

# EAGLE ERA

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## AHSPA wins big at Lenaea Theatre Festival

*Students at AHS are recognized for their performances at a regional theatre competition*

**Lisa Shokoor** | Staff Writer

From February 6th to February 8th, AHSPA took the stage at the annual Lenaea High School Theatre Festival, an event celebrating high school theatre departments across Northern California and Nevada. This was AHSPA's second time competing at the festival and its first year winning awards.

AHSPA's performance of *How to Get Away with a Murder Mystery* at the festival earned Gold distinctions in One-Act Performances and in Student Direction.

Ayaan Arif (11), who played Mr. Burgundy in the comedic one-act, shared how meaningful it was to win awards. He said, "It felt really uplifting because the week before we were coming in early and leaving late. I felt like all of the work was worth it; the payoff was great."

AHSPA placed in every category it was eligible for, earning awards such as Silver and Bronze distinctions in Monologue Performances, Bronze in Set Design, Bronze and Silver in Duo-Scenes, and Bronze and Silver in Musical Theatre performances.

Sana Arora (11) won the Respondent's Choice Award for her ability to adapt to feed-

back across two performances of a musical theatre piece. "I was nervous because it's a competition that's really big in the theatre world. A lot of schools from California and other states go there, so it was really exciting to see your and everyone else's names on stage."

Celina Minoji (12), who played Frazzled Lady in the one-act and performed a duo-scene with Orna Paul (12), reflected, "This year was special because AHSPA worked really hard, and we practically won a full sweep of awards. Judging



*The AHSPA cast and crew performed their production, How to Get Away with a Murder Mystery, at the Lenaea Festival (Photo Credit: Saanvi Deshini (11)).*

is extremely subjective—it depends on the person. We didn't know if what we were doing would be received well, and it was great to know that it was."

The one-act was also shown in Theatre 70 for AHS students during a free one-night-only showcase. Melina Rojas (11) appreciated the quality of the play and how well actors worked together. "I had high expectations going into it because I know the cast and crew are already great," she said. "But somehow they went beyond my expectations."

The close bond between the cast and crew was one of the highlights of their performance. "You can tell that the cast has great chemistry," said Rojas. "Nothing was forced; it felt natural but still hilarious."

Cinthana Santhakumar (12), a director of the one-act, said, "The cast was so close. At Lenaea, a lot of what our judges said was about our respect for each other. Tech had their own bows at the end, which isn't typical in theatre, but it really showed how we as a program care about each other."

(continued on pg. 3)

## New year, new electives

*Exploring the new classes being offered at AHS next year*

**Angella Li** | Staff Writer

As preparation began in February for the 2026-2027 school year, students could be seen scrambling to fill out their course request forms. During this hectic process, students may have noticed that AHS is now offering many new courses including Science Lab Technician, Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM), Engineering Essentials, Broadcast Media Arts in Gaming, and AP Cybersecurity.

While AHS has offered Chemistry Lab Technician as an elective in the past, the new Science Lab Technician course expands this position to all types of science classes. Brian Su (11), a student interested in becoming a lab technician for a chemistry class, said, "For people interested in working in a lab, you have an opportunity to pursue that kind of interest in physical science."

This valuable hands-on experience prepares students for careers in STEM fields involving laboratory experience and applied science programs. Some students hope that this class may open up new opportunities such as internships. Su said, "They're not go-



*After course request forms were submitted to math teachers, Counselor Teri Sorensen worked to input course requests for the 2026-2027 school year (Photo Credit: Angella Li (10)).*

ing to try spending extra time to teach you. Because you have this experience, it's easier for them to have you as their intern."

For upperclassmen specifically interested in engineering, CIM covers many manufacturing aspects of the field. Ms. Wheaton, who hopes to teach CIM, said, "A lot of students love the idea of robotics or mechanical engineering and [CIM] is going to get them exposed to what that could be like."

CIM was offered during the 2025-2026 registration cycle, but it did not become a class because the school didn't receive

the grant for the equipment needed and because of a lack of student interest. Soham Gokhale (11), a student who has been interested in CIM since last year, said, "I'm planning to pursue mechanical engineering. I think this elective will give me more experience in designing and 3D modeling."

On the other hand, Engineering Essentials is a more cohesive engineering course open to all grades. "We do hydraulics, soldering, open source, CAD, and 3D printing," said Ms. Kerr, who taught Engineering Essentials at Kennedy HS and is bringing this course to AHS. "It's more integrated than Principles of Engineering, which is more of a survey course. Engineering Essentials provides a cohesive picture."

This class also provides important experience that may be helpful beyond high school. "This is one of the best courses if you just want to know what engineering's about. There's a lot to do in college if you have a fundamental understanding of how to solder and 3D print," said Ms. Kerr.

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# Stepping into bigger shoes

*Incoming freshmen got their first look at AHS during its annual Open House*

**Ananya Pangarkar** | Staff Writer

AHS hosted Open House on Thursday, February 5th, welcoming incoming freshmen and their families onto campus to have a first look at life in high school. Teachers and students from AHS's leadership class helped the newcomers find their way around and answered questions.

The majority of the eighth graders were coming from Thornton Middle School, and many were excited to experience the campus culture for the first time. Farah Abdullah (8) said, "Everyone's been super helpful, super welcoming, and super nice. I am very excited for freshman year."

For Abdullah, high school represents an opportunity to begin thinking seriously about what's to come. "Planning out my future excites me the most about high school," she explained.

Similarly, Ken Ishiguro (8) said, "I'm excited for a new environment and meeting new people. The campus is okay, though; Thornton is lowkey better, but it'll do."

While some students expressed clear excitement, others admitted feeling nervous about the academic changes that come with high school. Kirthick Dhanaprabhu (8) shared concerns about the workload. "It's going to be a lot of work, and it might be really hard to handle all the classes," he said.

Despite these worries, Dhanaprabhu hopes to enroll in mostly advanced classes, like English 9 Honors and double-accelerated math. "I came to Open House to just check the courses available here," he explained.

Teacher DeBlonk, an English 9 teacher who spoke to students and parents at Open House, said, "Our role is to help new students and give

them information about classes that they're potentially interested in taking in the next year. Being able to ask whether they should take certain classes and get those questions answered is often very helpful."

Saanvi Joshi (8) explained a difference she is anticipating with the switch from middle school to high school. "I think my friends and generally the people I surround myself with will change the most."

Abdullah said, "I feel like there's going to be a different sense of being. Friend groups will shift; everyone will grow up and change. You'll find yourself here."

Parents who attended Open House were eager to learn more about the high school environment and classes that their kids are planning to take. Komal Singh, a parent of an incoming freshman, said, "I have a high schooler here, and I see how involved she is in school. I wish the same for my younger kid."

During Open House, Singh attended the opening session and visited the rotunda to ask about math and English placement. "The leadership team here was so helpful. I did not even have to go to the front desk; they answered all my questions," she said.

Romir Swar (11), a member of AHS's leadership team helping at the event, explained that his role during Open House was to assist incoming families. "Leadership shows up and helps people out," he said. "I answer questions from kids and parents."

Many incoming freshmen use Open House as a chance to ask upperclassmen about their class choices. "I think the biggest



*Incoming freshmen, parents, teachers, and AHS leadership students walked around the rotunda during Open House. Singh said, "I am really happy and excited to see this adventure. I'm staying excited for [my kid]" (Photo Credit: Ashish Stephen (11)).*

question they ask is whether or not they should take English Honors," said Swar.

