

THE JAMS JOURNAL

JOHN ADAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL

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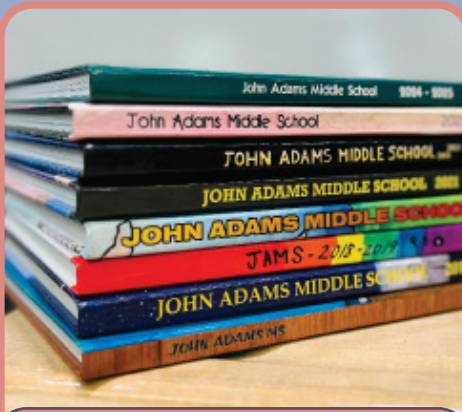
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How lucky you are to witness this magical production of *Seussical Jr.*!



Seussical Jr.

Birds flying, silk dances in the land of Solla Sollew, and glowing fish! It just can't be...but can it?!

By OLIVIA PRATHER

“I do not like green eggs and ham!” As the famous curtain call song rang throughout the theatre, the crowd sat amazed at what they had just witnessed. Such talent on a middle school stage? It just couldn't be, but it sure is for JAMS! This was a musical unlike any other. It was filled with aerial arts, silks, trapeze, and even flying birds! The crowd watched as Seuss characters came to life through actions, voices, and heartfelt words. A famous Dr. Seuss quote that represents *Seussical Jr.* and the story it follows is, “Why fit in when you were born to stand out?” This well liked quote resembles who Horton really is. This story follows the Cat who is always looking for trouble, introducing a young child to the mythical world of Seuss. JoJo is a very smart kid, with a very wild imagination. Together the Cat in the Hat, and JoJo explore different universes, uncover ideas from beyond, and create a special bond. As the lights come up and the curtains

start to close the last chorus is sung. “I do not like them Sam I Am!”

From moving set pieces across the stage at a quick pace, to getting into costumes in under 30 seconds, there are many moving pieces in a complete middle school musical. Actors don't just play an important role, but so do the tech and design students working hard behind the scenes. Sixth grader **Rafa Alvarez Cartagena** from lighting

team said, “During the show, there should be two people on each spotlight. One person is moving the spotlight, the other one is telling the person moving the spotlight where they have to move the spotlight (by looking at the cue sheet). Then there has to be somebody on the light board, which basically manages all the other lights.” It is very important to recognize that it takes every individual in this production to

make this musical come to life and run smoothly.

Student **Leif Reyna** was constantly moving set pieces across stage, creating magical moments for the audience.

The spotlight focuses on the actors on stage dancing and singing proudly and loudly, while backstage is a constant clatter of voices and footsteps helping make everything come together.

It is also very important





The whole cast opens with “Oh the things you can think”, as they get ready for a magical performance in the world of Dr. Seuss.



The Whos that live on Hortons speck of dust plead that he must keep them safe.



As the Cat, Soleil M.M. auctions of egg, nest, and tree the crowd shouts out bids from \$10, to \$1,000, to \$10,000!



As the Bird Girls, Alma B. and Dani K. get ready to take the stage, they prepare to dance and sing for the big night.

Photography by Niku Kashef



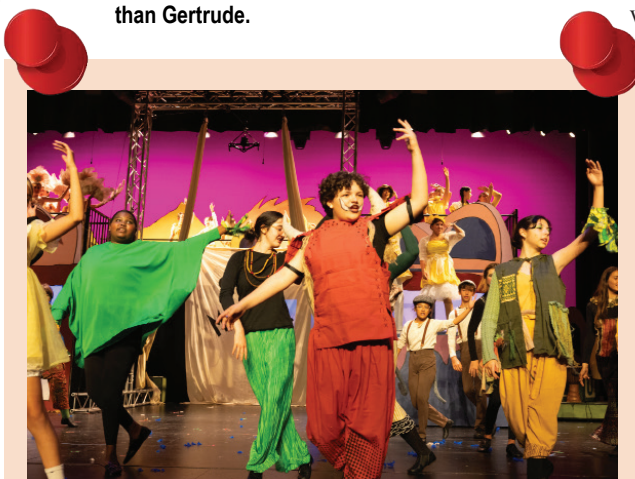
Mayzie La Bird, aka Mira Shah, is reminiscing about how she once had a one feathered tail, but is now gorgeous and beautiful, and better than Gertrude.

for each person working on or in this production to acknowledge the work that each person puts into it. However, the audience is also very important to a theatre production. What did they think of the show?

Crowd opinions can be very important to many actors because it provides them with confident approval of their performance. But at the same time, the cast, tech, design, and staff opinions of their performance and the group’s production all together matters even more. **Valentina Foronda** from the cast team said, “This show was awesome and so amazing and I loved that this was my first one.” Many people in this production thought the show was remarkable and so did the audience. **Mia Petrigliano** who watched this show on Saturday night said that, “My favorite part of the show was how it encourages the audience to think big and persevere despite what others say.” So many amazing things happened during these performances, from monkeys swinging on vines, to the cackle of Vlad Vladikoff as he flies off with Horton’s clover, to the magical silk dances during Solla

Sollew. Although there were many highlights to this production, now it’s time for the cast, tech, and design teams to reflect on what they might want differently in a future show.

Everybody has things that they are proud of themselves for, and things they think they could’ve done better. Most people wish they could go back in time and redo everything flawlessly, but in reality, nobody is perfect. Our very own Seussical Jr. is said to be the essence of imagination, fun, and mischief. Director of Theatre 31, and Seussical Jr. the Musical, **Chad Scheppner** said, “I was also very impressed with the dedication and talent of the performers. Everyone worked hard to bring their characters to life, “no matter how small”, and that reflected on stage.” The amazing director, **Chad Scheppner**, doesn’t just direct the show, but he also brings in ariel artists from Cirque du Soleil, and set builders and painters that have worked really hard on this show. They devote themselves to building set pieces and creating choreography for the performers. Over spring break actors, design, and tech students volunteer their time to help the staff out with their duties. This year’s musical shared with us that no matter what challenges stand in your path, nothing is impossible.



The Jungle Citizens dance and sing all while refusing to believe Horton’s theory.

Steven Hernandez Wins Regional CJSF Award

By STAFF WRITER

Steven Hernandez has been recognized for an impressive achievement: he won the regional California Junior Scholarship Federation Marian Huhn Memorial Award, which honors outstanding students for academic excellence, leadership, and service. The award is given through CJSF, and Steven competed against students from counties across Southern California, including Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and others. For winning, he received \$250, a certificate, and a large medal at the award ceremony.

What makes Steven stand out is the way he leads quietly but consistently. He describes himself as a “quiet leader,” and many teachers agree that this describes him perfectly. He is known for being respectful, organized, humble, and someone classmates enjoy working with. In fact, one teacher shared that before assigning a group project, students were asked anonymously



As he stands next to Ms. Cowgill, Steven H. proudly wears his CJSF medal.

which classmates they wanted to work with most, and Steven’s name appeared on almost every list.

Steven also notices what others need and takes action without being asked. When he saw that his math teacher’s pencil supply was running low, he began bringing boxes of pencils for the class. He also created a school-wide DreamBox competition during advisory, encouraging students to improve their math progress while making it fun. The winning class earned a popcorn party, and later he helped expand the competition with an even bigger reward.

Outside of class, Steven tutors younger students through UP Grade, volunteers at his former elementary school, and participates in AVID, NJHS, and ASB. His award shows that leadership can be thoughtful and powerful without needing attention.

JAMS Honored with California Distinguished Award Two Years in a Row

John Adams Middle School has officially been recognized as a 2026 California Distinguished School for the second year in a row.



This award honors schools across California that show strong academics, student support, and a positive school environment. According to JAMS staff, the recognition reflects years of teamwork between teachers, staff, and students. Teachers at JAMS work together to create classrooms where students feel supported, challenged, and included. Dr. Chacon said the award represents the strong sense of community and care that makes JAMS special. Being named a Distinguished School again shows the continued effort and dedication happening across campus every day.

JAMS Begins Microforest Project

By ELDEN FUR

A new microforest project is beginning to take root. Led by Paula Vezzulli, the project will bring a small forest made completely of plants native to the Los Angeles Basin onto the JAMS campus. Planting is expected to begin in the fall and should be completed around Winter Break. Instead of large construction machines, students and volunteers will use hand tools to plant everything.

The microforest will also become a learning space for students. Classes will be able to use it for science, art, engineering, and other projects while observing nature up close. As the forest grows, more biodiversity like insects, birds, and other wildlife is expected to appear naturally.

Vezzulli explained that one of the most interesting parts of the project is how the forest will “mimic nature” by allowing trees and plants to regenerate soil and communicate through underground fungal networks called mycelium. The project is inspired by microforests in Miyawaki, Japan, and by the microforest on Olympic Boulevard in Santa Monica.

JAMS Journalist Receives District Writing Awards

By STAFF WRITER

JAMS seventh grader Daniela Kadish recently earned First Place and Second Place in two district wide writing competitions hosted by the Santa Monica Elks Lodge #906. Daniela, who is also part of the JAMS journalism class, was recognized at an awards ceremony on February 27 for her award winning essays.

The contests invited students across SMMUSD to write about meaningful topics that connect to citizenship and healthy choices. One essay theme asked students, “What Does Service to Your Country Mean to You?” while the second focused on the theme “Drugs Are a Grave Mistake.”



Earning high praises for her writing, Daniela K., receives her award from the Elks Lodge committee.

Daniela earned First Place in the Americanism Essay Contest and Second Place in the drug awareness essay competition. The contests were open to students in grades 5 through 8 and required essays to be 300 words or less. Judges evaluated entries based on originality, development of ideas, grammar, and neatness.

