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Constitutionality of Laws Protecting Teachers Challenged

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On Jan. 27, nine public school students in California took a law-suit, concerning the constitutionality of laws that ensure teacher tenure and seniority, to court. The lawsuit, *Vergara v. California*, was first filed in May 2012 by Students Matter, a national non-profit advocacy group, against California and the California Department of Education.

The plaintiffs – the students – aimed to overhaul the current dismissal process, extend the time frame for teachers to gain tenure and abolish the “last in, first out” policy. Students Matter argued that the Permanent Employment Statute, which obligates school administrators to grant or deny permanent employment to instructors in 18 months or less,

does not allow schools enough time to draw a valid conclusion.

“The system is dysfunctional and arbitrary. Outdated laws handcuff schools administrators from operating in a fashion that protects school children and their rights to equality of education,” lead attorney Theodore Boutrous said, according to NBC.

According to the Los Angeles Times, the effectiveness of teachers has been questioned over

the years as school districts, including the Los Angeles Unified School District, have attempted to find a correlation between teacher

consuming.” Within the last decade, LAUSD officials have spent an estimated \$3.5 million attempting to fire seven of the district’s

teachers for unsatisfactory classroom performance.

A according to LA Weekly’s five-month investigation, LA USD officials spent approximately

\$3.5 mil-

lion within the last decade trying to fire seven of the district’s 33,000 teachers for lackluster classroom performance, with

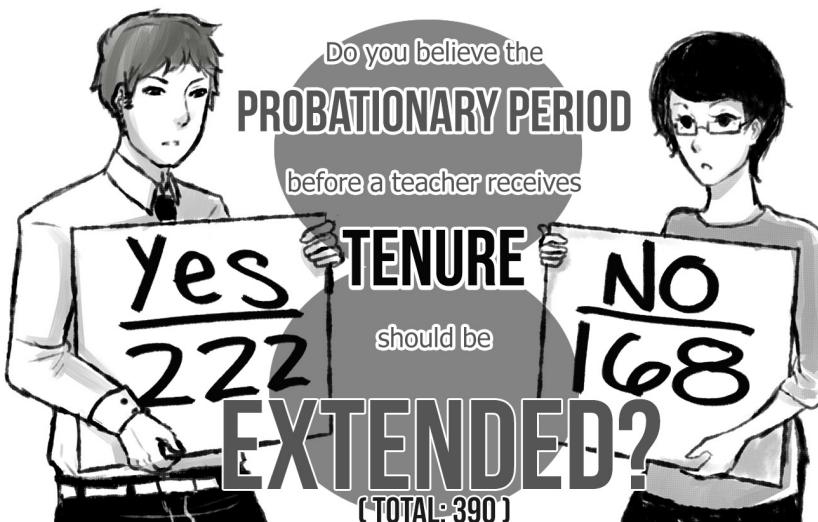
only four actually being removed.

“The years prior to the tenure should be extended. The security that tenure provides shouldn’t make the teachers feel too comfortable with their jobs,” senior Ricky Armenta said.

Teacher unions consider tenure, seniority rules and the dismissal process as safeguards and an essential part of the hiring process of teachers. Tenure was established to protect teacher’s academic freedom. Although tenure is considered to be a “safety net,” it does not prevent school districts from firing teachers.

“The process for teachers to attain tenure is adequate because it protects our [teacher’s] academic freedom. Some forget that teachers teach because they want to express their creativity in their jobs,” history teacher Bill Yee said.

MOOR graphic by GEN THIPATIMA



evaluations and students’ standardized test scores. The plaintiff claims that the current dismissal process is too “costly and time-

Acadec Qualifies for State Competition

SHELLEY LIN
Staff Writer

Academic Decathlon (Acadec) is an annual high school academic competition organized by the non-profit United States Acadec Association. Individuals take seven multiple choice tests in 30 minutes in the subjects art, economics, language and literature, math, music, science and social science. In addition, there are three subjective events that are graded by judges: the essay, interview and speech.

AHS’ Acadec team won 7th place county finish and 3rd place team finish in Super Quiz. Among those who placed in the competition were Derek Duong, Bonnie Lam, Jeffrey Le, Jonathan Le, Henry Lee and Chi Yu.

“While I’ve been in Acadec, I’ve gone through rigorous training to cram and excel in ten subjects. I’ve learned to bond with other people on a team and to communicate my ideas through the speech and interview events,” Lam said.