Swar viewed Open House as an opportunity to reminisce on the time when he was an incoming freshman. "I remember when I was an eighth grader, and I came to Open House. I remember walking to the big gym, and I climbed up the stairs and tripped. It was so loud. Everyone looked at me, and I was like, 'Oh, this is high school,' and I started laughing."

Starting high school is a strange but thrilling experience for incoming freshmen, and leadership students strived to welcome them with open arms. "I remember all the upperclassmen when I was a freshman, and looking at all these freshmen, I just want to emulate those upperclassmen and be the same person that they were to me," Swar said.

## Registered and ready to vote

- POLITICS -

*An overview of AHS's voter registration event with the League of Women Voters and the Youth Voter Movement*

**Suhani Thakkar** | Staff Writer

As juniors and seniors near adulthood, they get ready to participate in voting. When they turn 16, students can pre-register to vote and prepare to take part in America's democracy, but for many, the process of pre-registering is unfamiliar. To help, AHS collaborated with the League of Women Voters and the Youth Voter Movement on February 23rd for a pre-registration event to guide students through the process.

The event was a product of the hard work and dedication of student organizers like Ayushi Makhija (11). She explained, "This event took months of planning with the League of Women Voters, and we faced many challenges as our school had a smaller team in charge of this event—putting lots of pressure and responsibilities on each of us."

In the end, all of their hard work was worth it as many students, including Shari Vaidya (11), said that they truly learned from this experience. "I really liked the event, and I now finally understand what the whole pre-registration process is and how I can participate in it."

The event meant a lot to many of the organizers due to their belief in the importance of pre-registering. Makhija said, "When our team had meetings with the League of Women Voters, we noticed that those that register to vote once usually continue to do so for the

next elections. So by getting younger people involved sooner, we can encourage their civic participation in the future as well."

Amaris LeBron, a state representative with the League of Women Voters, believes that efforts like this only benefit the younger generation. "These kinds of events can really help get students thinking about politics, and even if they are not ready to register yet, just having the information and the ability to know how to vote truly empowers them," said LeBron.

Many students, including Sahana Reka (11), are slightly hesitant to register as they reflect on the whole process of voting. "I genuinely want to register, but first I need to educate myself about what is truly happening in our government," said Reka. "I believe others should also be informed before making their choices."

LeBron provided a solution, explaining that there are many ways students can get more involved with their government. "There are lots of things students can do to boost their civic engagement. Whether it is joining an organization or getting involved in the community through things like peaceful protests, every small thing counts."

Shari Vaidya (11) shared a similar opinion that civic involvement is crucial considering the current political climate. "With all

of the things going around our country with ICE, the Epstein Files, Trump, tariffs, et cetera, I feel like people need to be more willing to vote or protest and inform themselves on the things that are going on around them because it impacts each and every one of us."



*Makhija said, "I am overall really happy with how the event turned out, and I feel like students left the event more informed and more motivated to register, which was our end goal" (Photo Credit: Tegbir Kaur (12)).*

## AHSPA wins big at Lenaea Theatre Festival (cont'd)

Yumeng Fang (10), the Assistant Props Master and the Technical Director for the one-act, compared how the play went at the free showing at AHS and the Lenaea Festival. “Our first show went so well,” she said. “We didn’t have a lot of confidence before, but when we performed it, it was like everything paid off. The showing at AHS was for us together as a team to show people what we’re working on.”

The wins at Lenaea reflected AHSPA’s commitment to theatre, showing how a strong foundation and hard work can pay off. “This win helped us feel seen and represented,” Arora said.

Santhakumar agreed. “Taking our program to Lenaea was easier because we were all so driven. We had two months to pull our pieces together, and we got it done,” she said.

## Science and Ecology Club hosts campus mulching event

*Students partner with staff and district officials to prepare campus grounds for future planting efforts*

**Ananya Pangarkar**

*Staff Writer*

AHS students, staff, and administrators gathered on campus after school on February 20th to spread mulch across several open areas near the front of the school. The event was a part of a campus-wide sustainability effort by AHS’s Science and Ecology Club in collaboration with staff and district officials.

The mulching initiative was first organized by the school’s Green Team, a group of staff members formed as part of a district-wide push to establish sustainability-focused teams at multiple school sites. Hiba Kathawala (12), Vice President of Science and Ecology Club, said, “They had this idea to remulch some of the parts on campus where the soil is lacking in nutrients, and they brought this idea to Science and Ecology Club.”

The club organized volunteers and publicized the effort. “We basically helped in spreading the information and setting up the whole volunteer event,” Kathawala said. “[The Green Team] worked with the district to get the mulch dumped on our campus, and we were in charge of getting volunteers.”

The timing of the event also aligns with future campus improvements in coming weeks. “An outside organization [Urban Forest Friends] is donating trees to the school, so we wanted to have this event right now so that the soil would be ready to have trees planted,” said Kathawala.



*Student volunteers helped spread mulch as part of the Science and Ecology Club’s event. “The work is pretty hard, though if you just put your mind to it, you can basically accomplish anything,” Seth said (Photo Credit: Aruna Harpalani (12)).*

Assistant Principal Mr. Navarette described the effort as a joint initiative between students and staff. “This is a collaboration,” Mr. Navarette said. “Science and Ecology Club has talked about it for many years, and our staff Green Team has prioritized this.”

Mr. Navarette also pointed to the environmental benefits of the project. “As you see around campus, there’s a lot of bare spaces that would benefit from having mulch on the ground,” he said. “Adding mulch helps to retain water and return nutrients to the soil. So all around, it makes our campus a healthier and greener place.”

The mulch used for the project was supplied by FUSD’s Grounds and Operations department, created from recycled landscaping materials. “The mulch comes from branches,

shrubs, and trees that have been cut or trimmed at other schools throughout the district,” Mr. Navarette explained. “All of that has been turned into mulch that we can now use for the soil.”

Student volunteers stepped-in to help with the physical labor. Daksh Seth (12) said, “I was just walking home and saw Mr. Peffer, and since he’s a super cool guy, I was like, you know what, I’ll help him out. It was pretty fun.”

Science and Ecology Club officer Kaviya Gopalakrishnan (11) said, “I’m glad that everybody came out. It was really tiring, but I like what we did. The students are going to love [the campus] a lot more now.”

Seth described the work as mostly shoveling and spreading mulch. “The event was pretty successful—they got a lot of stuff done. I’ll probably come back the next time this happens,” he said.

Valerie Quintos (12) said, “This event was fun; it was interesting. It makes our school a lot prettier and nicer, so people can actually enjoy it. I would do it again.”

The club hopes the project will continue improving campus grounds while encouraging student involvement in sustainability efforts. Kathawala said, “This event is a really good way to show other people what they can do further [for the environment].”

## Championship in Fremont’s backyard

*A look at pre-Super Bowl events in the Bay Area*

**Keithav Sivashanker** | *Staff Writer*

As anticipation for the Super Bowl built momentum in early February, excitement spread across the Bay Area. With the Super Bowl taking place at Levi’s Stadium this year, students and community members alike celebrated with watch parties and other interactive events to get people excited before the day of the game.

For some students at AHS, the Super Bowl is different from regular football games. Gaurav Vijaykumar (11) said, “I don’t watch every game of the season or anything but the Super Bowl feels much bigger. It’s more of an event than just a weekly game.”

