



## Parading Prior to Annual Homecoming Dance

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As the football team prepared for its last home game and service clubs made banners and floats related to this year's Homecoming's theme, AHS's second annual parade and dance were just days away. Student council members, service and interest clubs, the Mighty Moor Marching Band and dance teams walked down the parade route together to Moor Field where the Homecoming game occurred.

A tradition of competing with hand-made club floats was brought back this year; participating clubs included Kaibigan, Leo, United Royals, Interact, and Campus, Junior Civitan and Kokua Lima, in a collaboration. Clubs marched together in the annual parade with their floats to display their school pride and to present their floats in the hopes of winning the competition.

"It was unbelievably fun planning out ideas with new and old friends [for our

club float]. Since everyone [had] a different outlook on things, the amount of creativity that went into the floats [was incredible]. [Kaibigan] was able to put a little of everyone's personality into the project," Kaibigan Inter-Club Council (ICC) representative Carmen Le said.



MOOR photo by SHANNON KHA

**MARCHING TO HOMECOMING** Senior Danny Jian plays the tuba during the AHS Homecoming parade to Moor field on Oct. 23.

Different from last year, ASB passed out blue and gold pom-poms instead of T-shirts. According to 2016 Class President Amy Than, the pom-poms really influenced the school's spirit be-

cause they encouraged a lot of cheering.

"[This year's dance] decorations were a lot more fun and displayed the theme nicely. We incorporated the Wizard of Oz theme into all our decorations, so people would be able to look at them and know what [ASB's] vision was," Homecoming dance committee co-head Vanessa Gutierrez said.

The dance took place on Oct. 24 in the big gym from 7 to 11 p.m. Decorations pertaining to this year's theme surrounded the gym while clubs sold food and drinks during the dance. Last year's theme, "Nightmare in Wonderland," was a mix of ideas from both the Nightmare Before Halloween and Alice in Wonderland while this year's theme focused on ideas from the 1939 movie, the Wizard of Oz. "ASB did a 'magical' job [in enhancing] the theme

for this year's Homecoming. Through the assembly and rallies, I felt that there was a larger emphasis on the theme throughout the days [leading] to [the day of the dance]," senior Jeremy Tran said.

## Student-Teacher Connections May Lessen Achievement Gap

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Recently, a Harvard University study has detailed a possible link between successful academic performance and similarities in both teachers' and students' interests. In the study, the researchers administered a survey featuring questions such as preferred way to communicate with friends and favorite hobbies to 315 ninth-graders and 25 teachers at the beginning of a school year.

The results of the survey, particularly the ones that demonstrated a link between student and teacher responses, were disclosed to a select group of these individuals. By the end of the year, the students that were aware of the results, especially the ones that identified as racial minorities, witnessed a noticeable increase in grades compared to those of their peers.

"I know my student's worlds don't revolve around math," math teacher Tara Isozaki said. "So I like to learn about each

student's interests and activities and relate them to what I teach. Involving their sports in examples is something they always love."

According to the American Psychological Association, positive teacher-student relationships can promote the trust and support that leads to improved academic performance. By teaching in a way that acknowledges students' individual differences and opinions, teachers can encourage more classroom engagement and foster the motivation to learn.

Each day after school, Isozaki opens her classroom for students to work and study in, as well as communicate with her as needed. In the previous school year, she also asked her students to complete a personal survey, allowing her to learn aspects such as the languages they spoke and the music they listened to.

"I do notice that the students I'm closer with are more comfortable with trial-and-error, making mistakes, and asking questions without feeling like

they will be judged," Isozaki said.

Achievement gaps related to poverty, English language proficiency, disability, and racial and ethnic background are still very prominent in spite of decades of overall progress in combating such discrepancies, according to the National Education Association. This disparity persists because of both school-related and non-school-related factors, including the home-study environment, frequent changes in schools, and the amount of experience among the faculty interacting with students.

The researchers of the Harvard study hope that teachers can apply its results to build stronger connections with students and decrease the achievement gap between different ethnic groups.

"I feel like using a survey would actually be beneficial some of my past teachers have done something similar, and I saw how it allowed teachers to develop an actual relationship with their students outside of school," senior Gage Flores said.

