

The Aviary

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Dr. J—Exclusive Interview

WISH Academy - On Friday, October 27th, Dr. Kimberly Johnson, WISH Academy Principal, sat down with The Aviary's Nicholas Steinman for an interview covering her background and reflections on her tenure so far, as she begins her second year on the job. The following transcript has been lightly edited for clarity.

What motivated you to go into education?

I had a job that I really didn't like, and I got fed up. I was venting to one of my friends who was a teacher at that time, and she encouraged me to quit that job and think about substitute teaching.

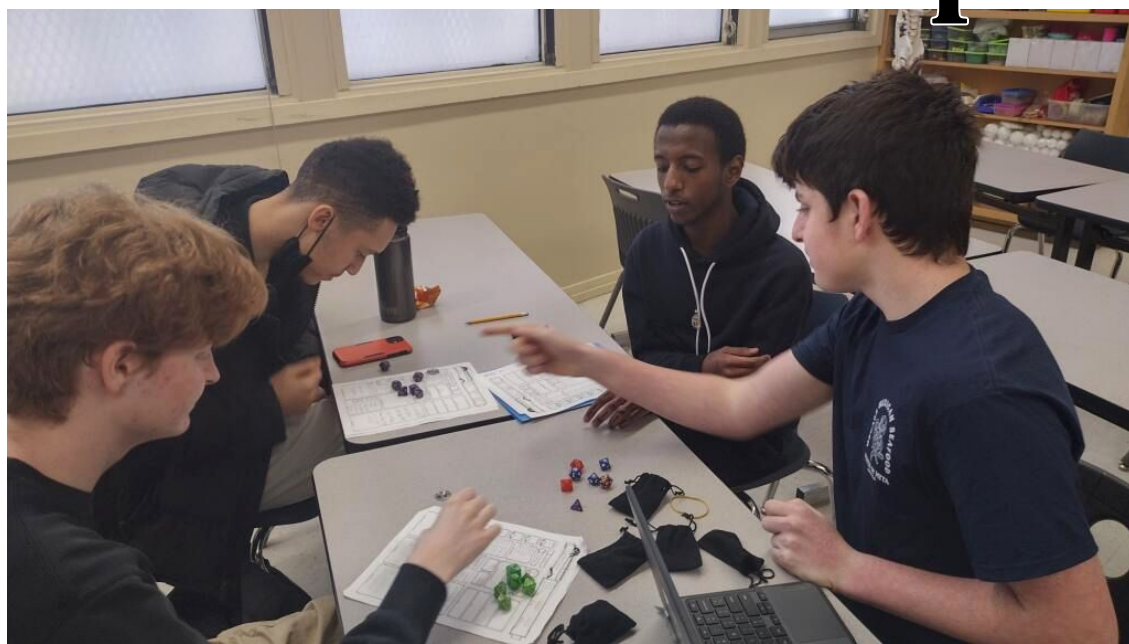
And that's how I got started. I started substitute teaching, and then I went straight into my Master's Degree program and got my credential, and started out as a middle school algebra teacher.

Can you talk a little bit about your career before you came to WISH?

This is my 30th year as an educator. Over the course of those 30 years, I've either been a teacher or an administrator for every grade level, fourth through doctoral programming.

Most recently, I was the assistant principal at Da Vinci Connect High School just before I started here last year; but prior to that, I worked at university level. I worked in [the] Santa Monica-Malibu District, [the] Culver District, Inglewood, El Segundo—and then I'm originally from St. Louis, Missouri, so I worked at a... (see pg. 6)

New Lunch Club Options



~ **Nathan Valdivia**

WISH Academy—With the end of Semester 1 upon us, lunch clubs have been in full swing this semester. Let's check in on four of our newest clubs that were formed earlier this year!

The D&D club meets in K2 (Mr. Leggett) every Tuesday to play the fantasy role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons. The tabletop games center around storytelling, where a group of people go through scenarios set up by the Dungeon Master (DM) or leader of the group. Each event is based entirely on player actions, determined by the number rolled on the dice. Currently, two campaigns are running, one with Mr. Leggett as the DM and the other run by co-founder Dante as the other DM. Students are also able to create their own campaigns.

On Tuesdays, Crochet Club runs in S7 (Ms. Kaura). Crochet is similar to knitting but uses one hook instead of two to create

clothes, small animals, patterns, and many other designs. Just under a dozen people attend this club. Club leader Don said they want to do a donation drive with some of the creations they make by the end of the year.