With the championship happening locally this year, Vijaykumar said that the atmosphere felt different. “It’s actually really cool knowing that it’s happening near us. It makes it feel closer to home, and it also brings a lot more attention to the Bay Area.”

The Super Bowl LX Experi-

ence was among many interactive events hosted in preparation for this year’s game, featuring decades of NFL memorabilia. Community members like Zach Miller, an attendee of the Super Bowl LX Experience, described

**“IT’S ACTUALLY REALLY COOL KNOWING THAT IT’S HAPPENING NEAR US. IT MAKES IT FEEL CLOSER TO HOME, AND IT ALSO BRINGS A LOT MORE ATTENTION TO THE BAY AREA.”**

the event as unforgettable. “I watch the Super Bowl almost every year,” Miller said. “I’ve never been able to go to an event that displayed all of the trophies; this was the first time,” he said. “Usually whenever I watch, it’s just at home on my TV, chilling

with a bowl of nachos, but this time it felt real. The crowd, the noise—everything felt so real.”

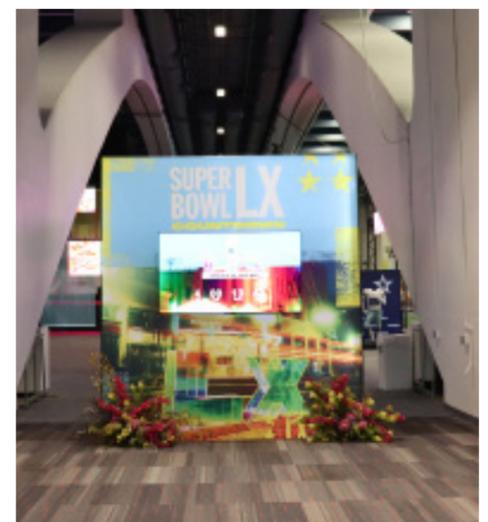
Miller has consistently followed football for most of his life. “I grew up watching it with my family, so I’m pretty familiar with the rules and strategies. It gives you a better understanding of the game when you know the rules,” he said. “I watch during the regular season and playoffs too. The Super Bowl feels like a climax after months of buildup.”

According to Miller, hosting the game locally had a very noticeable impact. “It’s huge for the Bay Area. I live in San Jose, so I could hear all the parties that were happening for the Super Bowl,” he said.

In the weeks leading up to the game, Miller attended several other Super Bowl events. “I went to a fan fest downtown and some other community events. From my house, I could also hear some

of the raving block parties that happened on some nights. I didn’t attend them, though,” he said.

He described these events as essential to building anticipation. “They really hype you up before the actual game. All these massive events get everyone excited; it’s all about building to that climax point which is the actual game.”



*A look inside the Super Bowl LX event at the Moscone Center (Photo Credit: Evan Schreiber / KSNV).*

# Puerto Rico on the 50-yard line

*Bad Bunny's halftime show brought language, culture, and a larger vision of America to the nation's biggest stage*

Today, politics are inseparable from everyday life—even the Super Bowl halftime show. Bad Bunny's performance at the game was a celebration of culture paired with subtle political statements about what America truly means and how minorities belong to that vision.

One of the most striking symbols of the performance was the Puerto Rican flag Bad Bunny carried, colored light blue instead of the darker blue commonly used today.

"The Puerto Rican flag that he was flying was the original one before the US made them change it to match the US flag," Anagha Sainath (12) explained, highlighting its historical significance.

Victoria Pacheco Valencia (10) also pointed to other symbols throughout the performance, including the sugar cane fields that represented the agricultural industry in Puerto Rico and the visual references to Puerto Rico's fragile power grid, which has struggled for years with outages and underfunding. "There was a lot of symbolism showing how Puerto Rico's electrical system is outdated and people are being refused resources," she said.

Sra. Reid, who teaches Spanish 3 and AP Spanish Language and Culture, said that a lot of these symbols were more cultural than political. "I think it was a day in the life of a Puerto Rican. Everything from the sugar cane field, reggaeton, piraguas—some might call it stereotypical, but it's not. It's awesome for people who are in bubbles to see the richness of the Latino culture," she said.

Still, the message extended beyond Puerto Rico. After saying "God Bless America," Bad

**Iniya Prabahaar | Staff Writer - POLITICS -**

Bunny proceeded to name countries across North, Central, and South America.

"He's trying to say that America isn't just the US," said Valencia. "South America, Central America, and North America all play a role in what is defined as America." The moment emphasized that the continent is made up of many nations, cultures, and people.

This idea was reinforced with the diversity of dancers who represented nations across the Western Hemisphere and through the football he held up, reading, "Together We Are America." The message pushed back against US nationalism at a time when immigration dominates political discourse.

Still, that message was not just reinforced through visuals. The decision to perform solely in Spanish sparked controversy among some viewers, while others defended the choice. "America does not have an official language, and Spanish is [one of] the most spoken languages in America. So I think it makes a lot of sense that this was in Spanish," said Sainath.

Abhay Polavajram (12), however, questioned whether



*Bad Bunny ended his Super Bowl performance carrying the 1895 flag of Puerto Rico, representing the island's history and resistance against colonial rule (Photo Credit: Rolling Stone).*

it was the right venue for an all-Spanish performance. "The Super Bowl is the most watched television event in the US," he said. "I wouldn't have had a problem if half was in Spanish and half in English, but the whole thing being in Spanish was kind of weird."

While Polavajram did not oppose the message itself, he emphasized the importance of context. "There's nothing wrong with sending a message, but there should be a time and place," he said. "The Super Bowl is mainly for entertainment."

Sra. Reid saw the all-Spanish performance as a conscious choice of inclusion. "It reached such a diverse population—not only within the United States but outside of it," she said.

Sainath argued that the message of unity felt extremely timely given the context of current ICE raids. "Due to all the problems and controversies that are happening with ICE deporting people and taking them away from their families, it's more important now than ever to be spreading messages of togetherness."

That theme was emphasized by the banner in the back reading, "The only thing more powerful than hate is love." Rather than serving as an explicit political statement, the message functioned as a broad expression of unity that many interpreted through their own perspectives. Yet, as Sainath said, "Even the message of spreading love is political today."

Whether viewers interpreted the halftime show as activism or cultural representation, the reaction itself emphasized how intertwined culture and politics have become.

On a stage designed for mass entertainment, Bad Bunny's performance did not explicitly promote a candidate or party. Instead, it asked a broader question: who gets to define America?

## New year, new elective (cont'd)

Meanwhile, the Broadcast Media Arts in Gaming course plans to cover topics for online content creation. "The emphasis is going to be on the entire broadcast journalism process: digital and visual storytelling, short- and long-form content, live streaming and broadcasting, podcasting, writing, getting sponsors, growing viewerships, and analyzing those numbers to make money," said Mr. Elam, who is teaching the course next year.

While the class emphasizes digital journalism, many topics taught in this class can be applied elsewhere. Mr. Elam said, "[This class] is in alignment with any radio, television, or general broadcast majors for college, but there's also a lot of personal brain development and marketing style involved."

For students who are interested in a Mission Valley ROP (MVROP) course, AP Cybersecurity is expanding its availability to AHS next year. Mr. Albizo, the teacher for this course, said, "Students learn practical skills such as threat

detection, incident response, risk analysis, digital forensics fundamentals, ethical hacking concepts, and the role of artificial intelligence in modern security operations."

