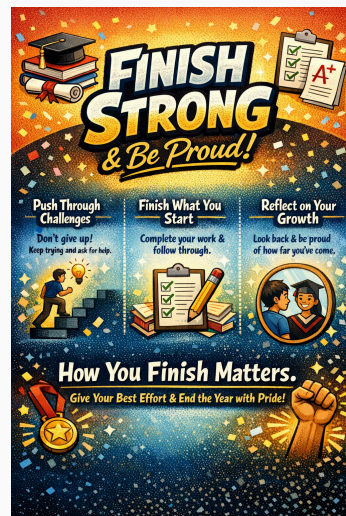
CAASP/SBAC is important because it shows how well you understand math skills that matter in real life—problem solving, reasoning, and explaining your thinking. It also helps teachers and schools know how to better support students like you.

This test does not define you—it reflects your **effort** and **growth**. Trust yourself, stay calm, and show what you know. ✨

Strategy of the Month

"Finish Strong & Be Proud"

By: Dr. Laura Castro



As the school year comes to a close, it can be easy to lose focus or feel hopeless, but this is actually one of the most important times to stay on track. **April** is all about **finishing strong and taking pride in how you end the year.**

At **Mendez**, we hold ourselves to high expectations!! You've already worked hard to get here, so don't let that effort go to waste. Whether it's completing assignments, catching up, studying for final tests, or staying focused in class, every choice you make now matters. Even small

"Manny Wants to Hear from You"

By: Yvette Cortes



If you have a question to ask Manny the Mustang or if you would like to share positive feedback about *Mendez Minutes*, or if there is a topic or trend that you would like us to research and write about, please scan the QR code below.



Ask Manny

Your question or comment may be featured in an upcoming newsletter.

Manny the Mustang looks forward to hearing from you!



Mrs. Tiffany Tran, Math Teacher

MELENDEZ FUNDAMENTAL

SBAC TESTING DATES

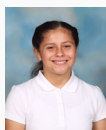
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
April 28	April 29	April 30	May 1	May 2	May 5	May 6	May 7
		NO TESTING					NO TESTING

EARLY RELEASE DAYS:
STUDENTS WILL BE RELEASED AT 12:15 PM ON THESE DAYS:
4/28, 4/29, 5/1, 5/2, 5/5, 5/6

REGULAR MODIFIED DAYS:
STUDENTS WILL BE RELEASED AT 1:30 PM ON THESE DAYS:
4/30 & 5/7

April Song of the Month - "Here Comes the Sun"

By: Paola Guillen



For April's Song of the Month, I chose "**Here Comes the Sun**" by The Beatles.

In April the weather starts to warm-up and the days become brighter.

After the cold and rainy months of November - January, it feels like the sun is saying, "Summer is just around the corner".



actions like starting your work right away or asking for help can make a big difference.

It's also a great time to reflect on your growth. Think about how much you've learned, how you've improved, and what you're proud of. Success isn't just about grades, but it's also about effort, perseverance, and progress.

Mendez Scholars also support one another. Encourage your classmates, stay respectful, and continue to represent our school with pride both in and out of the classroom. Remember, how you finish is just as important as how you started. Show your best effort, support your classmates, and leave a positive impression.

Finish strong. Be proud. You've got this. Stay a **Mendez** Scholar.



Dr. Laura Castro, ELA Teacher

"A Day in the Life of..."

By: Juliana Vargas



I wanted to know more about **Mrs. Helen Peña's** job, so I scheduled a day and time to talk with her about her important role at **Mendez Fundamental**.

Juliana: "What is your job title and its responsibilities?"

"What is Your SBAC Strategy?"

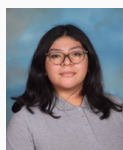
By: Mendez Journalists



Stacy Colin's strategy is **Reviewing my Notes**.

"This strategy helps me remember the lessons that I did in class. Reviewing my notes also works for me because when I am in classes that I struggle the most in (ELA and math) the lessons begin to make sense.

I also picked this strategy because I feel like this will really help me feel confident while taking the test."

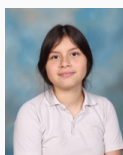


Daisy Fernandez's strategy is **Process of Elimination**.

"This strategy helps me narrow the answer choices from 4 to 1.

Instead of feeling overwhelmed by choices which all "look" correct, I can eliminate the silly answers quickly.

I also picked this strategy because I can hear my teacher's voices in my head saying, "Use P.O.E!"



Diana Gallegos' strategy is **Taking Notes**.

Journalist Spotlight

April showcases four wonderful Journalism Scholars.

"Boredom is not for me!"



Most people describe me as funny, kind, thoughtful, and considerate.

My dream is to travel to Italy to see the amazing leaning tower of Pisa.