At the February 27 ceremony, Daniela received her awards while JAMS was also recognized during the presentation. Her achievement highlights the strong writing talent at JAMS and shows how student voices can create meaningful messages through writing.

Grade By Grade

Students reflect on the memories, friendships, and lessons that shaped each grade level

By MYLES SHAW & MARY PHAM

Starting 6th grade will always feel new and a little overwhelming, but by the end, students will have grown more confident. As students move into 7th grade, they start to feel more comfortable with their teachers and surroundings while also beginning to prepare for becoming leaders in 8th grade. Once they're in 8th grade and preparing to move onto high school, they start reflecting on how much they have grown throughout their years in middle school, while also thinking about how to improve themselves in for high school. However, the reflections of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders are all different. For 6th graders, it starts with looking back on their first year of middle school and thinking about what is still ahead of them.

I feel really happy about the friends I've made along the way and that I'm excited for high school.

Drew Peterson
8th grade

As sixth grade draws to a close, students begin to think of the years ahead, and what will come in their way. According to source **Noah Smith**, "At the beginning of the year when I transferred here from outside the district, I thought I wouldn't be able to make friends, and then on my first day I met Myles and we became friends almost immediately. It has gone very well from there and the year has been the exact opposite of what I thought it would be." **Sandy Montano**, another 6th grader, has also said "I was a lot more nervous at the beginning, but now I feel more relaxed, because my friends made my year really fun". Clearly Noah and Sandy's perspectives and the perspective of many others, has changed now that their first year of JAMS has ended.

With 7th graders however, they usually think back to how their year went, while also looking ahead to their last year at JAMS. Seventh grader **Simone Roman** said, "I feel nervous but also excited to be an eighth grader next year." Other than that, 7th grader **Kalia Bell** has said, "At the

beginning of the year I was really stressed because last year you didn't know what to expect. This year you would but with the construction I didn't know how our schedules would change," she continued, "I would rate my year a 9.5 out of ten because in 7th grade I found new friends and created new bonds that I didn't have in 6th grade because I was so nervous." Now that their 7th grade year has ended, the soon to be 8th graders are now preparing for their 3rd and final year at JAMS.

But as their year ends,, the 8th graders at JAMS start to prepare for their 9th grade year at SAMOHI. Some of them, though, usually reflect on how their 8th grade year went so as to improve themselves for a good first year as freshmen.

Eighth grader **Leif Reyna** has said, "I feel like 8th grade was a lot easier than I thought it would be." He also said that the only thing he is worried about is whether or not he will get lost on his first day at SAMOHI. Other than that, **Drew Peterson**, has also said that some advice for incoming 6th graders, "Do not procrastinate and have grit when working on school work instead of using ChatGPT since when you do it on your own, it will benefit you more."

In the end, as the school year starts to end, JAMS students start to prepare themselves for what's next while also reflecting on themselves. Throughout the reflections they've done, making the effort to gain new friends, the achievement of many things academically, has made them who they are as a person. With sixth grade going into seventh, seventh into their final year and eighth heading off to high school, this year has truly been one filled with changes made along the way.

Students' average rating of this school year



4 STARS



JAMS students participate in a painting activity on Earth Day.



Akim J., Mason A. & Matteo M. enjoyed food truck days.



Sandy Montano "Something that surprised me the most about JAMS, was that they brought a horse onto campus." - 6th grader

"I found new friends and created new bonds that I didn't have in 6th grade because I was so nervous." - 7th grader



Leif Reyna "Honestly, the only thing that's got me worried is SAMOHI's big campus, and if I'll get lost on the first day." - 8th grader



Hailey N. and Ms. Woo celebrate 3 years in the JAMS music program.

A Note to the 8th Graders

As the last few weeks of school wrap up, 8th graders have to get ready for promotion. They have gone through three whole years of middle school, and have to get ready for the next big change: high school. We hope that you value and cherish all of the fun experiences, friends, and even classes that you had along your middle school journey. While high school will be a big and exciting change, JAMS will hold space in a lot of your hearts. Everyone is so proud of you, 8th graders, so strive for greatness at high school and take risks!

THEN VS NOW



Ellowyn S. and Francesca N. recreate their 6th grade Catalina trip photo.



Average Middle School Experience Rating

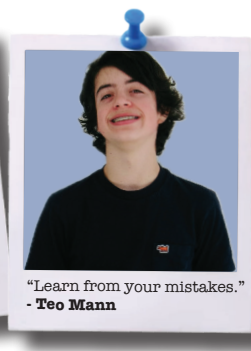
8th Grade Advice



"Have fun and enjoy your childhood."
- Camryn Washington



"Eat anything you want, don't let people lecture you."
- Morgan Bitterolf



"Learn from your mistakes."
- Teo Mann

JAMS CLASS OF 2026

FAVORITE MIDDLE SCHOOL MEMORIES



"I'm going to miss all of the fun times I had with my friends. We did potlucks and different activities that made middle school worthwhile. I also want to shout out Herbert the custodian because he is always so kind to me and my friends."

-Zoey Markowitz, 8th grade

"My favorite memory of middle school would have to be the first semester of 8th grade. There isn't really a specific moment but all of the first half of it was super fun and I loved everyone I would hang out with. I also just felt so myself throughout that time."

- Audrey Rodriguez, 8th grade



Mystery Student Revealed

For nearly three years, one mystery photo in Ms. Check's office kept students guessing. The face in the picture turned out to be current 8th grader Finnley McLendon, captured back in 5th grade, and now the long running mystery has finally been solved.



8th-Graders Best Teacher Award



Ms. Alexopoulos
Math Teacher

vince.yu



106 likes
@vince.yu When the friendship graph has perfect symmetry #hugo.yuankruse #sebastian.soto @fortnite emote unlocked @lego somehow perfectly connected

ms.guirguis



995 likes
@ms.guirguis Science teachers and Mark Rober basically formed the STEM Avengers #markrober @markrober glitter bomb incoming! @billnye science teachers leveling up in real time

josie.mankiewicz



634 likes
@josie.mankiewicz PE turned into a dance rehearsal for no reason #charlie.mccain #dakota.graves @charlidamelio synchronized vibes detected @highschoolmusical we're all in this gym together

kahlan.roberts



761 likes
@kahlan.roberts Cup stacking station became an official sport #jeremiah.cumes.diaz #ricardo.gonzalez #kate.kawano

Instajams

Instajams captures JAMS life the way you've never seen it: snapshots straight from campus, not the Internet.

 All the comments and likes are just for laughs. (No WiFi required)

elden.fur



828 likes
@elden.fur When your group locks in and creates greatness #noah.mccaffery #sy.mai

teddy.pesapane



993 likes
@teddy.pesapane Library corner lowkey turned into a mythology lesson #delilah.avila #valery.de.los.santos @percyjackson these two definitely know all the gods by name

delfina.cordero



752 likes
@delfina.cordero Ms. Dolloso running PE like an air traffic controller #milerun #survivalofthefittest @espn clipboard game unmatched @tomcruise mission: survive the fitness unit

olivia.prather



447 likes
@olivia.prather Dog got invited to the hangout and became the main character #josie.lipman #leila.nord @cesarmillan emotional support legend fr @snoopdogg bro knows he runs the group chat

SONGS THAT MAKE US HAPPY

From Bruno Mars to breakup songs, JAMS students explain how music can completely change a mood

By AMELIA TROUTMAN & JOSIE MANKIEWICZ



Airpods in, music playing, world tuned out. When your favorite song is playing, you aren't focusing on anything else. Maybe you're dancing around your room, sitting on your couch, walking home, or maybe you're singing at the top of your lungs. Either way music helps people feel free. Let's explore the difference between music that makes you feel deep, and the music that makes you feel inspired.

Our JAMS students all around campus share a love for one thing, music. **Lou Clarke** said "Happy summer songs affect my mood in a good way while revenge-like songs and songs that express anger also make me more energized", while **Kinsley Spencer** stated, "Rock music usually stresses me out, so I rarely listen to it." Even though everyone has a different music taste, whether it's rock, pop, rap, or country, we can all agree that music can really affect your mood.

"When you're happy, you enjoy the music but when you're sad, you understand the lyrics." Frank Ocean. Over sixteen hundred people responded to a survey done by psychology of music, and they say that about 17% of the participants reported a saddened mood as a consequence of

"I think the most important thing is that students are focused, and if music helps them, then I'd be happy too."

Mr. Perata
Science teacher

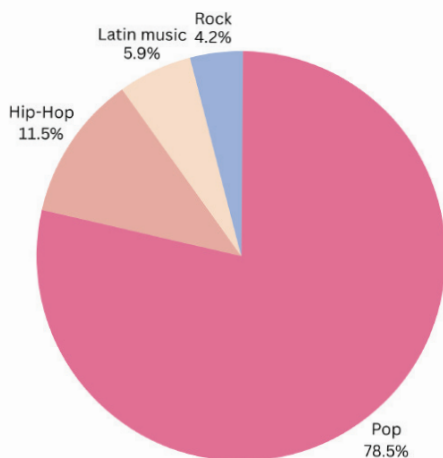


listening to sad music when sad (Psychology of Music).

When **Simone Roman** was asked if certain songs affect her mood, to which she said, "It really depends on the song, and the mood that I was in when I first listened to the song", while **Noor Kawar** said, "Any Bruno Mars song can instantly make me happy."