While some may find MVROP classes to be intimidating due to scheduling challenges, AP Cybersecurity may open up new pathways for students. "At MVROP, we are no longer preparing students for a 'technology industry' but for a technology-powered economy. Every sector runs on digital infrastructure. Networks move the data. Cybersecurity protects it," said Mr. Albizo.

Many students eagerly anticipate the various new classes coming to AHS next year, especially those interested in STEM fields. "Our school already has a lot of STEM electives, but [the new courses] are more specialized," said Su. "I know a lot of people at school are interested in [STEM], so I think it's really good for the school."



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# How students are rallying against ICE

Young activists across the community demand accountability

Sachi Ladole, Kaitlyn Liu, & Tiffany Notice | Staff Writers

Over the course of several weeks early this year, students across Alameda County have organized walkouts protesting the recent actions of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Students marched, delivered speeches, and coordinated walkouts to show support for immigrants. While many participants described the demonstrations as empowering, others questioned their effectiveness at balancing the importance of students' voices alongside school policy.

After a first walkout on January 20th, AHS students returned January 30th for another demonstration, this time with more planning and organization.

According to student organizer Eason Chang (10), unlike the first walkout which was largely spontaneous, the second was intentionally structured. "I saw the sheer amount of people at the first walkout," they said. "And I thought, since the wave is still going, there should be another one."

Information about the event circulated widely through reposts of flyers on social media and word of mouth. By brunch on January 30th, a crowd amassed by the flagpole, ready to show their frustration.

The demonstrations began as the students walked in a loop around the front of the school along Fremont Boulevard, with handmade signs and posters raised high. Cars passing by honked with some drivers waving in support—adding to the energy.

Olivia Haynes (11), a student at AHS, made and distributed posters to peers and attempted to raise awareness through her social media platform. "It genuinely sickens me to know that there are people out there who think [ICE's actions] are okay. I will continue to speak up and fight for what's right. The more the word spreads, the closer we will get to change."

According to a statement on their website, ICE says its mission is to "protect America through criminal investigations and enforcing immigration laws to preserve national security and public safety."

Yet, at these protests, several students pushed back against these statements, stepping forward to deliver speeches about immigration policies and their effects on families in the community.

The protesters held a brief moment of silence for individuals who were fatally shot by ICE agents or died in custody. Students stood together near the flagpole, holding their signs for several minutes. At the end, organizers encouraged participants to sign a poster in solidarity with those affected.

## How students reacted across multiple schools

AHS was only one of the many schools that participated in protests. From Mission San Jose HS (MSJ) to James Logan HS, schools across Alameda County were similarly active about their concerns regarding ICE.

Students at Irvington HS were especially passionate about recent ICE activity. Avni Xena, who played

keep justice alive, and that tool is empathy. Empathy is refusing to let people become statistics. And right now, that matters more than ever. Not everyone can vote or protest, but everyone can refuse to be numb."

Despite her opposition towards ICE, Xena also stressed the importance of understanding, refusing to judge people who did not attend

initiative to create powerful school chants that reflected their disapproval of a long history of authoritarianism in the US. "It was pretty empowering because we were chanting some of the scripts they gave us pre-walkout, such as 'No ICE, No KKK, No Fascist USA.'"

## The future of student activism

While the recent walkouts have been fueled by student outrage and disagreement over ICE, many question their efficacy and place in an educational setting. District leaders and school officials have had to strike a balance to allow students to express their 1st Amendment rights while keeping them safe and in school.

Ms. Strausbaugh, the principal of Thornton Middle School, said, "School administration encouraged students to meet Principal Strausbaugh in the small gym to provide an opportunity for their voices to be heard and to brainstorm some ideas about how they could protest in a way that would also comply with all school rules."

At AHS, Amnesty International Club President Evangeline Bloom (11) held an event with a similar intention. On February 5th, the club hosted a letter-writing event aimed at sharing the sentiment against mass deportations with government officials.

The event gave students an alternative way to voice their concerns. Bloom was pleasantly surprised by how many people participated—to her, the dedication was apparent. "That was our largest event. [Students] definitely took it in a positive way and saw it as an opportunity for them to extend their voices."

FUSD superintendent Zack Larsen echoed this sentiment, saying, "Our goal is to support civic engagement while ensuring every student has access to the instructional time they need to succeed."

Larsen said, "Our focus remains on supporting consistent attendance, student safety, and instructional continuity so that any disruptions are minimized."

Despite the passion shown during the walkouts, the reality of student advocacy remains challenging. Now, more than a month after the first protest, student participation has declined for recent events, as was clear from the low turnout for a third protest. The Instagram account made by ASB presidents in the area, @Tri-City Against ICE, was formed after the first two protests as a way to keep the momentum going. However, miscommunication and short notice for the planned third protest at AHS ultimately led to its cancellation.

ASB President Ayush Sharma said, "We acknowledge what went wrong, but we also understand the admin's perspective, and we just try to accommodate. Moving forward, we'll figure something out that everyone can participate in."

Bloom reflected on the walkouts, expressing the importance of the momentum to continue. "What I hope to see is that students continue to care—they'll continue to stay passionate about this issue and continue to fight. It's so easy to lose hope when you're advocating for change."



Irvington students posed with posters sharing anti-ICE sentiments (Photo Credit: Nivi Shome (11)).



During the second protest, many carried signs high, displaying messages about immigration enforcement and solidarity with families affected by ICE policies (Photo Credit: Sachi Ladole (9)).



"We coordinated with student leaders, planned the timing carefully, and made sure everyone understood that the demonstration would remain peaceful and respectful," said Xena (Photo Credit: Nivi Shome (11)).

a large role in organizing the school's walkouts, stated that the walkout was led primarily by students. Xena aided in connecting to other students via social media, utilizing students' online presence to broadcast information.

Xena also had the opportunity to give a speech in front of her peers in which she displayed her passion. She stated, "We do all have one tool we can use to

walkouts. "I think that everyone has the capacity to care for innocent people. You don't have to protest, but I urge everyone to show empathy and love," she said.

Kelly Shi, a student at MSJ HS, described walking out to the front of her campus alongside some of her friends who had signed up to deliver speeches. In the days leading up to the protest at MSJ, Shi described how students took the

# INSPIRATIONAL BLACK HISTORICAL FIGURES



“LeBron James, because he battled through adversity and became a great basketball player.”  
- Aarush Lodhi (12)

“I think Flight is inspirational because is very funny and intellectual”  
- Tanav Kyabarsi (12)



Guneet Chana (11)  
**ORCHIDS**



what flower  
you like  
receive  
Valentines

**JOVINA ZION PRADEEP,  
AKSHAYA JYOTINAGARAM  
STAFF WRITERS**



# Students deserve Super Bowl Monday off

*How a national event affects students' mental focus and learning*

**Marjan Nabizada** | Staff Writer

Every year on a special Sunday night in February, millions of Americans gather around TVs with their friends and family, eat way too much food, and scream at their screen as they stay up late watching the Super Bowl. Then Monday morning comes and alarms go off. Students drag themselves to school, and teachers try to compete with nonstop game talk. If the Super Bowl is already basically a holiday, let's start actually treating it like one.

The Monday after the Super Bowl should be a national holiday. The Super Bowl is not just a football game; it is the biggest football game of the year in the country. Even people who don't normally watch sports tune in for the halftime show, commercials, and the experience of being part of something everyone is watching. As Anthony Pan (12) explained, "It's just because a lot of people are into football. It's a big sport in the US, and it's the biggest football game of the year."