The LGBTQ+ club is held in D12 (Ms. Payson) on Wednesdays. Their overall goal is to create and build a welcoming environment for queer youth through events and other activities. Roughly a dozen people show up to this safe space weekly. Ms. Payson says, "All are welcome to walk in." Recently, the club hosted a showing of "Bend It Like Beckham" after school, a sports drama that deals with common LGBT themes such as hiding one's identity. They plan to create more club-sponsored fundraisers and pride events in the second semester.

The last club to highlight is BBSU, or Black and Brown Student Union. Hosted by Dr. Johnson in her office, BBSU aims "to provide a safe and ... (see pg. 4)

Library Open to Students

~ **Nicholas Steinman**

WISH Academy—On Monday, October 2nd, WISH Academy students filed into their campus library with their English classes for the first time in over a year. The library, located between the E Building and the Hastings parking lot, is now open to Academy students all day on Mondays, and during lunch and nutrition on Thursdays. The library serves as a quiet space for reading or study, and offers a wide selection of fiction and nonfiction books reflecting a great diversity in experience, style, and reading level. Students are welcome to come with their classes or during free time such as lunch and nutrition breaks, and can check



out books from the library's collection after submitting a signed permission form to the librarians. However, while the opening of the library brings many benefits to WISH Academy students, it remains to be seen whether the logistical issues of making the library a regular part of students' class time can be solved.

The WISH library occupies one wall of the library space; the ... (see pg. 4)

Reader's Guide

Read on to learn more about...

- * The LAUSD School Board's controversial decision
- * The dangers orangutans face from deforestation
- * Hispanic Heritage Month
- * A famous American painter
- * Exclusive insights from Principal Dr. Johnson and the head of the Theater Department, Ms. Landon
- * A student perspective on video games

... and more!

Brackets [] in quotes are used when words are added or inferred for clarity.

Save the Orangutans!



~ Emma Petersen, *Opinion*

Orangutans, also known as the man of the forest, can be found in their nests in the high canopies of trees in Bornean rain forests. Bornean orangutans can be characterized by their short beards, dark hair, and broad faces. Sumatran orangutans have longer beards and are also known to create close relationships with each other unlike Bornean orangutans. Currently, there are around 14,000 Sumatran orangutans living in the wild. Tapanuli orangutans are differentiated by their flatter faces, and fuzzier hair, this subspecies has a population of 800 in the wild. These three types of orangutan make up the largest arboreal species in the world.

The Bornean orangutan diet consists mainly of fruits like, mango, figs, and mangosteens. They also eat leaves, soil, insects, treebark, and larger orangutans are known to eat bird eggs and certain small vertebrates. Using tree branches, leaves, and vines, orangutans make nests far above the ground where they can be found lounging during the day and sleeping at night. Oftentimes, these animals stay in the same nest for the

entirety of their lives—around 40 years—but environmental factors have forced many of them to move or create new nests.

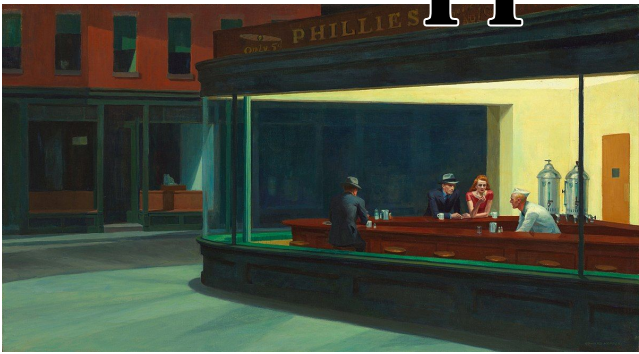
The orangutan population has been greatly diminished over the years as a direct result of deforestation linked to palm oil production. So, what can we do to protect the Bornean orangutan population? One of the most important things we can do is limiting our consumption of products containing palm oil. Actions like this encourage companies to find more sustainable ingredients and practice eco-friendly agriculture.