When I am not at school, I like to listen to music.

My career goal is to become a Marine Biologist. So, my plan after high school is to attend UCLA because it is one of the top universities for Marine Biology.

-Abygail Leon

"Chef Jacob"



People describe me as humble, kind, and funny.

I want to visit Germany because I want to try authentic pretzels.

In my free time, I like watching "Invincible", playing soccer, and listening to Tyler, the Creator.

When I grow up, I want to attend culinary school, and own my own restaurant.

-Jacob Martinez



Mrs. Peña: "My job title is pretty long. It's State and Assessment Specialist, and I take care of all the testing in the school which includes getting all the materials (i.e. paperwork, accommodations such as headphones). In addition, I train and work with all of the teachers to make sure all testing materials and procedures are ready for test day(s). Sometimes I have professional development at the district office to get trained on new features of a particular test (e.g. ELPAC, SBAC). Finally, I am responsible for running reports after all students have completed a particular test."

Juliana: "When you are not preparing for a standardized test, what else do you do at Mendez?"

Mrs. Peña: "My other responsibility is helping the lead-teachers and the AVID coordinator prepare for field trips. One additional feature of my job is being outside during Nutrition and Lunch. It's always fun to get vitamin D and talk with Mendez students."

Juliana: "What do you like to do in your free time?"

Mrs. Peña: "Outside of work I like to do a lot of fun things such as hiking, reading, spending time with my husband, and visiting with my family and in-laws. Being outdoors is what makes me happy!"



Mrs. Helen Peña,
State and Assessment Specialist

“Taking Notes helps me stay focused while I read the passages and questions.

Whenever I write down important ideas, keywords, or details it always makes it easier for me to understand what I am reading.

Finally, this strategy is very helpful because some SBAC passages are long and taking notes helps me to remember.”



Mia Lua's strategy is
Going to Tutoring.

“I struggle with a few subjects and sometimes I don't ask for help.

I know that there is a program called Peer Tutoring at Mendez where students volunteer to be a tutor and help other Mendez students every Wednesday after school.

To prepare for the SBAC test, I will attend Peer Tutoring after school and sometimes I will attend tutoring before school.

I want to do well on this test!”



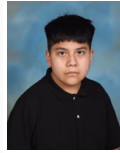
Guadalupe Merino's strategy is
Studying a Week Before the Test.

“I use this strategy because it reinforces the material that I have learned this year.

While some may consider this to be “cramming for a test”, I find it beneficial as I review short cuts and acronyms that my teachers have taught me (e.g. PEMDAS, TEPAC).

Doing well on the SBAC in my 8th grade year is important to me!”

“A Good Life”



I am a 14-year old kid who has a lot of favorites: my French Bulldog, a television show called “The Rookie”, baking, taking walks with my dog, my 8th Grade Language Arts class, and spending time with my parents.

My career objective (for now) is to either become a real estate agent or a law enforcement officer.

-Joseph Martinez

“Looking Ahead”



I am looking forward to being an 8th Grader because it will be my last year at Mendez. It will be fun and sad because I will be moving on to high school. It will be a bit sad because I will be leaving Mendez and the teachers and friends I have met here.

My 8th grade year will be exciting because of all the activities I will get to participate in that I couldn't as a 7th Grader. On my mark, get set, go. . .me!!!

-Tobias Lopez

Jokes for April

By: Alyssa Garcia



Mendez's Anniversary



Please join us at this awesome celebration of our fantastic middle school! Invite family members, friends, and alumni. 🥳👏🎉

Mendez Testing Dates QR Code:



There are several important tests happening in Semester Two. Please scan the QR Code above to remind

Autism Awareness Month April 1 - April 30



Journalist, Melina Romero, invites you to join her in celebrating **Autism Awareness Month**.

Please click on the link below to watch a video collage that she made to celebrate autism.

Special thanks to some of her Journalism classmates who made posters and had a speaking part in a second Autism video for GMM, Mendez faculty and staff who are featured in this video collage, and her family who encouraged her to create this special video.



[Melina's Autism Awareness Day Video Collage](#)

Beanstack Reading Challenge



Spring Into Reading 2026

April 1, 2026 - April 30, 2026

Question: What kind of bean can't grow in a garden?

Answer: A jelly bean!

Question: Why do eggs love April Fool's Day?

Answer: They really love practical yolks!

Mendez Memories

The April and May Edition of **Mendez Minutes** will feature our 8th Grade Journalists who will share what they'll miss about Mendez Fundamental Intermediate.

Hello, **Mendez** Scholars! Here is what I will miss about **Mendez Fundamental Intermediate**:

- Middle School activities
- The friendships that I have built over three years
- All of my classmates
- PTO sales
- Early dismissal

I hope that next year's 8th

Graders have an amazing school year.