With that kind of national attention, it makes no sense that people are expected to function at full productivity the very next morning. The reality is that people stay up late; whether it's celebrating a win, reacting to the halftime show, or just hanging out with friends, the night rarely ends right when the game clock hits 0.

Describing his usual experience on how the day after the Super Bowl feels like, Pan said, "I'm tired. I have been in a food coma since the day before." That one sentence sums up what so

many students feel on Monday morning—exhausted and sluggish.

Even if it doesn't completely destroy a student's ability to pay attention, it still makes the day harder than it needs to be. Pan said, "It can be rough sometimes, especially when you're tired from the night before and are still expected to stay focused in class."

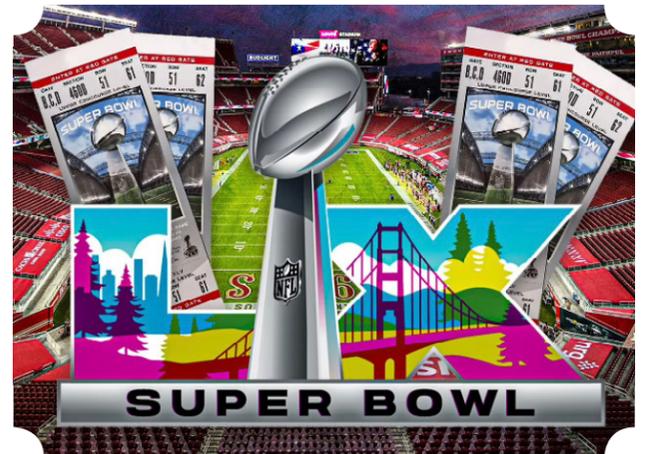
The Super Bowl also brings people together in a way few events do, and it can become a shared experience among friends. Pan said, "It brings a lot of my friends and I together, and even though we aren't super big on football, it's something everyone is talking about and watching at the same time."

Pan added, "In America, it basically is a holiday." People often plan their entire weekend around the game or even call off work to watch it. That sense of connection is powerful, and when an event consistently brings people together on a national scale, it clearly holds national importance.

A federal holiday would not just be about sleeping in—it would remove the stress that hangs over Sunday night. Pan explained that having the following day off would change how people experience the event itself. He said, "[It would be] really nice because you don't have that looming feeling of 'I have to do something tomorrow.'"

This pressure to prepare for school or work often cuts celebrations short as people leave early or become preoccupied with deadlines. With a day off, students and workers could fully enjoy the Super Bowl without a constant worry in the back of their minds.

With over 100 million Americans tuning in each year, the Super Bowl has become a shared national experience that families and friends return to annually. Recognizing the Monday after the Super Bowl as a holiday would acknowledge something that already unites millions of Americans year after year. It would improve attendance, decrease stress, and reflect the reality that the Super Bowl is more than just a game; it's a cultural tradition that has been ingrained in American life for decades.



*The Super Bowl has grown beyond a football game, becoming one of the biggest cultural events in the United States each year (Photo Credit: Pocket-lint).*

## Teaching a one-size-fits-all dream

*At a school shaped by immigrant families, teaching the American Dream as a financial milestone misses its true meaning*

**Ananya Pangarkar**

Staff Writer

During the first week of February, juniors at AHS had a timed writing assessment to define an attainable American Dream. Through various sources, students analyzed rising housing prices, student debt, and shifting definitions of success. Yet the discussion centered almost entirely on the assumption that the American Dream is primarily about money and homeownership.

Across the source packet, the American Dream is treated mostly as a financial goal. [Source redacted] from [Source redacted] explains how the dream gradually became cemented around homeownership. [Source redacted] measures the stability of the American Dream through income mobility and financial independence. [Source redacted] focuses on student debt, wages, and rising costs.

Yet, this makes it seem like the American Dream is only about financial success. But for many immigrant families, financial security is a result of opportunity—not the definition of it. In a classroom where the majority of the students are immigrants or second-generation Americans, this distinction matters.

America has long been described as a meritocracy where people can succeed through hard work regardless of their background. This belief has drawn millions of immigrants to the country who hoped to escape the rigid social systems of their countries of origin where caste, last name, or religion determine opportunity.

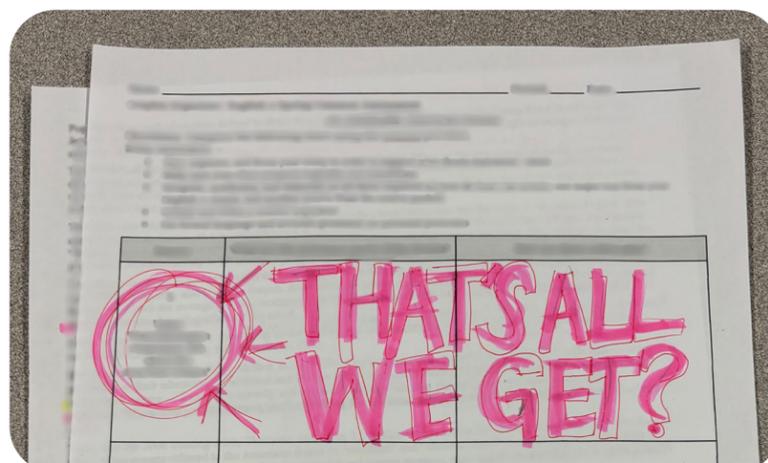
Saanika Urgaonkar (11), whose parents immigrated to America, said, "When my parents talk about why they came here, they

don't mention money first. It's more about having more options for jobs and social mobility."

For first-generation students, this idea isn't abstract. Many grow up hearing stories of parents who left extended family behind, worked multiple jobs, and navigated a new language and culture. The expectation to make their parents' sacrifices worthwhile can feel heavy, and the American Dream becomes tied not just to personal ambition but also to honoring those sacrifices.

Urgaonkar said, "There's this pressure to do something meaningful with the opportunities they have provided me with, especially since they didn't have them initially. The American Dream for me is more about not wasting the chances they've given me."

When lessons in class reduce the dream to economic statistics, it narrows something personal for many students. It pushes a version of the dream shaped by white Americans rather than the realities of immigrant families who came seeking opportunity.



*Only one source involved first-generation Americans talking about the American Dream, and for some, it ended up feeling overshadowed by the rest of the sources (Photo Credit: Ananya Pangarkar (11)).*

This financial framing did not emerge randomly. Historically, the mainstream version of the American Dream was developed by white, middle-class Americans who were not systematically excluded from opportunities because of caste, religion, or immigrant status. Thus, success often becomes defined by upward economic mobility because basic security was already guaranteed for those people.

In contrast, for many immigrant families, the "opportunity" itself is the milestone. The ability to pursue higher education, choose a profession freely, or practice religion openly may represent fulfillment before wealth even enters the picture.

When the curriculum centers financial definitions of success without equally valuing immigrant narratives, it reflects the historical lens through which American institutions were built. Public education was not originally designed with immigrant-majority classrooms in mind. As demographics shift, the curriculum should continuously evolve too.

The American Dream unit in junior year does include a video of first-generation Americans discussing the topic, but that brief perspective feels secondary to the other, lengthy written sources that focus on economic data.

Yet, if the goal is to prompt students to examine definitions of the American Dream, curricula should reflect the experiences most common in the classroom. It should ask how immigration and cultural expectations shape what the dream means, and recognize that for some families, simply having the chance to make a life through hard work and merit is already part of achieving the American Dream.