Every teacher has their own opinion about music in the classroom, for example, **Mr. Perata** said, "Once they've done the leg work of getting themselves set up on an assignment, I'm happy to let them listen to music", while **Ms. Alexopoulos** mentioned "I like to play music for students during independent work time. I don't mind if students want to use headphones to play their own music if it is during independent work." Now, two of JAMS' most valued teachers tell us about their opinion on music in class.

Whether you listen to music by yourself, with family, or with friends, music brings people together. It's a constant, no matter what you're feeling, whether you're feeling sad, or feeling like you're on top of the world. Thinking back to being four years old, while a parent sang to you, that's a memory that reminds you of happier times. That's what music is. Music is a memory, and one we never want to forget.



TEACHER TALK



Q: Do you allow students to listen to music in your class?
A: "When we're doing projects that require like this once they've done the leg work of getting themselves set up on an assignment, a lot of the kids ask if they could listen to music. As long as it's quiet, I really don't mind, but I wouldn't generally allow them."

Q: Why do you think teachers wouldn't allow music in the classrooms?

A: "I think that it can definitely be helpful to listen to music, but it certainly can be distracting. One of the common things is when students are going down a rabbit hole of what to listen to, and that can 100% waste time."

Q: Do you think students are more or less focused while listening to music?

A: "There is definitely some music that helps them focus and it is productive for them. I do try to support whatever it is the students need that helps them get their work done."



Q: Do you allow students to listen to music during class?

A: "I like to play music for students during independent work time. I don't mind if students want to use headphones to play their own music if it is during independent work."

Q: Why do you think teachers wouldn't allow students to listen to music during class?

A: "For some students, I'm sure it can be more distracting than anything, and some students might listen while a teacher or a peer is talking."

Q: Do you think students are more or less focused while listening to music?

A: "I do think that while music can help some students to focus, it can also be distracting for some students, so that should be considered, but I think that in general, it does help them focus to listen to something that they enjoy."

JAMS 8th graders tackle real community problems while learning how to create change with the Civic Action Project

By ELIZABETH MELBOURNE

Every JAMS 8th grade history class has recently adopted a new assignment into their curriculum, the Civic Action Project. This project has many names including the Civic Action Project, and the shortened version, the CAP, an assignment where students work to create a positive change in their community. Students take action and make a plan to change or fix a problem they face. Students find a problem directly affecting their community and make a plan to best fix it. To do this, they often have to implement a new public policy, which is more commonly referred to as a rule. The project is a chance to learn how to make change and it gives students the freedom to run it themselves.

A recurring theme of the Civic Action Project is the genuine excitement and engagement some students have towards their topics. One group of students aims to bring CPR training to JAMS. **Cooper Sands** and **Elden Fur** think it could be a very unique and useful opportunity to learn CPR. **Elden Fur** wrote, "Our plan is to reach out to the American Heart Association, and see how we can communicate to either bring CPR kits to JAMS and have the teachers teach it to the students, or have the American Heart Association (AHA) send out a trained professional to come in and educate the students on it." While CPR training dummies are expensive it is very possible for them to bring in an AHA training seminar or event.

Another one of the many interesting CAPs focus on teaching students how to recognize AI in their daily life, and educate people on the harmful effects AI can have. When asked about the topic of her CAP, **Morgan Bitterolf** said this "The problem I am trying

THE CAP

to solve is the use of AI in a negative way. For example, AI has been used for facial recognition. Sometimes used for tracking criminals in public, so ANYONE who passes by the camera(s) are being recorded. How do we know that AI won't make mistakes? Another example is that AI can be used to create realistic fake videos/images that can easily spread misinformation." Morgan also shared concerns about the environmental effects of AI, and alongside her partner, **Delfina**, she interviewed many people to gather their thoughts and experiences with it.

The CAP is not only liked by students but also by teachers. While **Ms. Goldberg** and **Ms. Murphy** are new to it, **Mr. Cierra** has been working with this project for about 10 years. He claims that the main reason students get engaged with this project is because they get to have freedom when picking their topic and if they didn't have that then they wouldn't care as much.

Ms. Murphy emphasized choice but limited topics to better guide students. She even made a website for the project to organize and lay out all the different components.

This helps students see all of their work set out in front of them making it easier to create new policy and change.

The Civic Action Project is an assignment that gives students a chance to make change and grow a voice. They can advocate against problems that directly affect them and maybe even fix those problems. It teaches students that they can be impactful and powerful. It also informs them about public policy and how to get new systems implemented. Even if it is still just an assignment, it gives middle schoolers a chance to make a difference, and that can be invaluable to some.



"The students should get to choose their projects because that's the only way there is going to be some buy in. That's the only way they're going to put in the effort necessary, the work necessary to be successful."

Mr. Cierra
History & Spanish teacher

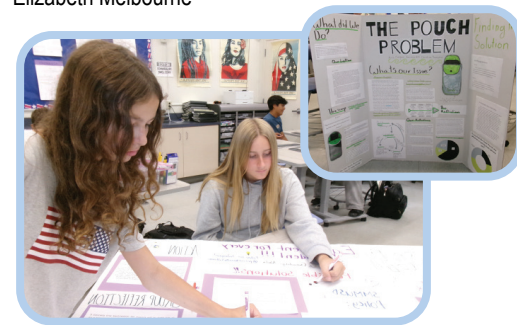
Project Highlight

Showing off some of the exciting projects being worked on by JAMS students.

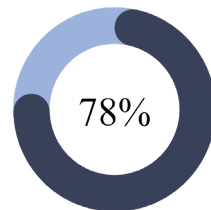
Project	Student(s)
CPR training at JAMS	Elden F. and Cooper S.
Getting new soccer goals for JAMS	Riley L., Darci B., Madeline D., Sawyer M., and Ava O.
Providing opportunities for 1-on-1 tutoring for struggling students	Maele D., Drew P., and Mariah Y.
Helping students who are negatively affected by stereotypes in the LGBT+ community	Lucia C. and Ivy B.



Ms. Murphy's student's finished posters displayed next to working students. Photo: Elizabeth Melbourne

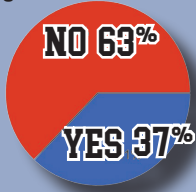


Students work on their Civic Action Project preping to present their poster at open house. Photo: Elizabeth Melbourne



About 78% of people working on the CAP said they were passionate about their topic.

Results from the survey show that students are divided on the 5-minute passing period, with roughly 63% saying it needs to be longer and 37% saying it is just right.



PASSING PERIOD PERSPECTIVES

Across all grade levels, they were worried about how far apart the classrooms are and how all the construction is in the way.

Lots of kids who said five minutes is enough still pointed out that you have to actually focus and speed walk if they want to make it. Sixth and seventh graders talked the most about the struggle of getting to the music rooms and how stressful it is when teachers expect them to be ready the second the bell rings. A common theme was that while five minutes works if classes are close, it's a major fail if they need to use the restroom or have to trek all the way across campus.

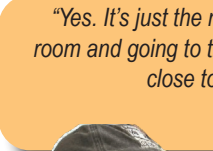
Is the 5-minute passing period long enough between classes?

Some students feel rushed trying to get across campus, grab materials, or use the restroom, while others think five minutes is plenty of time. But longer passing periods would mean a few more minutes at school.



"No. It wasn't enough time before the construction. Now it's worse causing an obstacle with moving from one class to another."

Nicolas Perez Nunez, 8th grade



"Yes. It's just the right amount of time to go from class to class. If you're at the choir room and going to the 90's, it is not a big deal, just speed walk. Also, if your class is very close to your other class, you can use that time to use the restroom quickly."

Elisa Handoyo, 7th grade



"No. It shouldn't be five minutes because what if someone's 2nd period is across the school? Are they supposed to run and be tired or walk and be late?"

Kennedy Cline, 7th grade



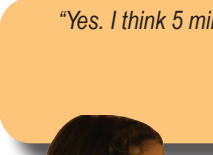
"Yes. The school isn't that big so 5 minutes is plenty of time."

Mariah Young, 8th grade



"No, it should be longer because if you have to get from music island to the 90s, that's going to take a long time."

Leon Osmand, 6th grade



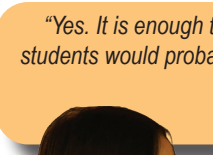
"Yes. I think 5 minutes is enough time to get from one class to another because it's easy to get to class on time without getting distracted."

Logan Farr, 8th grade



"No. Some days I need to go from room 33 to the choir room to lunch. The pressure is on to get there in time."

Wynn Jeffers, 6th grade



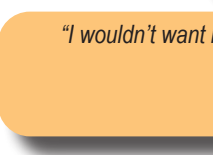
"Yes. It is enough time to get from one class to another because if we got more time students would probably use it to talk with friends in the hallways because they are not as rushed."

Kahya Stroock, 7th grade



"No. Teachers expect students to be in class early so they can put down their things and get ready, but there is just not enough time. It would be better if passing period is 8 minutes so students don't have to stress about getting to class on time."

Ayla Strand, 6th grade



"I wouldn't want longer passing periods because that also means that school ends later."

Ayza Sogut, 6th grade

BY THE NUMBERS

Source: JAMS Journal Student Survey

8th graders

are most likely to want a longer passing period, 67% said it's too short

7th graders

wanted a longer passing period as well, about 65%

6th graders

also wanted more time to get to class with 62% saying it's not enough time

Chimes, Claps, and Comebacks

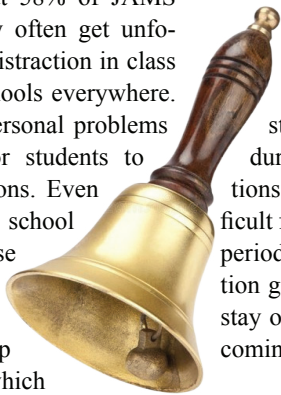
Whether it's a countdown or a loud bell, teachers are discovering what actually gets students to pay attention

By IRIS GRUNCA & MAKENA HORWITZ

Did you know that 58% of JAMS students say they often get unfocused in class? Distraction in class is a major problem in schools everywhere. Stress, homework, and personal problems can make it difficult for students to pay attention during lessons. Even though concentrating in school can be hard, teachers use different strategies to help students refocus. One common strategy is clap and response patterns, which are a fun way to quickly get students paying attention again. These attention getting methods help students stay engaged while reminding them to focus.