For the first time in two years, AHS’ team qualified for the state tournament in Sacramento in March. In order to earn a spot at the national competition, AHS’ Acadec must place first in the state competition.

“Being in Academic Decathlon has changed my perspective on success and has inspired me to continue working harder due to many ambitious and talented students I meet during the competition,” Lam said.

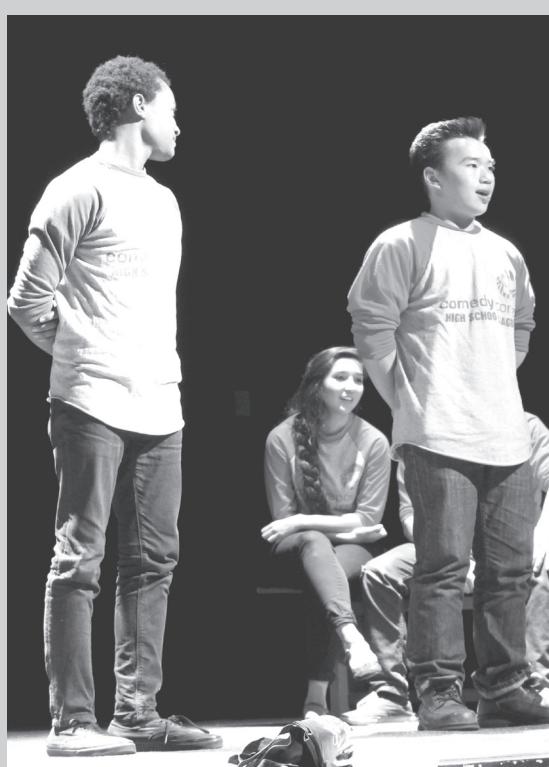
Actletes Compete in ComedySportz

DIANA LI
News Editor

ComedySportz, an international organization with origins in 1984, inspired the inception of AHS’ own ComedySportz club in the 1980s. The club disbanded but later restarted in 2012 under the guidance of members and current co-managers Sara San Agustin and Tuan Tran.

ComedySportz is essentially improvisational comedy that is played as a sport, with the players divided into a Red and a Blue team. The teams choose games to play that involve impromptu situations. Unlike stand-up comedy, players must come up with jokes on humor on Jan. 31, AHS’ ComedySportz members go the spot, as well head-to-head with their very own alumni.

MOOR photo by SHANNON KHA



This challenge forces players to think on their feet while being able to adequately articulate their jokes.

Matches are typically held on Friday nights at the Little Theater. One of the most recent matches that has taken place was the alumni match on Jan. 31, held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. During the match, among the games played were Slideshow, Slow Motion Olympics and the Dating Game. In the end, the alumni team won the match.

Win or lose, ComedySportz members still enjoy participating in the club.

“I love being in ComedySportz because I get to see everyone having a great time, including myself,” San Agustin said. “It makes me feel great knowing that my team and

I are having a blast while our audience is too. ComedySportz is a great place to be in to discover your inner comedian!”

Water We Going to Do About Alhambra’s Water Source?

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About 92,000 of Alhambra’s residents get their water supply from Alhambra’s groundwater aquifer below the city, yet many residents are unaware that the water is contaminated. According to Alhambra Source, since 2002, several water companies have agreed to pay \$200 million to help clean up the water over the course of 15 years.

According to the Alhambra Source, Alhambra’s groundwater surpasses the maximum contamination levels in some instances by approximately 1,000 times. These contaminants may include microbial, inorganic, pesticides and herbicides, organic chemicals and radioactive contaminants. Therefore, the city must administer the groundwater after it has been pumped to the surface to remove the contaminants.

“I never knew the water was contaminated, but I’m glad that the city is addressing the issue,” freshman Christina Tran said.

Alhambra’s water situation is comparable to the recent case in West Virginia. On Jan. 10, 2014, a chemical, known as 4-methylcyclohexane methanol, leaked into the water. This chemical can break down into formaldehyde, a colorless gas that can cause some health issues. About 300,000 residents in the southwest area of the state were unable to use tap water until Feb. 5, 2014.

All in consideration, according to the City of Alhambra, there are professionals who are working to ensure that the waters of Alhambra meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and California Department of Public Health requirements.

IN THE NEWS

American survey says that teens are more stressed than adults

New Jersey festival allows visitors to eat, drink and floss with bacon

Facebook adds 50 gender terms for people to identify as

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Small doses of peanut protein may help alleviate peanut allergies