# The age of anti-aging

*Celebrities with excessive filler and Botox negatively affect young audiences' perceptions of beauty*

**Iniya Prabaha** | Staff Writer

Turn on the television, open Instagram, or sit through a red carpet interview and the same image will greet you: celebrities with identical high cheekbones, identical sculpted noses, and identical overfilled lips. Wrinkles have vanished, smile lines are missing, and distinct ethnic features have been softened. The audience is left with a hyper-curated, artificial version of beauty—one that young audiences are expected to internalize as normal.

Cosmetic procedures have exploded in popularity over the last decade. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, minimally invasive procedures such as Botox or filler have increased by nearly 80% between 2019 and 2024.

At the same time, social media platforms such as TikTok have normalized preventative Botox, encouraging teenagers to fear wrinkles they do not yet have. Young adults now document online cosmetic consultations the way previous generations documented haircuts or skincare routines. As these procedures become frequent, they don't just change faces—they change expectations.

The greatest concern is what these curated images teach young people about aging. Wrinkles, smile lines, and textured skin—all things that used to be seen as markers of a life fully lived—are now treated as failures. "Aging isn't even a concept anymore," Nishitha Gopinath (12) explained. "There are 60-year-olds striving to look like 20-year-olds."

But the issue extends beyond looking younger. As more celebrities refine their features through fillers and injectables, beauty begins to flatten into sameness. High cheekbones, sculpted noses, and plumped lips repeat across screens. Gopinath described the result as a "copy-paste" standard of beauty. "Everyone who gets filler or Botox wants pretty much the same thing. There's no diversity anymore," she said.

This homogenization overwhelmingly favors Eurocentric features such as small noses and light facial structures—subtly framing natural ethnic traits as flaws to be fixed.

"As a person of color living in the United States, consuming media where most people in TV shows and movies are white with Eurocentric facial features definitely makes me question whether I would be seen as beautiful compared to these people," said Gopinath, reflecting.

**"AS A PERSON OF COLOR LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES, CONSUMING MEDIA WHERE MOST PEOPLE IN TV SHOWS AND MOVIES ARE WHITE WITH EUROCENTRIC FACIAL FEATURES DEFINITELY MAKES ME QUESTION WHETHER I WOULD BE SEEN AS BEAUTIFUL COMPARED TO THESE PEOPLE."**

A 2022 Dove Self-Esteem Project report found that 1 in 2 girls between the ages of 10 and 17 found idealized content on the Internet to contribute to lower self-esteem. When celebrities change their appearance to fit a narrow ideal, younger audiences absorb

the message that beauty is something objective and bought at the cost of individuality.

For youth, these standards have real consequences on their personal perceptions of beauty. "It makes them feel undesirable. No matter how confident they are—when everyone on their screen has the same nose shape—it makes them feel like they'll never be accepted," said Gopinath.

This sense of inadequacy doesn't fade when the screen turns off. It pushes young people to consider cosmetic procedures at younger ages and equate self-worth with physical modification.

Since these pressures are reinforced daily by social media algorithms, there is no off-switch for this culture. Procedures will continue to advance in the future, and fame will remain tied to appearance. Celebrities are incentivized to maintain standards of beauty because relevance and public attention are determined by beauty standards.

Expecting it to reverse course is unrealistic. It would require dismantling interconnected industries including entertainment and cosmetic surgery—advertising that all benefit from promoting this aesthetic. It would also require audiences to collectively disengage from content that has been engineered to captivate them.

Yet, if young audiences grow up understanding that what they see is constructed, the power of those images begins to shrink, and they will recognize that a standard built on erasure of age, ethnicity, and individuality is not worth carrying forward.

## Trying a new formula

*A review of new menu arrivals and returning items at Taco Bell*

**Anthony You**  
Staff Writer

Taco Bell is well-known as a fast-food restaurant that tries new things and keeps customers on their toes. From its inception, it established differences from its competitors, serving tacos instead of burgers, and establishing its own drink—Mountain Dew Baja Blast—that was exclusive to its restaurants until January 2024.

Taco Bell's nacho fries were first introduced in January 2018 as a limited-time item, resulting in a massive success. They typically come back every year, and customers often return to Taco Bell just to grab an order of these fries. At the Taco Bell on Fremont Boulevard, the nacho fries were crispy—seasoned to perfection with a salty, savory, and slightly sweet seasoning. Many agreed that dipping them into the nacho cheese sauce they come with helps enhance their flavor.

Before they were introduced at Taco Bell, many people were not expecting a Mexican fast-food restaurant to make chicken nuggets. When they appeared on the menu,



*The new chicken nuggets and returning nacho fries on the menu at Taco Bell (Photo Credit: Anthony You (12)).*

people were shocked; Taco Bell even released a statement explaining their decision. As Taco Bell explains on its website page, The Lore: Crispy Chicken Nuggets, "Of course, we didn't want to make it fit into our existing menu but rather work it into the menu in an authentic and inspiring way." Knowing that the item was

a far step from its current consumer base, Taco Bell created new sauces to pair with the crispy chicken nuggets, trying to work them into their original menu.

The chicken nugget concept was first tested at a Taco Bell in New Caney, Texas. At the restaurant, creative twists like adding nacho cheese sauce and hot sauce to the chicken nuggets helped sell the appeal to customers.

Although the chicken nuggets were indeed crispy, the chicken on the inside was quite dry in comparison with other fast-food chains that specialize in chicken nuggets, like McDonald's. They seemed to be seasoned only with salt and pepper, and so they were quite bland without the dipping sauce, which could not even completely fix the dryness.

The nuggets were also slightly overcooked as they were appeared to be a darker brown than their ideal golden brown color. After taking his first bite of the chicken nuggets, Yertegen Karzhaubay (12) said, "It is so dry, and the taste is not very good. It just tastes like salt with minimal seasoning."

## AHS embraces the season of love

*The ways students celebrate Valentine's Day in 2026 are more creative than one might think*

Jovina Zion Pradeep | Staff Writer

Valentine's Day is often associated with grand romantic gestures, but at AHS, traditions emphasize connection and inclusivity—even for students who aren't in relationships.

This year some students exchanged cards and desserts with classmates, a tradition that, for many, began during elementary school classroom Valentine's Day celebrations. "I still remember how people used to bring bags of goodies with toys, pencils, and snacks inside," said Nida Sanglerdkatanyoo (12).

ASB member Jinzhu Chen (12) recalled a Leadership activity in which each student received a decorated bag filled with small treats. "It brought back childhood memories, and small things like handmade gifts show appreciation to people you might not always interact with," she said.

On a larger scale, ASB fostered that same sense of belonging through schoolwide traditions. During the annual Love Eagles Week, ASB members wrote the names of every AHS student and staff member on paper hearts displayed in the rotunda.

"It's fun to hunt for your name," said Sanglerdkatanyoo. "It shows that the school cares about everyone. It recognizes that you're part of the American High family."

ASB strived to keep Love Eagles Week engaging for all students by hosting various activities such as holding a bouquet-making event, offering free candy to students who dressed in pink or red, and distributing free hot chocolate before school.

Rose Grams have also remained a highlight each year. "ASB hand-delivers roses and letters to classrooms, and seeing students' reactions is really sweet," Chen said. "One year, 15 roses ended up going to the same person. She was so happy, and it was really sweet."