The orangutans of Southeast Asia used to live in the high treetops with little to no contact with the human world. In the 1930s, there were an estimated 200,000 Bornean orangutans, but the population has dwindled to nearly half that, mostly due to rapid deforestation for agricultural purposes in recent years. Communities surrounding the forests in Borneo practice what is know as “slash and burn” agriculture. This technique utilizes unsophisticated technology to quickly destroy large sections of ... (see pg. 3)

The Life of Edward Hopper

~ Emma Petersen

Edward Hopper was an American painter during the early progressive era, made famous for his oil paintings. Born in 1882 in Nyack, New York, Hopper was always been inspired by his surroundings. This can be seen in his early portrayals of landscapes and small town scenes, similar to where he was raised in Nyack. After Hopper moved to New York City in 1908, he began painting the dark city scenes that he is best known for, such as Nighthawks and Automat. Nighthawks shows an old fashioned diner illuminated by bright fluorescent lights in contrast to the dark night outside. At the counter, a man and a woman are seated next to each other. Although they are not speaking or interacting, it is evident that they share a certain relationship. Completed in 1942,



it is speculated that the empty street outside was based on real life events following the bombing of Pearl Harbor during the Second World War. The stark environment depicted could have been a result of widespread fear following the bombing, or perhaps representative of the feeling of seclusion that clung to Hopper throughout his life.

In 1924, Hopper married Josephine Nivison, an established watercolor artist who would become the subject of many of his paintings. The ... (see pg. 4)

Video Games: Worth It?

~ Dante Gutrecht, *Opinion*

It has been a longstanding tradition of adults to worry about the overuse of gaming as a leisurely activity. Their fears are not without reason, of course. While these are valid concerns, studies have also shown gaming can do good as well, often outweighing the potential concerns. Playing as much as 22 hours a week can even positively affect your cognitive abilities.

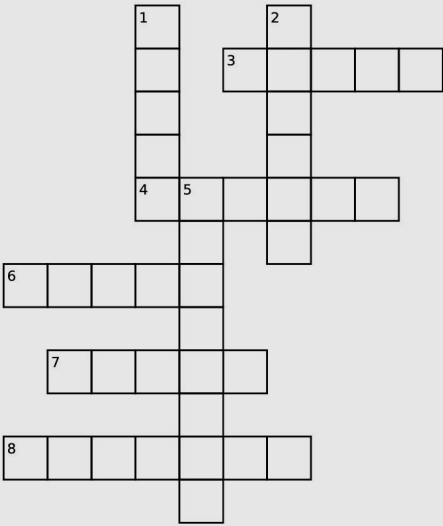
Many argue that video games can become an addiction, even causing you to lose interest in other parts of your life and creating self-control problems. However, there is more to the truth; In a 2022 study conducted by Dr. Bader Chaarani from the University of Vermont, he compared 1278 “NVGs” (people who played 0 hours per week) and 800 ”VGs” (people who played more than 21 hours per week). According to the an interview with Dr. Chaarani himself, they concluded that “compared with NVGs, VGs were found to exhibit faster reaction times in measures of cognitive performance involving response inhibition and working memory and differences in fMRI BOLD signals in key regions of the cortex responsible for visual, attention, and memory processing.” In Layman’s terms, this means that the amount of blood and oxygen you get to your brain, two things necessary to even function, is increased when visually processing video games. This benefits your ability to distinguish different objects while multitasking with improved self control, allowing you to both absorb and recall information better with a stronger memory. Many jobs require the consumption and analysis of large sums of data, meaning improving these areas of your brain boosts your work, focus, and efficiency when doing tasks. Not only are games increasing your self control, but they also give you essential skills for your future.

Video games can also help the medical world. For example, study by Glenn Platt (PhD) from the University of Miami in Ohio states that videogames can help alleviate stress and anxiety, especially because of their ability to ward off isolation as you meet like minded people on messaging sites like Discord. This is contrary to claims that video makes people lose interest in real life, as this shows that gaming can be used to make friends to be excited about.

While supported by data, I don’t think you even need a study to find gaming’s main benefits. To me, gaming is a source of fun and community, ... (see pg. 4)

FowlPlay!