Almost every student can probably relate to zoning out in class or thinking about something other than schoolwork. Listening and staying engaged can be difficult when students have a lot on their minds. Teachers often try to bring the class back on track with strategies such as call and response, countdowns, clapping patterns, and bells. In fact, 45% of students said that a bell works best for getting their attention.

Students also had creative ideas for how they would get a class to focus if they were teachers themselves. Seventh grader **Kate Kawano** said she would say "something interesting and absurd. (Ex: Class, Ms. Brown broke her leg! And the class would be interested in it, and want to listen to find out why.)" Sixth grader **Noah Smith** joked that he would yell, "Look up or pushups and detention!"

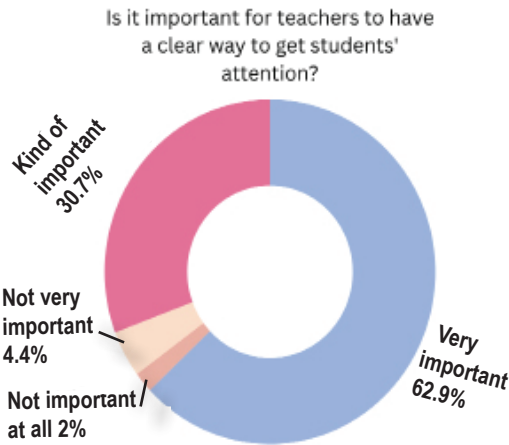


Students clearly had many different ideas about what works best in a classroom.

Many teachers also notice that students struggle to stay focused during lessons. With so many distractions and off topic thoughts, it can be difficult for teenagers to pay attention for long periods of time. However, effective attention getting strategies can help classrooms stay organized and keep students from becoming too inattentive.

Sixty percent of JAMS students said that when a teacher is trying to get the class's attention, they finish what they are doing and then look up. This shows that even if students get distracted, teacher reminders can still help them refocus. **Ms. Robinson**, a sixth grade humanities teacher, shared some of the strategies she uses in her classroom. She explained, "Yes, I do notice students having a hard time staying focused. Some ways I get my student's attention are to use a chime, do a countdown backwards from 10 to allow students time to finish conversations in a timely manner, or my favorite is to tell students to have a 'staring contest' with me until I get all of their eyes on me."

In the end, students can get distracted very easily during class, but teachers can use fun and simple strategies such as bells, chimes, and clapping patterns to help students focus again. Without these methods, side conversations, doodling, and zoning out would happen even more often. Attention-getting strategies help classrooms run more smoothly and create a better learning environment for everyone.



BY THE NUMBERS

52%

of students believe that attention-getting strategies only work sometimes

58%

of students often get unfocused in class

45%

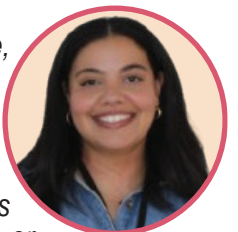
of students think that a bell works best

What strategy do you use to get students' attention?



"To get the ensemble (classes) attention I will either clap a short rhythm, which they will repeat. Or I will say 'if you can hear the sound of my voice clap once.'"

-Mr. Garnreiter
Orchestra and Band



"I use a chime, do a countdown backwards from 10 to allow students time to finish conversations in a timely manner, or my favorite is to tell students to have a 'staring contest' with me until I get all of their eyes on me."

-Ms. Robinson,
6th Grade Humanities

The Summer Scoop

Beating boredom and making the most of summer break

By JULIA CADENA & KAHLAN ROBERTS

Solving the Summer Slump

After a long school year, every student is excited for summer break; no worries, no classes, no school. However, once the break starts, many students feel bored, since they don't have a strict schedule to follow. In fact, about 45% of students agree with this. This phenomenon is called summer slump. Since school is over, and there's not as much to do, students tend to experience a decline in motivation and productivity, since there are no deadlines to meet.

Not only can summer slump cause boredom, but it can spark more serious issues, such as procrastination, anxiety, and stress. Sixth grader **Kiera Cheung** stated, "Sometimes I just watch YouTube and I'm not doing anything productive like cooking or crafting." While it's easy to catch the summer slump, students can cure it by staying active and spending time with others.

While many students are affected by summer slump, some have found ways to get rid of it. Twenty-nine percent of students believe that the best way to fix summer slump is to hang out with friends and family. Seventh grader **Naomi Perez** said, "I try to be active by playing with my cousins, who are much more energetic than me." In addition to curing boredom, spending time with loved ones can help to improve your mental health. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, "Social connection can lead to longer life, better health, and well-being. It can improve our ability to manage stress, anxiety, and depression."

Overall, summer slump can occur for anyone at almost any time during the summer. While summer slump can impact mental health and productivity, it is also very curable. So next time you feel yourself falling into the summer slump, try going outside, hang out with friends, or simply committing to a task to break out of the cycle.

Top 10

Summer Activities

According to JAMS survey

1. Going to the beach
2. Sleepovers
3. Going to the pool
4. Amusement parks
5. Water balloon fights
6. Water sports
7. Roasting S'mores
8. Barbeque
9. Watching sunset/sunrise
10. Summer camp

BY THE NUMBERS

Sources: JAMS Survey

1 in 5

students say that the best part of having summer break is getting a break from school

5%

of students believe that getting offline is the best way to break the summer slump cycle

56%

of students do not experience summer slump

29%

of students say that the best way to beat summer slump is to hang out with family and friends

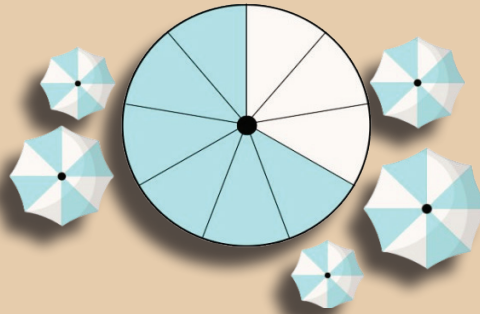
Teachers During the Summer

During the last few weeks of school, students may feel sad to leave their teachers and friends behind. But while they make plans to meet up with their friends over the summer, students likely won't see their teachers again for the entire summer. Most students don't give a second thought to what their teachers will be doing over the summer.

Like students, most teachers look forward to their summer vacation as a time to relax and reset after the school year. However, a teacher's job doesn't end when the school year ends. According to Study.com, 65% of teachers around the world spend their summer doing professional development, second jobs, or community service. In addition, while very few students spend their summer thinking about school, about 32% of teachers spend their summer vacation lesson planning.

Teachers have one of the only jobs that allows for a summer break, and for a good reason. After working hard all year, teachers deserve time off. Whether they're spending their summer relaxing, spending time with family, or becoming a better teacher, teachers enjoy their summers just as much as students do.

How Long Does Summer Feel?



● Longer ● Shorter

“

I feel like time goes by faster when you're having fun, and I'm having fun basically all of summer.

Zayd Sharif
7th grade

This or That?

Beach VS Pool



53% Beach Wins

Flip Flops VS Birkenstocks



63% Birkenstocks Win

Ice Cream VS Popsicle



82% Ice Cream Wins

Surfing VS Body Boarding



63% Body Boarding Wins

Teachers' Perspectives

"I used to go to a summer camp when I was a kid, and now I'm a counselor at the same camp. It's definitely a lot different to experience it as an adult, rather than as a kid."

-Ms. Hallman, Math teacher



"My favorite summer memory was when I worked at Disney Studios with my friends in High School."






-Mr. Avedian, Science teacher



JAMS JAMZ



Scan the QR code to listen to this student created playlist!

- 1  **Lush Life**
▶ Zara Larsson
- 2  **Midnight Sun**
▶ Zara Larsson
- 3  **California Gurls**
▶ Katy Perry, Snoop Dogg
- 4  **Riptide**
▶ Vance Joy
- 5  **Passionfruit**
▶ Drake

Out With the Old, in With the New

Discover the preference that JAMS students and teachers have on using Chromebooks or chalkboards.

By **KALIANNE LAMBERT & ANDIA BACAJ**

From 1985 to 2026, from old to new, from no technology to only technology, which is actually better? Seventy-eight percent of JAMS students report using Chromebooks every day, whereas teachers tend to use whiteboards only a few times a week. Students clearly prefer technology, but does that actually mean that it's better for learning? While both Chromebooks and whiteboards have benefits, using them together helps JAMS students stay focused, learn faster, and remember information better.

Fifty-two percent of JAMS students enjoy using a mix of both technology and old-fashioned materials such as whiteboards and paper. With many students struggling to stay away from devices, using pen and paper during the school day serves as a well needed break. Even with the benefits of pen and paper, students tend to lean more towards the faster and more reliable Chromebooks.