Ariannie Mendez 🎓

Since this is my last year at **Mendez**, there are so many people I will miss!

I am going to miss all my friends. It feels weird knowing that many of us are going to different schools next year.

I'm going to miss two of my favorite teachers, Mr. Lubba and Mr. Johnson. They are amazing teachers.

Lastly, I am going to miss being a student here, and I know that high school is going to be very different.

For the incoming 8th Graders, spend your 8th grade year enjoying each moment. Always cherish your memories at **Mendez**!



Guadalupe Pintor 🎓

yourself of our busy testing season at **Mendez Fundamental**. We are at the home stretch, so hang-in there, **Mustangs**!

"Did You Know?"

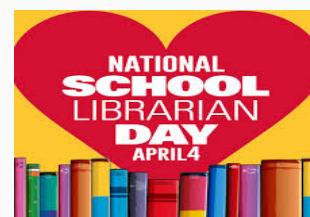
By: Ms. Yolanda Elmore



Did you know that **April 4th** was **National School Librarian Day**.

Mrs. Yvette Cortes wears so many hats. Not only is she an **outstanding** librarian for **Mendez Fundamental**, she is the **co-editor** of **Mendez Minutes**, she is a **tech-wizard**, a member of a few school committees, a **wife and mother** to a family of her own, and she is also a **quasi-mom** to many **Mustangs**!

We thank you, Mrs. Cortes, for **all** that you do!



Did you know that **April 16th** is **National Pajama Day**?



Although you cannot wear pajamas to school, you can change into your most comfy pajamas when you get home. Yes, do your

Mendez Library QR Code:



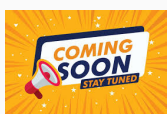
Mendez Mustangs, please remember to **log your SSR minutes each day**. In addition, don't forget to write at least one book review each month and submit it in Beanstack. Mrs. Cortes **enjoys** reading your reviews!



Happy Assistant Principals Week to **Dr. Magaly Ponce-Gomez, Assistant Principal April Salas, and Assistant Principal William Skelly!** Though we can't see their capes, they perform like true Superheroes every day.



To the **amazing** staff who keep the main office running smoothly:
Mrs. Juana Ornelas, Mrs. Elisa Garneri, Ms. Mayra Lopez, Mrs. Mayra Alvarez, Ms. Chris Muniz, Mr. Hector Peña, Mrs. Helen Peña, and Ms. Andrea Aguilar.
We thank you for **all** that you do for **Mendez Fundamental**, its staff, faculty, and students!



National Teacher's Appreciation Week
May 4 - May 8

In my three years of being at **Mendez**, I have had many exciting and special moments.

I enjoyed socializing with lots of students who are now my closest friends, and I have also enjoyed being able to join different sports' teams here at **Mendez**.

One regret that I have is socializing too much as it became a challenge for me; I can admit that I became disruptive in some of my classes.

Something I'm looking forward to this summer is going out with my friends, and traveling to Miami this summer.

New opportunities are ahead for me, and for this reason I am ready to start high school.



Hanna Salgado 🎓

I will miss absolutely everything about **Mendez**. **Mendez** became a very important part of my life.

Hanging-out with all my friends, waving and saying hello to people became a routine, and I will forever miss it.

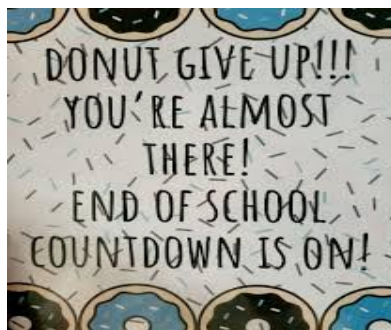
Not only my friends, but the staff here at this school will also be what I will miss.

Mendez was an amazing experience, but I can't stay here forever. I can't wait for the next chapter of my life to begin.

Good luck to my fellow 8th Grade classmates!



Yoselin Zuniga 🎓



homework in your pajamas!



Did you know that **April 20th** is **National Lookalike Day?**

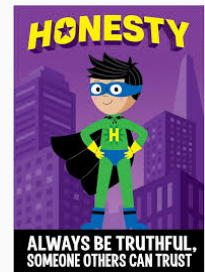
Have you ever been told, "You look just like . . ." **OR** "You're a *doppelganger for . . . "



*doppelganger (noun): a doppelganger is a person who looks almost identical to another, often acting as a non-biological twin, "double-goer," or "second self"

Did you know that **April 30th** is **Honesty Day?**

This month began with jokes and falsehoods on April Fool's Day, so be sure to end the month with honesty and truth.



Mendez Scholars

Are...

Respectful

Responsible

Ready