1: Human Organs



Down:

- Allows oxygen in the air to be taken into the body; lets the body get rid of carbon dioxide in the air breathed out
- Remove waste products from the blood and produce urine
- Produces enzymes that help to digest food, particularly protein

Across:

- Filters all of the blood in the body and breaks down poisonous substances
- Fights invading germs in the blood

- Controls thought, memory, emotion, touch, motor skills, vision, breathing, temperature, hunger and processes that regulates our body
- Pumps blood around your body as it beats
- Holds the food, mixes it with acid and enzymes that continue to break the food down into a liquid or paste

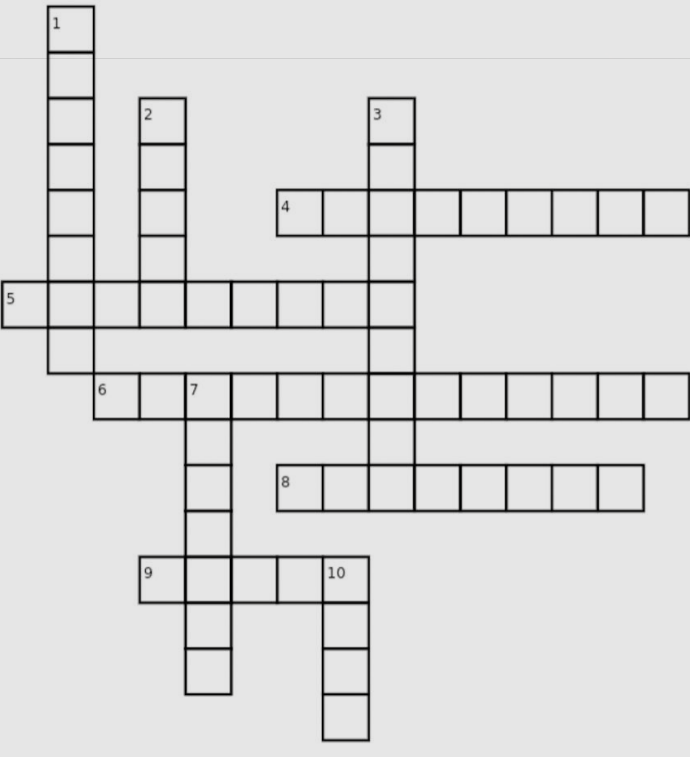
Down:

- January 1st
- The big cookie-destroying man who gives presents
- Holiday on the 25th of December
- Red-nosed reindeer
- Comes down from the sky when it's cold

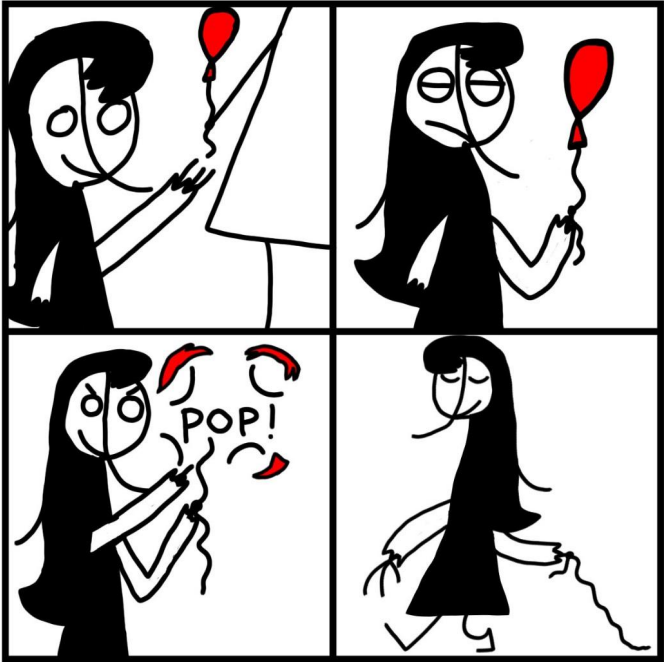
2: Holiday Crossword

Across:

- Where Santa works
- Things that go on the tree
- Where the presents go under
- Santa's wife
- Santa's workers on the North Pole



DARE by: Xander Youngless



Brands Endanger Orangutan Habitat

(from pg. 2) ... forest to plant palm oil trees. Many orangutans are killed by forest fires during this process and the surviving orangutans are forced into smaller sections of the remaining forest.

Palm oil is, unfortunately, very common and can be found in many food products and certain soaps. According to Greenpeace, major brands including Nestle, Colgate-Palmolive, Heinz, Pepsico, L'Oreal, and Hersheys are using this unsustainable ingredient irresponsibly in the production of their goods. Avoiding brands that regularly use palm oil in their products as often as possible can be the difference in saving the orangutan population. Even the smallest actions to stop deforestation and protect orangutans can create an impact. ~ Emma Petersen, Opinion

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

~ Aida Mebea

United States—With the unfolding of autumn came one of the year's most important celebrations of cultural diversity across the United States: Hispanic Heritage Month. Every year, from September 15th to October 15th, this celebration pays tribute to the contributions of Hispanic communities to American society.