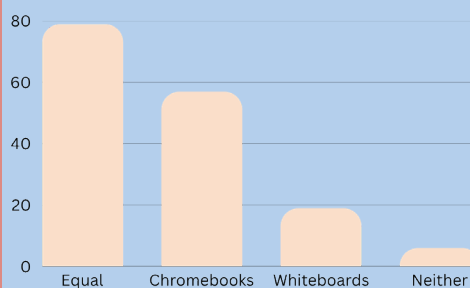
Technology offers many benefits, such as being more up to date than old textbooks, easier to research and gather information and better organization. The main grumble about Chromebooks is technical issues and distractions from games. Seventh grader **Matteo Von Watcher** stated, "I don't think Chromebooks necessarily improves your learning, but makes it easier to learn things in less time." This shows that while Chromebooks save time, they might not help students understand the material more deeply. Many students feel distracted by chromebooks, but math teacher **Ms. Hallman** said, "Chromebooks can be distracting, but with the use of GoGuardian a lot of distractions are eliminated."

Non-tech alternatives such as whiteboards and pen and paper offer very different advantages, such as hand on learning, making it easier to understand lessons, and provides students with better focus and no distractions. English teacher, **Ms. Mathews** said, "I have students use pen and paper the most. I believe that

Chromebooks are distracting for students." The issue with non-tech alternatives is that there may not be enough time to write all the information down. This makes it hard to keep up with notes and can leave you under-prepared for the test. Sixth grader **Irasema Hernandez Lopez** said, "In every situation I would rather write on paper, that way I can review my notes without ever needing to open my computer". A recent study in *Frontiers of Psychology* by Ruud and Audrey Van der Meer in January, 2024 found that students writing by hand had higher levels of electrical activity across the brain, creating better memory, sensory processing, movement and vision.

Old or new, which one is best for you? Chromebooks offer benefits such as up to date resources, like news articles, scientific studies, and digital textbooks. Whiteboards are proven to improve memorization and make your brain more active. The best choice depends on what you are trying to learn, so using both tools throughout the school day gives JAMS students the best chance to succeed.

Which tool helps you stay more focused?



Do you think technology like Chromebooks improves your learning?



"I don't think Chromebooks necessarily improve your learning, but it can be easier to learn things in less time."

- Matteo Von Watcher, 7th grade

"I like Chromebooks because its easier to complete work and follow along with the teacher."

- August Cho, 6th grade



"Yes, because it provides an easy, interactive approach that people that are disorganized can use to keep track of everything."

- Oliver Frost Lorenzo, 8th grade

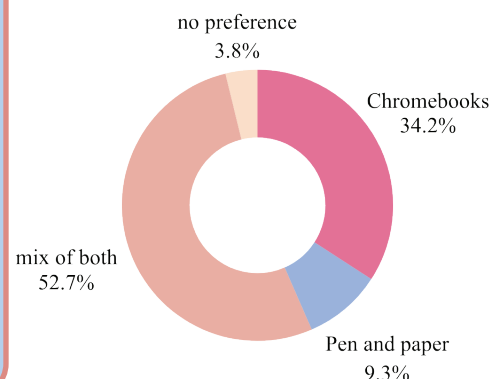


"I think Chromebooks improve learning because they have more options than whiteboards, and some students and teachers have bad handwriting, which proves as a challenge to read."

- Indy Guggenheim, 7th grade



Chromebooks or Chalkboards?



A Day in the Life of a JAMS Student

Walk through the daily lives of JAMS students By ELIZABETH MELBOURNE & EVANGELINE GIORDANO



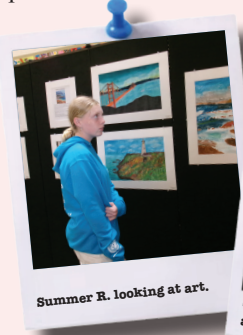
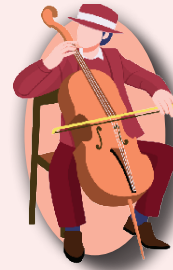
Summer Robertson is a 7th grade student taking ASB and Advanced Art. She does sports like soccer and takes art classes every Wednesday. Starting the day by waking up at about 7:15, she gets dressed and then counts her candy supply to make sure she has enough to get her through the day. When interviewed, Summer said, "I'll eat breakfast and read my book. And sometimes when I'm feeling good about myself, I'll make myself some French toast." Summer's first class is science with Ms. Gurguis, where she gets to do Gizmos and BrainPops first thing in the morning. Her third period is her first elective class, Advanced Art. She has worked on projects like landscape paintings and self portraits. Then she has ASB. When asked how ASB affected her daily life, she had this to say: "ASB is kinda hard because you have to remember if you have an event that day and you have to be really organized, but I think it's a really good skill builder personally. And it's fun to have 8th graders and 7th graders in the same class." Some skills she gained from ASB are communication, planning, and being able to deal with surprises. Summer has a very packed schedule outside of school too. Mondays she has tutoring, Tuesdays and Thursdays she has both school and club soccer, and on Wednesdays she has art classes where they are learning to work with oil paints.



Francesca Nitti is an 8th grade student taking Journalism and ISPE for Jiu Jitsu. Getting to school at about 8:40, she unlocks her Yondr pouch before she chats with her friends for a few minutes outside of class. Then she heads into her first period class, English. Francesca said this when asked about the key moments in her day: "Sometimes journalism, just because of the photo assignments I have to remember to do. But also because I feel very free in journalism. I can leave the classroom and do what I need to do, so I enjoy the freedom of it." Francesca only has 5 classes because of ISPE. Francesca chose to just have one elective. This means she leaves school at the end of her 5th period every day. "The best part of not having a 6th period is not having to rush to get to my sport after school because it starts almost immediately after. I think Jiu Jitsu is a big part of my life because not only does it affect my school schedule, it also affects my after school time. So I have training every day except for Sunday, which is my day off." She often has Jiu Jitsu competitions over the weekend or during summer breaks, so there's rarely time off. Francesca also has to unlock her Yondr pouch in the office every time she leaves, now making sure not to forget, as she has done before. Getting home can be complicated because 5th period ends at a different time almost every day, so there are many times when she has to call her parents to come get her.



Raphael Alvarez Cartagena is a 6th grader in orchestra and Spanish immersion. He starts the day by checking a calendar to make sure he brings the right things. He walks into school at 7:20 for his AM science class, starting the day with Ms. Gurguis. Then, he has Spanish classes for first and second period, only getting 2 to 3 homework assignments from that class. His elective is orchestra, where he plays the cello during third period. Orchestra leads to a lot of homework, and Raphael practices five days a week. In an interview, he said this: "I try and practice (cello) every day. To get a good grade you need to practice at least five days a week, so yeah it's a bit of work." When Raphael gets home, he tries to do as much homework as possible so he can clear up his time. This can be especially difficult because he has theater until 8:30 until show day. When asked how that affects his schedule, he responded with this: "I'm having much less time to do homework and barely any time to practice the cello. I have neighbors so I can't practice too late, but by the time I get home it's already like 9." One may wonder if he practices in his sleep to make up for the lost time.



Summer R. looking at art.



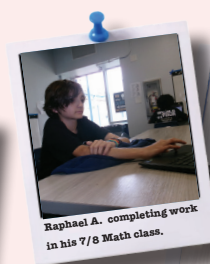
Summer R. working on a history project.



Francesca N. interviewing a student for journalism.



Francesca N. walking out of 5th period.



Raphael A. completing work in his 7/8 Math class.



Raphael A. working in Spanish class.

As deadlines slowly approach, the yearbook staff dart to make any last minute changes. The constant pressure to complete the yearbook illustrates the determination required to succeed in this class. With only $\frac{1}{3}$ of the school year to complete it, missing a single deadline might just jeopardize the entire yearbook. Advised by **Ms. Goldberg**, the yearbook staff collaborates to create a unique and profound snapshot of the 2025-2026 school year.

Understanding the history of yearbooks helps explain why they remain important in schools today. Yearbooks have evolved from simple scrapbooks in the 1600s to the professional publications we create now, showing how much effort and skill the yearbook class requires. These earlier yearbooks did not include photos which weren't introduced until 1806 when Yale College created the first ever school yearbook. The first high school yearbook was not created until 1845, when Waterville High School in New York became the first school to put one together. In the 1940s yearbooks really surged in popularity. Nowadays, it is very rare to find a middle or high school in the U.S. without a yearbook and it has become a norm in society to have one.

The JAMS yearbook class is led by editors **Miles Winkel**, **Chloe Beekman**, **Juliet Diaz**, **Evan Yrra**, **Sophia Vintin-**



I expected to have fun and for the yearbook to be really memorable. But it was hard especially because it was my first year in the class.

Adrienne Ulloa
7th grade

ner, and **Marisol Breslin Sandoval**, who combine their different skills to create a strong final product. Even though the class finishes the yearbook on time each year, they work under strict deadlines and high expectations. Yearbook editor **Juliet Diaz** said, "Some of the struggles are getting videos/pages done before the deadline, especially the yearbook itself because those deadlines are much more harsh." These rigorous deadlines that need to be met can change the day to day life of the yearbook staff, with many students in the class having to sacrifice their free time to work on their page. "Yes, definitely the workload and responsibilities never end throughout the year and even if your work is done, other people's work will still fall back to you after school. It affects me in and out of school between taking photos and videos or uploading them and editing at home," stated yearbook student **Chloe Beekman**.

The yearbook class requires students to work hard and stay committed throughout the year, making it one of the most demanding and challenging electives available at JAMS. The JAMS yearbook is produced starting at the beginning of the year, when the students learn the ins and outs of the yearbook program. They eventually finish the final product in mid March. The process starts off with each student in the class doing a demo page—a test run—to showcase their skills in creating an eye-catching and pleasing design. After the demo page, students are assigned one to three pages per spread, adding up to about 11 pages across four spreads. Once finished, editors review each page for mistakes and design issues, then Ms. Goldberg gives final approval. This process repeats for each spread, helping divide the workload, and once all spreads are complete, the pages are sent to the printer so the yearbook is ready for distribution by June.