Groups like the AHS Crafts and Baking Club also contributed to the celebrations by selling Teddy Grams to be delivered to students' loved ones as a way to show their appreciation.

"I buy teddy bears every year for my friends," Chen said. "It's a tradition that should definitely keep going."

Sanglerdkatanyoo explained the importance of thoughtful gestures over expensive presents. "If you gift something that's expensive but you don't have genuine intentions, that's not meaningful. But if it's something that's practical and handmade and it makes them feel loved, it will make them happy because it shows effort."

Smaller, nontraditional moments of joy near Valentine's



"This year, we have a four-day weekend for Valentine's Day, so we have one less day to keep our decorations up and host activities—which is a challenge. I really hope we can get more participation this year," Chen said (Photo Credit: Jovina Zion Pradeep (12)).

**"IT'S REALLY NICE THAT OUR GENERATION HAS TURNED VAL- ENTINE'S INTO LESS OF AN IDEAL- IZED COUPLE THING AND MORE OF WHAT YOU MIGHT HEAR AS GAL- ENTINE'S, WHERE PEOPLE GATHER WITH THEIR FRIENDS. YOU JUST NEED SPECIAL PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE TO APPRECIATE."**

Day have slowly gained importance for students over the years. "Last year, my friends bought a Valentine's special from Chick-fil-A, which was a heart-shaped tray with chicken, cookies, and pretzels," Chen said.

Although Valentine's Day can create pressure to be in a relationship, students at AHS aim to make celebrations inclusive for everyone. "It's really nice that our generation has turned Valentine's into less of an idealized couple thing and more of what you might hear as Galentine's, where people gather with their friends," said Chen. "You just need special people in your life to appreciate them; it's like Thanksgiving for the people you love."

As Chen put it, "Love everyone, love yourself, and love your family every day—beyond Valentine's Day."

## A\$AP Rocky's latest addition to his discography

*A review of the long-awaited Don't Be Dumb by A\$AP Rocky*

Shaurya Chaudhary | Staff Writer

A\$AP Rocky recently came back to music after an almost decade-long hiatus; *Don't Be Dumb* finally released on January 16, 2026 after numerous delays.

It was first teased in 2022 when Rocky released "D.M.B" on May 5th, starting a public rollout by releasing a few singles and appearing in a few music videos. Unfortunately for fans, Rocky did not end up releasing a full album in 2022. His popularity grew rapidly when he released a mashup of two older songs in 2023 which racked up over 700 million plays on Spotify.

Rocky's older music is well regarded in hip-hop circles. Olivia Haynes (11) said, "I enjoy the direction his music is going, but I'll always prefer his old music. His music also always has a deep meaning, which just shows how thought-out it is."

His mixtape *Live.Love.A\$AP* took inspiration from old New York rappers. Sergio Medina (11) said, "It definitely has inspiration from Nas and Big Al. The drums are very gritty and almost sound like New York itself."

Still, Rocky pushed the genre in new directions. He refined his spacey sound and continued to release music, but in 2018, his style changed. The album *Testing* had an experimental sound—not receiving many positive reviews—as Rocky performed on electronic music and unusual instrumentals that fans



*Don't Be Dumb's album cover made in collaboration with Tim Burton (Photo Credit: A\$AP Rocky).*

weren't comfortable with.

Yet, *Don't Be Dumb* still features lots of styles. Before the album's release, Rocky explained that it contained every genre of music. The first lead single for the album, "Punk Rocky," is sung on a rock instrumental that sounds similar to his older song "Sundress" but is more upbeat. He also raps on an early 2000s digital beat in the song "STFU" featuring Slay Squad. Rocky also developed previous sounds from *Testing* on the songs "NO TRESPASSING" and "AIR FORCE (BLACK DEMARCO)."

"FISH N STEAK (WHAT IT IS)" features long-term collaborator Tyler, The Creator and Jozzy—

bringing the album back to Rocky's roots. It starts with a dark flute and pitched-down vocal performance from Tyler and Rocky as they acknowledge their early beginnings, saying, "A\$AP Rocky and Tyler up here in H-Town, man / Slowin' down the world, one song at a time / From H-Town to Harlem."

In 2024, during the feud between Kendrick Lamar and Drake, Rocky was mentioned in one of Drake's diss tracks because of complications over Rihanna. Rocky addresses this on "STOLE YA FLOW," where he says, "First you stole my flow, so I stole yo' b\*\*\*\* / N\*\*\*\* gettin' BBLs, lucky we don't body shame / Throwin' dirt on Rocky name, turn around and copy game." Drake has not yet responded, so the argument is still unresolved.

Overall, A\$AP Rocky gained mixed reviews on his musical transition. Medina said, "He has some chill beats on *Don't Be Dumb*, but I don't know if I like the new Rocky over the old one."

In the same vein, Jaskirat Singh (11) said, "On the new album he tries to have an uptempo pace while his old albums were slower and more groovy. The new uptempo did overshadow the lyrics and made some songs underwhelming."

*Don't Be Dumb* has lots of innovative elements, but some sounds from the *Testing* era need to be further refined. 8/10.

# Jumps, spins, and Olympic grace

Highlights from this year's Winter Olympics figure skating season

Sachi Ladole | Staff Writer

Athletes from more than 90 countries gathered in Milan this year to compete in the 2026 Winter Olympics. Team USA was a strong contender, securing a total of 12 gold medals and 33 overall medals by competing in events like skiing, snowboarding, hockey, and figure skating.

Figure skating was a fan-favorite event this year at the Olympics, with unexpected wins and rising stars. The individual skating events were separated into men's singles and women's singles. Each skater performed a short program and a free skate for judges to evaluate based on technical elements such as jumps, spins, lifts, and step sequences, along with program components including skating skills and performance quality.

For many viewers, it's this combination of athletic difficulty and artistry that makes the sport so compelling. Abigail Li (11), a previous Junior Olympic artistic swimmer, explained the similarities between the 2 sports and what makes them special. "I think that artistic sports are so uniquely beautiful," Li said. "More people need to watch figure skating



Liu crushed her free skate program, eventually earning a gold medal (Photo Credit: Andy Cheung/Getty Images).

because not only are the athletes extremely athletic, but they also move with so much intention that I think it really tells a story."

In the men's category, much of the attention was focused on Ilia Malinin of the United States. Known as the "Quad God" for his record-breaking quadruple jumps, Malinin entered the Olympics as a shoo-in for gold. However, 2 unexpected falls during his free skate dramatically lowered his score to 264.49, placing him eighth overall. Fans across social media expressed shock and disappointment, sharing clips of his falls and commenting on the unpredictability of the Olympics. Some speculated that inadequate ice conditions may have contributed to these falls, noting that other skaters and athletes complained about clean landings being more difficult than usual.

Kazakhstan's Mikhail Shaidorov took advantage of this opportunity, delivering a confident and technically demanding performance. He secured gold with a final score of 291.58 because of a program that included multiple successful quadruple jumps to "Confessa" and "Diva Dance" by Kazakh singer Dimash Qudaibergen.

Veteran US skater Amber Glenn had one of the most dramatic storylines of the women's event. After a mistimed jump in the short program, she fell to 13th place—an outcome no one expected. Yet, going into the free skate, she remained calm and delivered an almost flawless performance, climbing all the way up to fifth place overall.