Hispanic Heritage Month traces its roots back to the mid-20th century. The initial celebration was known as Hispanic Heritage Week. In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed the week-long observance to recognize the importance of Hispanic contributions to American history and society. The date of September 15th was chosen as the starting date because it coincides with the independence anniversaries of several

Chewing Gum Scandal!

~ Duncan Rampen, *Satire*

Wall Street, New York—The Ford Gum corporation, manufacturer of the popular chewing gum company “Big League Chew” has just filed bankruptcy amid concerns that the number 2 ingredient is simply labeled as: “flies”. For many years customers have been curious about just what makes Big League Chew so chewy, but last week when the secret recipe for the product was leaked online, they were shocked to find that the second ingredient was flies. Complaints against the company were filed almost immediately, but as it would turn out, the use of flies in the gum formula was entirely legal.

“Billions of flies are killed every year,” our FDA correspondent claimed. “They have to go somewhere.”

“We admit no wrongdoing,” Ford Gum CEO Scott Lerner announced in a press conference last week. “You all loved it before you knew.”

Comic by Janaya Kemp



Latin American countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile also celebrate their independence days on September 16th and September 18th. The celebration was later expanded to a month-long period in 1988, when President Ronald Reagan signed into law a bill proposed by Representative Esteban E. Torres. In a country as culturally diverse as the United States, Hispanic Heritage Month serves as a reminder that our strength lies in our differences.



Students and staff enjoy WISH's HHM potluck in October

Lunch Club Roundup

(from pg. 1) ... supportive space for Black & Brown students of all ethnic backgrounds on campus, promote cultural awareness and education,” according to Zharia C, club founder. The club plans to create and contribute to multiple events throughout the second semester, such as pep rallies, spirit weeks, college fairs, and more, especially during Black History Month in February. The group plans to meet more regularly in the next semester. These are just a few of the many lunch clubs we have this year. The diverse array of new and returning clubs allows people with different interests to express themselves with other students. Congratulations to all new clubs this year, and let’s see what exciting events they plan in semester 2! ~ Nathan Valdivia



Clockwise from top: K-Pop Dance Club performs at a pep rally; a BBSU poster; crocheting in Crochet Club; attendees pose at LGBTQ+ Club’s screening of Bend It Like Beckham

Edward Hopper, American Painter



(from pg. 2) ... relationship between Edward and Josephine was often tumultuous, and though it appeared to be functional in the eyes of the public, their distant relationship resulted in the detached expressions of both the men and women portrayed in Edward Hopper’s paintings. His characters appear together physically, often standing side-by-side, but are rarely seen interacting or even looking at each other. His relationship with his wife is reflected in the cold, taciturn nature of his subjects. ~ Emma Petersen

Op-Ed: Are Video Games Healthy?

(from pg. 2) ... forcing me to think in ways I might not instinctually. Anti-video game people also argue that games have even inspired kids to commit acts of violence in rare cases by desensitizing them to extreme forms of brutality, such as shooting or killing. What most adults don’t seem to realize is that videogames are not all bloody shoot em-ups. *Tetris*, for example, is a classic that requires the players to control the space the blocks take up through rotation and movement. Even games that are simple on the surface (such as *Street Fighter*) require an advanced knowledge of the controls and different moves in order for a player to succeed at them. Additionally, the graphics in the game are not realistic and

the powers are fictional, meaning that violence translating to the real world is less the game’s fault and more in the mind of the player. Ultimately, although there are reasonable and real negatives to video gaming, the many positive effects make gaming not only fun, but worthwhile when it comes to your health. ~ Dante Gutrecht



The author playing a video game.