The yearbook team works extremely hard to produce the JAMS yearbook that students all know and love. Working through intense deadlines and extreme pressure, they have to dedicate their time and effort into the class. During the year the staff puts in countless hours of work into the yearbook so that in June, one thing is certain; the 2025-26 JAMS yearbook will leave students in awe.

Behind the Scenes: JAMS Yearbook

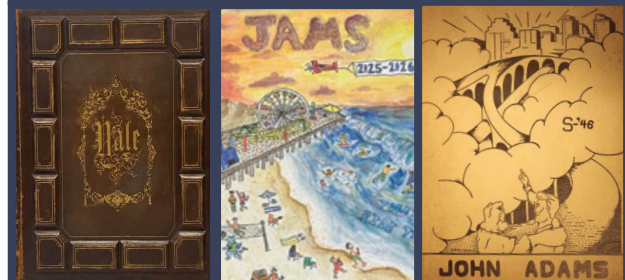
Taking a closer look into the ins and outs of how the JAMS yearbook class works

By ELDEN FUR & VINCE YU



Sophia V. and Rebecca M. collaborate to put their page together Photo: Rae Groth

Yearbook students Dulce A. and Juliet D. film for the Video Yearbook Photo: Elden Fur



The first ever yearbook, published by Yale in 1806

The current 2025-2026 JAMS yearbook.

One the earliest JAMS yearbook, published in 1946



Sophia V



Marisol B



Chloe B



Miles W

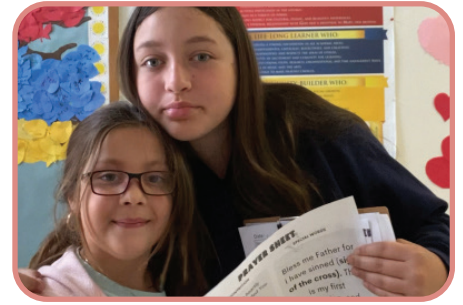


Juliet D



Evan Y

EDITORS



Helping their community, AVID students Rebecca M., Shanee F., and Aubrey H. organize supplies, pick up trash, or help others and events.

AVID Students Discover the Power of Giving Back

By STAFF WRITER

“

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.

Mahatma Gandhi
Freedom Fighter

others was their biggest motivation. About 43% of students reported completing at least nine hours of service this year.

Several students shared experiences that stood out to them. Eighth grader **Jenna Hald** said volunteering at a preschool was memorable because “helping them learn about the world made me feel more open minded.” Seventh grader **Geetika Pulipaka** explained that tutoring younger kids made her enjoy volunteering more because “they were so nice and funny.” Eighth grader **Maycee Luna** said community service helped her discover new interests because “I like interacting with people and I can use that to figure out what kind of

careers I could be interested in.”

Other students said volunteering helped them understand their community better. Eighth grader **Soleil McGene Mitchell** explained that giving food to a family in need made her realize how difficult life can be for some people. Seventh grader **Lucy Diaz** shared that making meals for families who were afraid to leave their homes was meaningful because it helped people during stressful times. Eighth grader **Victoria Villasenor** said helping at Immersion Family Night was special because “everyone was so happy and lively.”

Even though many students enjoyed volunteering, challenges still appeared throughout the year. Transportation problems, busy schedules, and not knowing where to start were some of the biggest obstacles students mentioned. Still, many students said community service helped them grow as people. When students volunteer, they are not just completing hours for AVID. They are becoming active participants in their community and proving that students have the power to create positive change.

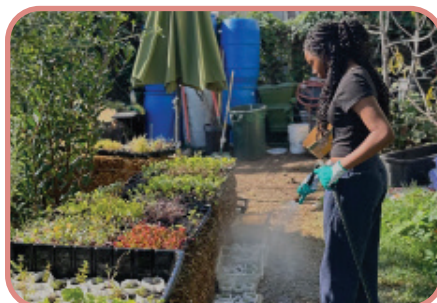
Community service is becoming an important part of student life at JAMS, especially for AVID students working toward their required service hours. Many eighth graders have already completed nine or more hours. Students are not just volunteering for school credit, many are building confidence and helping their community at the same time.

In the AVID program, students often talk about Individual Determination. This idea does not only apply to grades or academics. It also applies to the role students play in society. Colleges and future employers often look for students who have a service mindset. They want people who can notice a problem, create a plan, and work together with others to make a difference.

Community service gives students the chance to practice those skills in real life. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

Students around JAMS have volunteered in places such as churches, schools, food banks, beaches, and local organizations. Many students said helping

Giving back, AVID students Jenna H., Cali G., and Yaretzi I. assist in grooming dogs, watering plants, and helping young children in the classroom.



Second Step is an ineffective way to teach social-emotional practices. Let's talk about it.

ONE STEP FORWARD AND... A SECOND STEP BACK

By NOVA MORGAN

You are probably familiar with the program called Second Step. They are the social-emotional presentations that are taught to you throughout the school year. They teach small, bite-sized lessons about how to manage stress, relationships, and conflicts, respectively. According to the Second Step website, they state they help students “build essential competencies in behavior, belonging, and readiness to learn with the Second Step® human skills curriculum.” They also state that said curriculum is “proven to work.” However, countless students, as well as myself, would beg to differ.

Firstly, let’s lay down the facts. When asked if students enjoyed learning these subjects through Second Step, approximately 70% of them said they did not. Most of the 30% said they liked the lessons mainly because they took up class time. When asked how effective Second Step was at teaching its goals, 80% of students rated it below average, with very few calling it excellent, or even satisfactory. Seventh grader **Liam McPherson** said, “Solving conflicts that Second Step teaches us to solve does

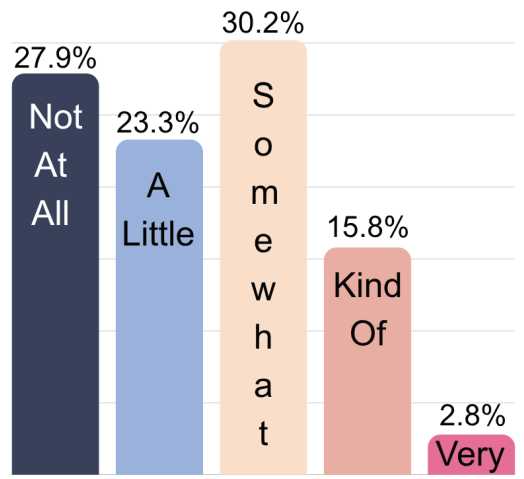
almost nothing. The conflicts in the real world are way more complicated than the examples and solutions they are giving us.”

I think I speak for the majority of the student body when I say that Second Step is ineffective. It’s hard to prepare students for conflict and stressful situations in a controlled environment, as conflict is unpredictable. At that, regular conversations are unpredictable. How can you prepare someone for something that you cannot predict? For example, there is one Second Step lesson that deals with apologies and making amends. Throughout the lesson, it is working off the assumption that the person will immediately forgive you at the word of sorry. But what is a student supposed to do if they aren’t forgiven? This is exactly what I’m talking about. I’ll admit, some of their logic is relatively sound. I can understand having a conversation about how to deal with stressors and anxiety, but that also falls short when you remember everyone works differently. Sure, some of the solutions will help students manage the work load, but many will still be stressed, as the solutions given are ineffective for them, specifically.

Second Step is not only ineffective, but agreeably obvious and, according to 7th grader **Shanti Haarten-Marchevsky**, juvenile. “I dislike that Second Step believes that telling us the same thing all adults already tell us will change something, and after a few lessons on basic and unrelatable kindergarten-esque examples, our whole perspective will change for the better.” It’s true, many of the examples given to us are very childish. The solutions seem almost obvious, which, again, draws back to how controlled everything is. 6th grader **Alice Roberts** says, “I felt like I learned nothing, and that Second Step was just stating the obvious.”

We have established that very few students in any grade actually like Second Step, and most appreciate it because it takes up class time. Students also feel that the conflicts presented are rather juvenile, the stress and anxiety strategies are limited, and the solutions to these situations are often obvious. So, where do we go from here? What are the alternatives? In my opinion, students that are struggling are capable enough to seek help on their own. But, if you still want to do the lessons, you can make them more interactive. Maybe actually put the “social” in “social-emotional”, you know? One 7th grade student, **Naomi Perez**, said “Maybe we could act it out. The presenter could ask people to act the conflict out, and maybe the short play will get everyone to actually talk about how they feel and how it affected them.” All in all, these lessons bring us one step forward and two steps back. Or, perhaps, one step forward and a Second Step back.

Do you remember the things taught to you during Second Step?



By TEDDY PESAPANE
& ANDREW LEE

Tests bring anxiety, group projects can result in one person doing everyone else's work, and presentations mean you have to speak in front of the whole class. None of these seem like very favorable options for assessments, do they? Although tests have been the standard assessment for many years, are they truly the best way to learn?

No matter who they are, everybody has a strong opinion on tests: some think they should be a large part of your grade, others believe that they shouldn't. Seventh grader **Simona Cipresso** said, "Tests are an assessment of what you've learned based on things you've done in class, and I believe that they are important parts of school to figure out how you're doing." On the other hand, **Indy Guggenheim** said, "Some people have test anxiety, and even if they know the subject really well they may not be good at taking tests." A survey sent to JAMS students showed that seventy-four percent of students believe that tests should be less than seventy percent of their grade. Many students feel that they have "bad days" on test days, and that their grade shouldn't drop just because of one bad day.