Angela Diao (10) was a big fan of the sport



Snow piled on the Olympics logo (Photo Credit: Richard Heathcote/Getty Images).

at the Olympics, watching the games solely for figure skating. She shared her enthusiasm, saying, "People like figure skating because of how nice it looks—the way they skate."

Fan favorite American figure skater Alysa Liu drew widespread attention for her return to the Olympic competition after stepping away from the sport for almost 2 years. After originally leaving due to burnout, Liu went into this year's Olympics with a mindset to do her best—with or without a medal. Through her programs, she delivered memorable shows, capturing the gold medal with a combined total score of 226.79.

Although she wasn't leading after the short program, her performance to "Promise" by Laufey reflected her emotions reentering a sport she thought she left in the past. Fans took to social media showing their support for the skater, pushing her to the limelight of figure skating this year.

As a previous artistic athlete, Li mentioned how Liu's program theme spoke to her. "I still think about artistic swimming a lot, so I really liked how she incorporated the meaning of art and figure skating in her routine."

## AHS wrestling wraps up its 2025-2026 season

Highlights of the girls' and boys' wrestling teams this year

Arana Harpalani & Tegbir Kaur | Editors-in-Chief



Aaliyah Wolfe (18) at the top of the podium of the 145lb girls weight class at NCS Divisionals.



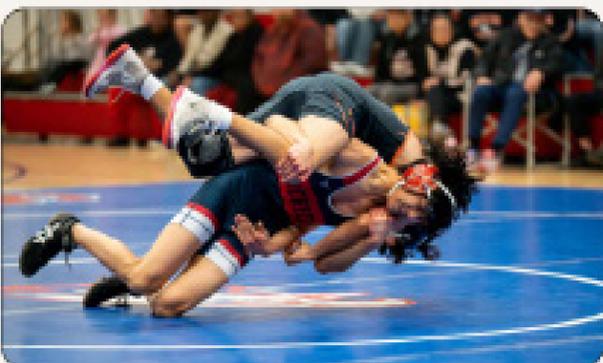
Noah Kariakose (11) strapped on his ankle band in the last moments before his match began.



Christian Reed (12) (right) wrestled from a front headlock, looking to score a takedown at NCS Divisionals.



Samiah Seymore (12) at the top of the podium of the 135lb girls weight class at NCS Divisionals.



Miaoh Chen (11) (bottom) shot a takedown on his opponent during the wrestling team's senior night dual against Washington HS.



Lyla Tillman (9) (right) handfight into an underhook at the San Ramon Valley Varsity Invitational.

### NCS Championship Placers

Samiah Seymore - 4th    Aaliyah Wolfe - 6th  
Lyla Tillman - 5th    Julianna Ouye - 6th

### NCS Division 1 Placers

Samiah Seymore - 1st    Grace Cao - 5th  
Aaliyah Wolfe - 1st    Isaac Chang - 6th  
Julianna Ouye - 2nd    Noah Kariakose - 6th  
Pech Wongkositarnon - 3rd    Royden Liang - 6th  
Lyla Tillman - 4th    Paetra Mavuro - 8th



Photo Credit: Dustin Tillman

# Behind the pages of *Buggin' Art Magazine*

An in-depth look at how the AHS Magazine Club created its newest edition

Jonathan Wang | Staff Writer

The academically slanted nature of the Bay Area lends itself to producing plenty of overachieving students who excel in STEM subjects—leaving little room for creativity and artistic expression. AHS's Magazine Club aims to address this issue through their digital magazine, *Buggin' Art Magazine*, which is dedicated to providing a platform to uplift different forms of artistry around the Bay Area. The magazine showcases various forms of visual art like photography, music, writing, and fashion.

As a nonprofit organization, the club also offers service hours to volunteers and has formed connections to other high schools in the area. Rachel Wu (11), Vice President and Visual Arts Leader, said, "We even have officers from different schools like Mission San Jose and Washington, so we can reach out to students from other high schools and people all over the Bay Area."

The club has thus created an inclusive environment where students across the community can submit different forms of artwork. The rules for submissions are simple: be a Bay Area high schooler and have something creative you want to share.

Ivan Kuznetsov (11), a member of the club, said, "I joined because I always wanted to be part of a magazine that really brought everyone together, especially when we work together on projects like photo shoots."

The club's newest issue is centered around the theme of found footage and horror, which was finalized after lengthy discussions and meetings. "So far, the styles of our art submissions vary with each artist, as everyone has their own art style," said Wu. "But since the theme for this edition is horror-related, when I'm selecting pieces, I try to find works that have an eerie and creepy feeling."

The club has seen many different people invest considerable time and energy into their newest issue, and the collective dedication required to construct and publish the magazine has revealed students' passion for art. "Our club is mostly composed of artists, but some people are also just interested in filmmaking and photography," said Kuznetsov. "We have some photographers who assimilated themselves and started showing up to meetings after volunteering as a photographer."

Their efforts include hosting several events like photo shoots to provide opportunities for students to congregate and create their art as a team. Wu said, "We've had 2

photo shoots so far. We all come together to make a reference board on Pinterest of the vibe we want to showcase, then we plan out a location, find photographers, and we go and take the pictures."

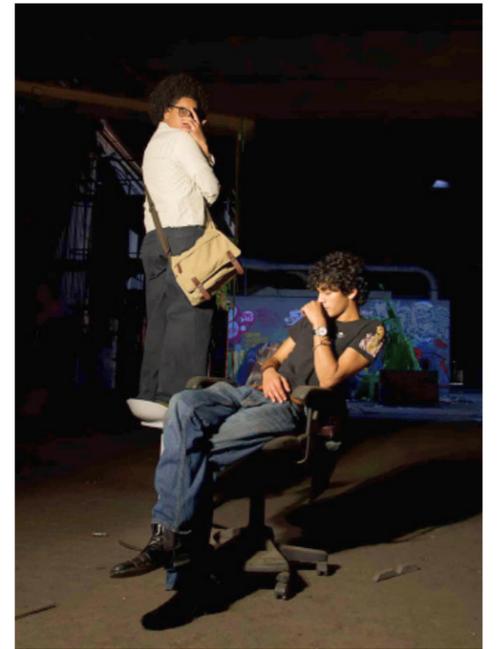
Planning these photo shoots takes careful consideration and creativity. Kuznetsov, who was tasked with organizing a photo shoot, said, "I chose an abandoned steel factory because the inside was dark and eerie, making it a great spot to take found footage photos."

The club has also held crafting events where they put together a collage magazine—a style of art created from combining various materials into a cohesive work. "We brought in a bunch of magazines, cut them out into pieces, and put them on a sheet. And by the end of the meeting, we had many different pieces of art that were made into a collage," said Wu.

*Buggin' Art Magazine's* newest issue, "Edition 1: Found Footage," was published at the end of February and posted to its Instagram @bugginartmagazine. Wu said, "For the near future, *Buggin'* plans on

publishing 4 complete editions by June of this year and also applying to NSPA Pacemaker and CSPA Crown Awards."

Kuznetsov takes pride in being part of *Buggin' Art Magazine* and its collective purpose. He said, "It exposes more art in AHS and the world, and it shows how others can express themselves through their art and photography."



Mumin Yousif (11) and Ayaan Arif (11) posed in an abandoned steel factory for their Found Footage Photo Shoot (Photo Credit: Philip Liao (11)).

## WORD SEARCH

Tegbir Kaur and Carolyn Baskar John | Co-Editor-in-Chief, Design Editor

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ADORATION

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