The Library: Present and Future

(from pg. 1) ... remaining shelves are occupied by the W.E.S.M. library and off-limits to WISH students. The library, which is shared with WISH Middle School, features a diverse collection of titles designed to suit students of different interests and reading levels while representing a wide array of cultures and perspectives. In an October interview with staff librarians Jen Scott and Allison Grover-Khoury, who run the WISH library, Grover-Khoury explained that “the minute I arrived and started even volunteering in the library, we began to expand it so that there are books for everyone, ... there are books that can challenge everyone, and everyone can find themselves in a book.” Asked to provide recommendations from their fiction catalog, they pointed out titles such as Angie Thomas’s *On the Come Up* (a follow-up to *The Hate U Give* about an aspiring rapper growing up in the same neighborhood), and *Firekeeper’s Daughter*, a book about an Ojibwe teen who has to navigate increasingly high-stakes conflicts surrounding her identity and the complex histories surrounding her, with romance and action to boot.

The library also includes many non-fiction books, although Grover-Khoury acknowledged that “the library is primarily fiction, but we are building our nonfiction, particularly with high schoolers in mind.” She added that, in addition to more curriculum-focused books, “right now, we’re focusing on US History, really expanding that to have a diverse and representative and more accurate set of books that can enhance what students are learning about American history. Because there’s a lot



Academy librarians Scott (left) and Grover-Khoury (center)

that isn’t in the traditional textbooks, but there are a lot of books that support that.” While the library raises money to buy new books through the Scholastic Book Fairs that take place at WISH Elementary School, it still relies on donations from students and families. The librarians are especially seeking donations of books in areas such contemporary fiction, history, science, and sports. Interested parties can contact the library at library@wishcharter.org to discuss donating books, which the librarians pick up at the main office. Students are welcome to check out books with the librarians once their parents have filled out the digital permission form on their behalf; the form can be found in the Advisory Slides every week. Beyond its selection of books, the library also seeks to offer other benefits to WISH Academy students. When the library is open on Mondays, it provides a quiet and comfortable study environment, and work is ongoing to further revamp the space. This year, Mr. Howard, WESM’s newly-hired librarian, has been working to remove and replace the library’s outdated furniture. Longtime students will notice the absence of the ancient seats, shelves, and computers that had occupied much of the space in earlier years. Mr. Howard’s WISH counterparts gave him high marks on his ... (see pg. 6)

WISH Wash

Meet the ASB Officer Team



WISH Academy’s Student Council is made up of elected ASB officers Gabriel Koppula, Aida Mebea, Samuel Kidane, and Madison Mendoza (pictured clockwise from top left). Here’s what they had to say to The Aviary.

- Gabriel Koppula, President:** “Hi—there will be a third dance, stop asking me. Make sure to study for your finals, and attend some home games to support all our teams.”
- Aida Mebea, Vice-President:** “‘Never stop dreaming, never stop believing, never give up, never stop trying, and never stop learning’ - Roy T. Bennett”
- Samuel Kidane, Treasurer:** “‘Knowledge is the treasure of a wise man’ - William Penn”
- Madison Mendoza, Secretary:** “Hello! I hope everyone had a great break. :) Don’t forget to take care of yourselves and take breaks! It’s important to take care of yourself~~ push through the last few weeks of semester 1! Keep fighting! 🙌”

Ms. Landon on Theater, VAPA Plans

Janet Landon is the head of the Theater Department at WISH Academy. She has worked at WISH for four years, and in education for 30. She started as a substitute teacher and has even served in administrative positions. She has hopes to strengthen WISH’s up-and-coming theater program and recently received a \$53,000 grant from the Ahmanson Foundation, an organization focused on the arts and youth engagement. The Aviary’s Hannah Benveniste sat down with her to ask her about her past experiences, her hopes for the theater program, and the student

District to Restrict Charter Schools ~ Nicholas Steinman

Los Angeles—In a contentious meeting on Tuesday, September 26th, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board of Education took a major step to limit how charter schools can share space, or co-locate, on district-owned campuses. The Board voted 4-2 to approve a resolution, introduced earlier this year by board president Jackie Goldberg and member Dr. Rocio Rivas, which directs the school district’s superintendent to develop a policy to avoid approving new or modified charter school co-locations on the district’s 100 Priority Schools, Black Student Achievement Plan schools, and Community Schools, as well as in cases in which the differences in grade levels between the co-locating schools could be deemed unsafe or detrimental to the enrollment of local district (non-charter) schools. The passage of the resolution marks a major development in years of debate over the prevalence of such semi-independent schools in the L.A. region.