If JAMS students could choose how they were assessed, would they want mostly group work, presentations, tests, or projects? Some students feel they learn better with a more social approach in a group work assignment, while others prefer speaking about a topic with a presentation. Sixth grader **Soliyana Beyene** said, "When you work in a group you get to learn new

Are Tests for the Best?

Are grades measuring learning or just measuring who can survive the pressure?

“

Tests should count for less than 25% of your grade. One test that you feel pressured on most of the time should not control your whole grade.”

Vanessa Barrios
8th grade



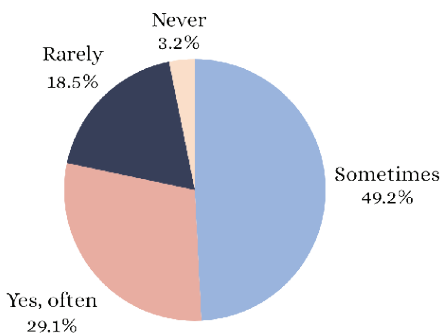
Ms. Rattan's seventh graders comparing silly putty to the Earth's mantle. Photo: Andrew Lee

stuff from other people's perspectives." On the contrary, **Sophie Lloyd-Smith** said, "You work so hard on preparing something so that you can present it to your peers and teach them." Although it's easy to ask what assessment students like the best, what really benefits them?

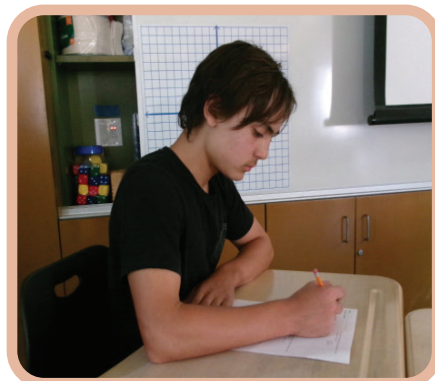
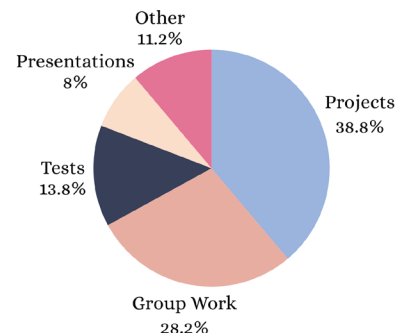
It's easy to forget that school is intended to prepare students for their futures. Between projects, presentations, tests, and group work, which of these options is scientifically proven to be the most beneficial for students' futures? An article published in 2024 by The Polytechnic School expressed that projects and presentations – or any type of assessment that helps students think deeply about the topic and apply the concepts – are much more beneficial for students. For example, a student might memorize that the Civil War started in 1861 for a test, but forget it a week later. However, if that student created a project comparing life before and after the war, they would remember the date and understand why it matters. Overall, tests won't help students later in life as much as projects would have, proving that tests aren't the best method for learning information effectively.

Although tests have been used for many years, projects and presentations are better ways for students to learn and remember information. Some students believe that tests should matter to your grade and some think they shouldn't, but it's obvious what the science proves. Students are more likely to remember the information long after they learn it if they do a project or presentation rather than take a test on the topic. Information stays in students' minds longer when they complete projects.

Have you ever felt that the test grade did not reflect your true ability?



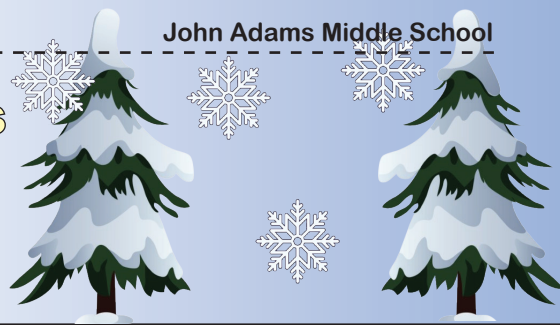
What type of assessment do JAMS students feel helps them learn best?



Eighth grader Soren Forrest taking his first math test on paper in Algebra 1. Photo: Teddy Pesapane



Longer Summers or Year Long Calendar?



Summer break is the most memorable time of the year, filled with pool days, time with friends, and a break from school work. At the same time, students also enjoy their winter and spring because of holidays and family gatherings. At the same time, numbers don't lie, and a new survey shows that 80% of JAMS students want longer summers, but teachers worry this could hurt learning. To raise the burning question, what's better: a longer summer, or more breaks throughout the year?

The JAMS community loves the idea of a longer summer with over 80% of students claiming it would help them academically and overall boost their morale. Even though most students agree upon that fact, sixth grader **Kate Walker** said, "I'd rather have breaks spread out throughout the year so I don't forget everything I've learned, or have months and months of consecutive school. A JAMS survey recording 91.4% of students prefer having a longer summer. This may be fine for them, but as Kate said it may cause some academic setbacks.

The summer slump is a known obstacle where students, who enjoyed their

By **DARIEN MAHIR**
& **FRANCESCA NITTI**

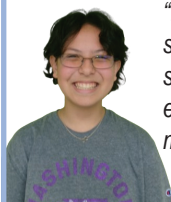
summer break with no homework, may forget some of the material they learned during the previous school year. While this is not a major roadblock, with longer summers, problems start emerging. For example, if we get a month extra or even two more, that would mean teachers and students would have to go months on end without a break in between. With the infamous summer slump, teachers have to spend extra time going over outdated topics with students. Teachers also think that a year-round calendar would be better for students' learning. **Ms. Alexopoulos** also agrees with the idea, "Students would be better off academically with a year round schedule." One way to cheat the summer slump is just to have more frequent breaks throughout the year.

JAMS students are set on not having a year round schedule but studies from U.S News and World Report show that a year round calendar is not the worst idea "One of the advantages of a balanced calendar is that students get more frequent

breaks throughout the year, which proponents of the model say can help reduce burnout among teachers and students." Students would be in a constant state of learning and there would be no huge break to forget what was learned. The year-round calendar is considered a better option in terms of learning. Although research supports year-round schedules, a survey showed that 73.3% of JAMS students still believe a longer summer would be better for learning.

JAMS students agree on having a longer summer over year-round calendar. Although a longer summer sounds nice on paper when the school year comes around students will soon realise going to school for a prolonged period of time without a break can be exhausting, and they can't function properly. In addition a longer summer might set them back academically which would cause intense classes. While JAMS students prefer longer summers, research shows that year-round schedules may help them learn better. The school should consider both student preferences and academic benefits when making this decision.

Hailey Nosh, 8th grade



"I prefer a year round schedule because during summer you can forget everything and you have more time to recharge."

Ms. Cowgill, Counselor



"As a student I loved a year round schedule. I always had time to recharge."

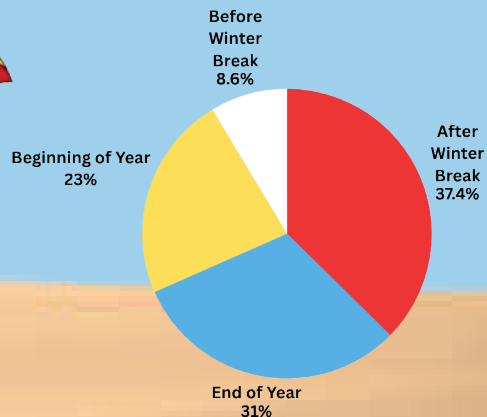
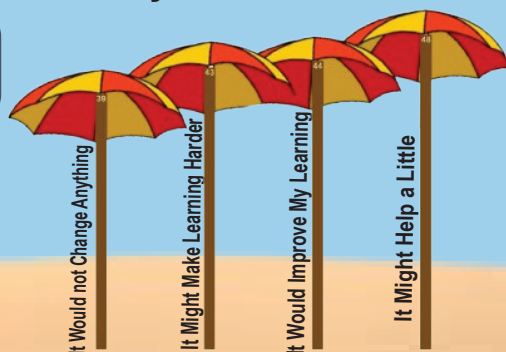
Kate Walker, 6th



"I'd rather have breaks spread out throughout the year so I don't forget everything I've learned, or have months and months of consecutive school."

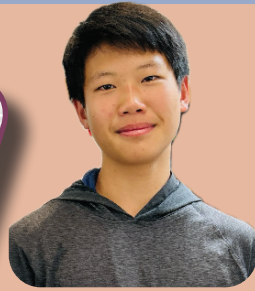
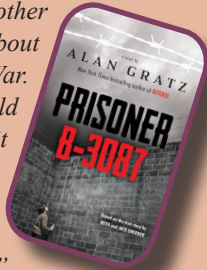
By the Numbers

Nine out of ten JAMS students prefer a longer summer



Prisoner B-3087
by Alan Gratz

"It gave me a different perspective compared to other books I've read about the Second World War. Other students should read this book as it tells you what life was like while being oppressed and abused during a time of war."



David Ong
8th grade



Ms. McLaughlin
Librarian



Change the Game
by Colin Kaepernick
"I read the graphic memoir to learn about how high school baseball player Colin Kaepernick fouled up others' plans for him to become his own person, an NFL quarterback and social justice changemaker."

Scrolling Into Chaos

If JAMS students became influencers overnight, their feeds would be packed with jokes, art, drama, and total confusion

By STAFF WRITER

Imagine opening TikTok and seeing a giant close up of a confused face, dramatic music that makes no sense, and someone holding noodles for no clear reason. According to JAMS students, this is exactly what fame would look like. If students at JAMS woke up famous tomorrow, their content would not be polished or calm. It would be chaotic and impossible to scroll past.