MOOR graphic by SAMMIE CHEN

## Champlain College Reports Grades for States' Financial Literacy

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On Oct. 20, Champlain College's Center for Financial Literacy released the 2015 report card of states, evaluating how efficiently high schools teach students about personal finance. With the growing number of students who graduate to attend colleges and universities, financial education has become increasingly crucial. According to Champlain College's Center for Financial literacy, the 2015 results show that there is more to be done before the U.S. becomes a financially literate nation.

Champlain College reports that less than half of the states received grades of an A or B, and 29 percent got a grade of a D or F. Eleven states, including California, were

given an F grade because there are few or no requirements for financial education in high school. In these states, high school students are able to graduate without ever having to take a financial literacy course.

"Basic knowledge in finance will be really helpful in the future, because we all need to know how to spend and budget money wisely. Learning how to handle money is something we'll need to know for everyday life," junior Brandon Phan said.

Literacy in personal finances provides high school students a foundation of knowledge and skills that may assist in leading them to lives of financial stability.

Champlain College states that financial literacy is just like reading, writing and mathematics. It empowers individuals and gives them the opportunity to build a ba-

sis for personal finance that they will use for their entire lives. Having basic knowledge of financial management, like saving, making investments, and budgeting creates a foundation for buying a home, going to college, and preparing for retirement.

In AHS, the classes that offer basic instruction in managing personal finances include, international business, finance, accounting, and marketing.

"Financial literacy is important because we pretty much interact with finance on a daily basis. You have to know how to manage money. Proper financial literacy will benefit students in the future by helping them stay organized and to make smart decisions with purchasing, saving, and investing," finance teacher Thomas Jelsma said.

MOOR graphic by SAMMIE CHEN

## Students Say Goodbye to HS Exit Exam

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The CAHSEE (California High School Exit Exam) was first administered optionally in 2001 to ninth grade high school students with the primary purpose being to support further student achievement and ensure that students can demonstrate grade level competency in reading, writing, and mathematics, according to the California Department of Education.

However, this month, Governor Jerry Brown signed a bill that suspends the CAHSEE from being a mandatory requirement for graduation. The bill also automatically grants high school diplomas to past students from as far back as 2006, who did not graduate simply because they did not obtain satisfactory grades on the exam.

"I'm pretty relieved that I don't have to worry about taking the CAHSEE. If students are [learning and being tested on Common Core Standards,] the CAHSEE does not serve as an efficient evaluation on the students abilities," sophomore Sydney Chang said.

Still, this may not be the last we see of mandatory high school exit exams. As of now, this suspension withstands up until the graduating class of 2018. One of the leading causes for the dismissal of the CAHSEE is that it is outdated and does not align with new Common Core standards. The California Department of Education may present high schools with a redesigned test that satisfies Common Core objectives in the future.

## CSUs Drowning Under High Student Demand

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Contrary to many beliefs of the rigor of the California State University (CSU) system's acceptance requirements from previous years, more and more students have been turned away ever since CSUs reached an overwhelmingly high number of applicants. According to the Los Angeles Times, an estimated 25,000 high school graduates have been rejected by CSUs in recent years because the campuses lack sufficient funds to hire enough full-time faculty to meet all of the applicants' needs.

"I feel discouraged [trying] to apply for CSUs because [of the increasing] competition," senior Raymond Hunyh said.

According to Pasadena Star News, CSUs have received approximately 790,000 applicants for the Fall 2015 semester. Many students, especially low-income students, prefer CSUs due to their low costs and relatively small student debt load among graduating students. However, the system must recover, from the Great Recession, \$2 billion in state budget cuts that had been in effect from 2007 to 2012.

Students used to have high prospects of acceptance to CSUs if they received good grades in high school with at least a 2.0 GPA. However, last year, CSU decided to require test scores as well, unless a student has a grade point average above 3.0 and is a California resident.

"[I] encourage students to apply broadly [...] If you can't get into an impacted major, try to take alternate majors [or] prerequisite classes first," Career and Technical Education adviser Janice Liu said.