Supporters of the resolution hailed it as a decisive step to mitigate problems and inequities associated with charter school co-location on district campuses. However, charter school advocates claimed that the resolution’s proposed policy would be divisive, impractical, and potentially illegal, as well as increasing tensions and logistical challenges for many district and charter schools. The policy wouldn’t result in any schools moving immediately, but it is ultimately



Attendees watch a meeting of the LAUSD Board of Education in this 2012 photo by Tami Abdollah for KPCC

expected to lead to substantial changes for elementary, middle, and high schools across LAUSD’s sprawling jurisdiction. The school district covers a large portion of Los Angeles County, extending from San Pedro to Sylmar in the San Fernando Valley, and from Westchester to East Los Angeles and enrolling over 560,000 total students, just short of the population of the U.S. state of Wyoming.

Traditionally, most public K-12 schools in the U.S. have been operated directly by school districts, independent units of local government whose boundaries and sizes vary independently of the cities in which they operate. What school district someone lives in can thus have a substantial impact on the nature, funding levels, and quality of their traditional public schools. On the other hand, charter schools, such as WISH Academy, get their funding from the government and operate under similar constraints to other public schools, but they are not directly operated by school districts. Instead, charter schools are run independently under a ... (see pg. 7)

productions she is most proud of.
Why did you choose to go into theater education?

- I was a professional actress, but was not satisfied with my life as an artist and was looking for another way to contribute and have employment.
- I started substitute teaching and I found that I really enjoyed it. My mother was a teacher as well, and so I swore I'd never be one. I found that I actually did enjoy it. And then, as I started teaching, I found I was always bringing theater into it, because it always brings me so much joy. And I find it's a great way to create community. And so, as time went on, there were opportunities to teach electives in theater, which seemed a really good fit for me. And that's how it happened.
- What's your favorite part of**

- running/directing a student play?**
- I think my favorite part is when the company of actors creates that community together of support and encouragement and excitement around what they're doing.
- What is something you've learned at previous jobs that has helped you in your current role?**
- As a waitress, I learned how to multitask—quickly. As a paralegal, I learned how to work quietly by myself. What's a little interesting about that is, for me, one of the favorite things that I did as a paralegal was to summarize depositions. Because depositions are like plays. [Depositions] are the interviewing of the different people involved in the lawsuit. And so they read like a script. And so it was a very natural thing for ... (see pg. x)

Dr. J Reflects on Career

(from pg. 1) ... few schools back there. Were there a few jobs you had over that time that stood out to you?

Yeah. Every teacher, I feel, has a dream to start their own program from the bottom up. And when I was at the University of West Los Angeles, I had an opportunity to build my own master degree program. That really stood out for me.

It was a brand new online program. This was 2012, so that's, like, 10 years ago. And online was popular, but not as popular as it is now. So it was an online program with five different emphases. Kind of like our pathways; we had five pathways. So I hired all the teachers, I chose all the curriculum, I chose the learning management system, I did all of the things for the accreditors. It was a great experience.

What was something you took away from your first year as principal here?

I did a lot of reflection over the summer, and there were a lot of areas that were new to me from a WISH standpoint that I had to learn how to navigate and do. So my first year takeaway is, I think I did the best I could, given the support I had. And I feel so much stronger this year, having gone through a pretty bumpy last year.

Would you be willing to talk about any of those areas?

Just learning [about], like, the informational tours. That took a minute, for me to understand the frequency, the flow, what was being communicated. Also, navigating the co-location piece. I didn't really understand fully until towards the end of last year, so that helped me walk into this year a whole lot stronger. I didn't really understand the reserving of spaces and the sharing of spaces and the friction sometimes that comes with being co-located, and I think I've worked through [that], as a matter of fact.

I know I got a compliment yesterday [that] I've worked through a lot of that, and I'm much more comfortable just being able to respond in the moment about a thing, where last year I was uncertain and relied heavily on Dr. Branch and Ms. Zendejas to sort of guide and lead me.

What are some goals you have for this year, then—for yourself and for the school?

So for myself, I want to continue to grow in my principalship-ness, if that's a word. But for [the school], I really want the culture and climate of the campus to feel good. I want students ... (see pg. 7)

Joys of Teaching Theater: Ms. Landon

(from pg. 1) ... me to do. As a matter of fact, I would sort of reverse that question and say, “What has theater allowed me to do in all the different jobs I've had?”