The most popular creator style was comedy and chaos. About 40% of students imagined themselves as loud, random, and funny creators who rely on bloopers, awkward moments, and pure confusion. Seventh grader **Goldie Gordon** said the goal would be doing it "for fun." Sixth grader **Alice Roberts** explained that comedy creators feel like "some of the most fun people to hang out with." For many students, making people laugh mattered more than looking perfect.

Aesthetic and art based creators came in second at around 30%. These students focused on vibes, personality, and creativity, even if their content was hard to explain.



Sixth grader **Mia Valenzuela** said she would create aesthetic videos "to cure boredom." Seventh grader **Amelia Golden** explained that aesthetic content shows personality. Art creators stood out for wanting to share what they love. Sixth grader **Valentina Foronda** said, "I really like to draw and paint and it would be fun to show people my creativity and maybe find people who like the same things as me." Many imagined doodles, monsters, paint, and joyful chaos filling their pages.

Gaming, sports, and dance creators made up about 15% of responses, but even those creators leaned into humor. Thumbnails still included confused faces, random glowing objects, and friends looking shocked. Seventh grader **Krisztian Bodor** imagined filming on a phone that is always at two percent. Seventh grader **Summer Robertson** described a dramatic entrance that ends with her eighteen pound cat appearing on screen.

No matter the content type, chaos always followed.

Posting schedules also revealed something important. Only a smaller group wanted to post every day. Most preferred flexibility. Many said they would post only when inspired, often saying only when the universe tells you to. Eighth grader **Kahlan Roberts** explained that her content would be funny but also aesthetic and posted when it felt right. This showed that students imagine fame as creative freedom, not pressure.

Friends played a huge role in almost every vision of fame. More than half of students mentioned friends helping film, appearing in videos, or being dream collaborators. Sixth grader **Wynn Jeffers** imagined working with friends to show dance routines before and after practice. Seventh grader **Mira Shah** said she would collaborate with her friend **Shanti** because she is "silly and crazy and perfect for my TikTok aesthetic." Many students described friends accidentally walking into frames, laughing in the background, or becoming part of the joke.

If TikTok fame ever hits JAMS, it will not be quiet or polished. It will be full of jokes, art, low battery phones, and friends who never follow the plan. At JAMS, even imaginary fame is creative and better together.

First Bell to Last, Trends Move Fast

Hidden trends in a student's everyday life

By CHANDLER SCHWARTZ & DELFINA CORDERO

In one corner of the JAMS quad, a student leans over a fountain for a quick drink, while across the way another sips from an Owala. Around them, students with lunch trays and backpacks decide where to sit, what to eat, and who to be with. These everyday choices might seem small, but together they reveal the trends that shape life at John Adams Middle School.

Every day, students decide whether to bring lunch from home or get it from the cafeteria. During the school day, 52.2% of students prefer home lunch while 44.8% prefer cafeteria food. Haley Navarro said, "I like getting home lunch more than getting food from the cafeteria because I like getting to choose what to eat." Sophia Boorman disagreed, saying, "I like getting school lunch because I don't have time to prepare lunch at home and I love the cafeteria wings."

The most popular cafeteria foods are chicken dishes, pizza, and tacos or nachos. Sixth graders **Luke Bellanger** and **Robin Danielson** both enjoy the cafeteria bagels. They said, "I like the bagel because it is simple and because it tastes better than everything else." **Kimberly Bracket**, a member of the JAMS cafeteria crew for 17 years, said, "Out of everything I have to make, I make the most fries. It seems to me that the most common food taken from the cafeteria is the pizza, chili cheese fries, and the wings." Even though foods become popular, that does not mean everyone likes them.

Two out of 5 stars. That is the average rating JAMS students gave the campus water fountains. Some students described them as "gross" or "crusty," while

others called them "good" and "normal." Most students prefer bringing water bottles instead. One brand growing in popularity is Owala. **Austin Buzzell** likes Owalas because "you can sip and drink," but **Lou Clarke** and **Summer Robertson** feel that "Owalas have too many parts and are too hard to clean." Out of 77 JAMS students, 57% own Owalas.

From 2021 to 2022, stress toys like Pop Its and infinity cubes were everywhere. People collected and traded them, but the trend faded. Now, Labubus have taken their place. Still, not everyone is a fan. Based on responses from six students, Labubus earned an average rating of just 0.38 out of 5 stars. Sixth grader **TJ Jones** said, "I rate Labubus 0 stars out of 5 because they look very creepy."

Now, Jellycats and Needoh stress toys are becoming more popular. Eighth grader

Coco Daskivitch said, "I prefer Jellycats over Labubus because they are better quality and cuter than them." Some students disagree about Needohs. Seventh grader **Gee-tika Pulipaka** stated, "Needohs causes a lot of overconsumption which is really bad for the environment." On the other hand, eighth grader **Matisse Fawcett** thought, "I prefer Needohs over other brands of stress toys because the consistency is better."

When something is trending, it does not mean everyone has to like it. Trends appear, disappear, and change every day at JAMS. If everyone around you is eating the same snack or carrying the same water bottle, that item is probably in its "trending era." Some trends you may like, some you may not, and some you might never even notice. Understanding trends at JAMS shows that personal choices can also be part of a bigger pattern.



This is a Needoh. Needoh is a popular line of squishy sensory fidget toys

BY THE NUMBERS

Sources: JAMS students

54.2%

of JAMS students eat lunch in the quad

55.6%

of JAMS students prefer to bring home lunch

23.6%

of JAMS students do not have a favorite food from the cafeteria

What are JAMS students' favorite lunches from the cafeteria?



How many stars JAMS students give these popular items



Labubus were rated an average of one out of five stars



Owalas were rated an average of five stars



The JAMS water fountains were rated an average of two out of five stars



Convenience vs. Experience

Do students prefer in-person or online shopping?

By DANIELA KADISH & ALEX BENDER

A busy mall filled with energy or a quiet room with a phone in hand, students at JAMS have different opinions about how they prefer to shop. Since online shopping became popular, many people have started choosing convenience over in-person trips, while others still enjoy going to stores. Both options have clear advantages and drawbacks. Students at JAMS have different preferences when it comes to shopping, and understanding these choices can help us think about how our shopping habits affect the environment.

Students shop in many different ways, but what are the main differences between shopping in-person and shopping online? Fifty-one percent of students who answered a recent survey said that “A downside of online shopping is the items may not look like the picture once they come.” Thirty-four percent of students said that another downside of online shopping is, “The shipping takes too long.” On the other hand, in-person shopping’s disadvantages and downsides are, there may be limited choices on items, 39% of students said this, another downside was that stores can be too crowded, and 26% of students said this.

While there may be many disadvantages of each type of shopping, there are also many benefits too. For online shopping, people can always return things. It is also much easier to shop without things being out of stock. And an upside of in-person shopping is that people can try on and see as many things as they want and decide what things they decide to buy. 7th

grade student **Mila Mayer** said she prefers “In-person shopping because I am able to try on the clothing and see what looks best on me. I also enjoy the experience of being able to spend time in a store. It can be made into an activity with friends or just something fun to do.” Another 7th grade student

Otis Kaiser said this about which he prefers in person vs online shopping “I prefer online shopping more because it is much more convenient for me personally. I don’t shop in person much so it’s easy for me to buy what I want when I want. The wide variety of clothes online shopping provides is great for choosing clothes.”

When shopping, either alone or with others, what do people usually buy? According to the survey, 89% said they shop for clothes and shoes, making it the most popular category, including items like jeans, shirts, sweatpants, hoodies, and jerseys.

But some of these things go out of style in a flash, this is called fast fashion.

Trends can be rapidly changing which means people rapidly produce inexpensive, low-quality clothing that mimics current trends. These pieces of clothing can pile up in the trash because of the amount of the massive amount of trends that come and go.

While both online and in-person shopping have benefits and drawbacks, students should think about how their shopping choices affect the environment, whether they shop in stores or online. So what will it be? The bustling mall or the easy click of a button on your phone. The choice is up to you.

Nine out of 10 students said that they shop for their own shoes and clothing



The most common worries of shopping online are items may not look like the pictures

The most common downsides of shopping in-person are that there may be limited choices

Which do you prefer, in-person or online shopping?



“I prefer in-person shopping because I am able to try on the clothing and see what looks best on me. I also enjoy the experience of being able to spend time in a store. It can be made into an activity with friends or just something fun to do.”

-Mila Mayer, 7th grade



“I prefer online shopping more because it is much more convenient for me personally. I don’t shop in person much so it’s easy for me to buy what I want when I want. The wide variety of clothes online shopping provides is great for choosing clothes.”

- Otis Kaiser, 7th grade

BY THE NUMBERS

Sources: Survey

54%
of students shop online a few times a month

59%
of students shop in-person a few times a month

61%
of students return something they buy in-person and online

What are students favorite types of shopping?



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE!



Dr. Chacon joined other school district employees in the groundbreaking ceremony for the new STEM building at JAMS. Photo: Elden Fur

ANSWER KEY

Look closely and see if you can find all **14 changes** between the two pictures. Can you find them all? Look carefully; some are sneaky!

- 1. Clouds in the background removed / 2. SMUSD logo on Dr. Chacon's helmet removed / 3. Man on the left's hard hat changed to yellow / 4. Man on the left's shovel changed to black / 5. Plane added in the top left corner of the sky / 6. Hole added in the ground next to Dr. Chacon / 7. Dirt removed from shovel / 8. Graffiti added to the background building / 9. Man on the left's lanyard removed / 10. Cone behind the man on the left removed / 11. Eiffel Tower added onto the performing arts center / 12. Man on the far right removed / 13. Mountains added in the back right / 14. Woman on the right's vest removed

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