

THE VAN NESS VOICE



February 2026



CSA EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

- Math: The instructional learning targets of the CSA middle school math curriculum focus on developing students' proficiency in key mathematical areas such as ratios, geometry, algebraic expressions, and statistics, while fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and real-world application skills. The curriculum is designed to prepare students for high school math and beyond by encouraging a deep understanding of mathematical concepts. This month, students will be exploring concepts of algebraic equations (Foundations Math), ratios and rates (Applied Math); graphing and writing and graphing linear equations (Intro to Integrated Math and Integrated I Math); and graphing quadratic functions (Integrated II Math).
- Science: (Pods B & C): In our next unit, "Phase Change," students will investigate the mystery of the methane lake on Titan. The apparent disappearance of the lake serves as the anchor phenomenon for the unit, and the students' assignment is to determine what happened to the lake. Motivated to understand phase change more deeply, students gather evidence from the Phase Change Simulation, from several articles, and from physical investigations of phase change. They learn that the molecules of a substance move differently when that substance is in different phases. They also learn how the kinetic energy of molecules and the attraction between the molecules affects the way in which the molecules move. Students use this newfound understanding of molecules, kinetic energy, and attraction, as well as evidence about the conditions on Titan, to explain what they think happened to Titan's mysterious lake.
- Literature (Pods B&C): This month, students are putting the finishing touches on their Greek Mythology scrapbook projects, making meaningful connections between the myths, their morals and themes, and their influence on modern literature. After completing the project, we'll begin our second read-aloud of the year, *The Outsiders*. As we journey through the novel, students will explore Robert Frost's poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay," analyze its connection to the text, and then replicate the poem by adopting Frost's tone while adding their own creative spin. Throughout the beginning of the novel, students will dive deeply into the characters, themes, and moments that shape the story.
- Social Studies: In February, students will get a chance to dive into Ancient Hebrews, the Origins of Judaism and finally, the much awaited Ancient Greece! Students have been very excited for this unit and we are excited to finally get to dig deeper into it with them. Students will use these historical examples to continue their studies on how civilizations rose to power, lost power, and fell. We will look further into factors that helped civilizations develop, the technologies they used, the geography of the areas, and the reasons these great civilizations eventually met their downfall. By the end, students will be able to make connections to previous civilizations, demonstrate their understanding of the differences between these civilizations and emphasize the lasting marks they left on the world.

POWERSCHOOL:

POWERSCHOOL and CSA District Annual Student Forms

Remember you can check your child's progress on PowerSchool at any time at <https://csadistrict.powerschool.com/public/>.



All CSA District annual student forms can be accessed and completed electronically through your student's PowerSchool account. Under the PowerSchool Parent Portal, you can update emergency contact information and complete all annual forms. If you need help or support with accessing your PowerSchool account, please let me know.

BELUGA BALL BASKET

To prepare for our annual Beluga Ball Basket for auction, our Advisory has been diligently working to collect items to create a WORLD CUISINE COOKING basket. We are asking for families to take a look at our Amazon Wishlist and consider purchasing an item, or sending in cash donations. Every little bit truly makes a difference! All proceeds from the Beluga Ball go directly towards student enrichment! In years past, these funds have been used to purchase sports and recreational equipment for physical education and recreation, library books, student technology, and so much more! Thank you for your generosity, and for supporting our district's learners!

Amazon Wishlist:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3I3KYYRZ6SPXD/ref=nav_wishlist_lists_3



THIRD YEAR PROJECT

Third Year students have been hard at work on their research project! This comprehensive project is designed to be the pinnacle of your student's middle school experience, allowing them to demonstrate their academic competency, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Project Components: Students will dive deep into a topic of their choice to produce:

- Extended Essay: A well-developed research paper (maximum 1,500 words) written in APA format. It requires a minimum of six sources, four of which must be scholarly.
- Presentation: A professional 4.5 to 5-minute speech accompanied by a Google Slideshow to demonstrate the knowledge gained from their research.

Important Upcoming Dates: Please mark your calendars for these key milestones to help keep your student on track:

- Monday, Feb 16: Final Draft of Extended Essay Due
- Monday, Mar 2: Presentation Speeches Due
- Monday, Mar 9: Google Slideshow Due
- April 13 - 16: Presentation Nights

We look forward to seeing the incredible work our students will produce!

YEARBOOKS



Middle School Yearbooks are on sale! Our yearbook is a 68-page color yearbook made by our Middle School Yearbook enhancement that captures events and memories from this school year. If you would like to order a yearbook, please visit this direct link: [Order Link!](#) If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Kowalczyk (kkowalczyk@csaschool.org).

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

National Junior Honor Society members for the 2025 - 26 school year have already been selected. To be considered for new membership to the CSAMS chapter of NJHS for the 2026 - 27 school year, current first and second-year students must demonstrate outstanding scholarship by maintaining all A's in each content area on this school year's Term 1, 2, and 3 report cards. Invitations for next school year memberships are sent out at the end of the school year.

CAREER DAY AND ACTIVITY NIGHT

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For Career Day, we are seeking Presenters to share their career journeys, educational experiences, and valuable advice with our students. Our goal is to inspire and inform students about the myriad of career possibilities that await them!

If you are interested, please email Amanda Woodruff at awoodruff@csaschool.org

Note: All presenters must have a valid background check on file with the front office.

Expect a follow up email with this documentation.



Our upcoming **Winter Glow Activity Night** is going to light up the winter season with neon colors, glow sticks, music, and tons of high-energy fun. It will be after school from 4:00-5:30pm in our Gym, and the cost is \$5 if pre-paid, or \$7 at the door. The admission price includes pizza and snacks. Note: For Safety, parents must enter the building to sign out their student(s) after the event.

We're so excited to create a bright, memorable night for our students—and we'd love your help to make it shine!



UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:



Wednesday, February 11th	Count on Comfy Clothes Day (No pajamas, but jeans and hoodies are ok!)
Thursday, February 12th	Activity Night, 4:00pm-5:30pm
Friday, February 13th	No School - Midwinter Break
Monday, February 16th	No School - Midwinter Break; Third Year Final Draft of Essay due
Friday, February 27th	CSA/CSAMS Spirit Wear (Uniform shoes and bottoms are mandatory)

*NOTE: Information about our rescheduled Day of Service and the Snowtubing Field trip will be shared to families via email. Please check your inbox for the latest news!

BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

Get ready for an exciting showdown of reading knowledge! Our upcoming first annual “Battle of the Books” is a fast-paced trivia competition where students go head-to-head by answering questions based on novels from a pre-selected reading list. Participants will put their comprehension, teamwork, and recall skills to the test as they compete for bragging rights and schoolwide recognition. It’s a fun and engaging way to celebrate reading, encourage thoughtful discussion of literature, and spark a little friendly competition. Let the reading—and the battle—begin!



A NOTE FROM MRS. VAN NESS

Dear Advisory Families:

I owe you a sincere apology for the picture-free newsletter—an honest oversight on my part! I know how much you enjoy seeing moments from our classroom, and I’m sorry for missing the chance to share them this time. I promise to make it up to you with plenty of photos in the next edition, since February has many fun-filled events planned! Thank you, as always, for your understanding and support.