Being able to analyze things, being able to find ways to include a lot of different people. I would say, collaborating in a joyful way. It's taught me how to organize, how to be disciplined. It's taught me to be empathetic.

What is something you've learned from your time working at the WISH Theater Program?

In the recent last couple of years, I think the thing about WISH that's been the most challenging was the pandemic and teaching theater online. And then even coming back to the school after the pandemic when we couldn't have [an] audience with us inside. So, finding ways for students to be able to perform for an audience within all these limitations was a huge challenge for me as an artist and as a teacher. And so it has taught me how really adaptable I am and how creative I can be and how much students really need to perform in order to get better, which is why it's been really slow to grow this program because I really lost several years there of getting the students to perform live. Those who did do the best are those who have performed live prior to coming to WISH. I've just been able to build on their existing experiences. It's been very difficult [because] a lot of the seniors that I have right now, I had as freshmen online.

What are you most proud of that the VAPA program has done?

The musical. 100%. And that came about because, in auditioning students for



Students performing for WISH Elementary classes

the musical, there wasn't a musical that I knew that matched the talent, abilities, and interests of the students that I had. And that led me to create an original piece that I was able to collaborate on with students. I mean, Mira's the one who came up with the idea for this sort of Wizard of Oz concept to the story. And I was able to use my extensive knowledge of songs to create this jukebox musical that really featured the students in ways that were joyful for them and utilized their specific talents.

I felt I was the luckiest teacher on campus because I left every single Friday with a huge smile on my face, just happy as all get out because that was the day that everybody rehearsed together. So I went home every weekend with my heart full for three months there. That was really just the best.

Let's talk about the Ahmanson Foundation grant. How do you think that will change the theater program?

It's hard to say. I really was intentional around the things that I put into the grant so that those things, those items, would be useful across both the community school as well as the academy. Although the grant was for the academy, specifically, my mindset was about items that would serve both schools. Because it is of course the vision, I believe, of the school to have its own ... (see pg. 7)

Library Logistics

(from pg. 4) ... collaborative relationship with them and his plans to make further improvements throughout the year. The WISH librarians are also planning other potential projects, such as working with the Los Angeles Public Library to provide library cards and research tools to students and potentially scheduling guest speakers later in the school year.

In the meantime, one of the greatest issues facing the library is student access. Currently, each of WISH's three English teachers is allotted time to bring their odd-period classes to the library on alternating Mondays. However, English classes that only meet on even days are not yet able to go to the library, as WESM occupies the space on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and WISH Middle School does during class on Thursdays. Making matters more

complicated, both WISH and WESM often hold events in the space throughout the week, limiting library time during classes. As Ms. Phillips, head of WISH Academy's English Department, explains, “It's all about space. Unfortunately, we don't have enough space to hold [events], and since we have the free space in the library, they're using that sometimes for, like, parent meetings... Originally, it was planned for us to go every three weeks; now, that's changing.” Despite these challenges, she remains excited about the chance for students to use the space, saying, “I think it's very beneficial ... It's nice to get a change of scenery.”

The library's logistical issues are still under discussion among the librarians, school administration, the English department, and WESM. Students can also go to the library on their own every week during lunch, nutrition, or any other downtime they may have ... (see pg. 7)

Book Reviews

~ Dante Gutrecht



Scythe by Neal Shusterman

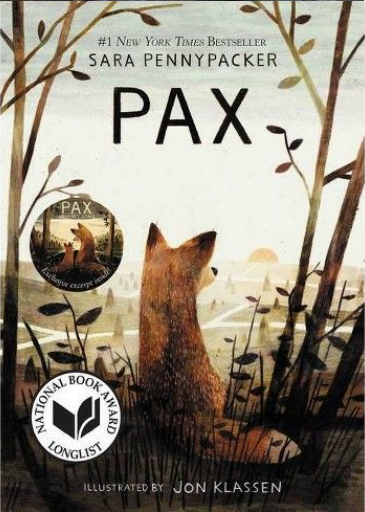
In a futuristic world where humanity has conquered death, only a Scythe can permanently kill anyone. This book is interesting because the unfamiliarity of the situation keeps the reader engaged, along with the numerous twists and turns throughout the story.

Clockwork Angel by Cassandra Clare

Set in Victorian Era England, a woman named Tessa finds themselves trapped in a feud between angels and vampires. This book is decently heavy on romance but also has captivating world-building and dynamic characters.

Pax by Sara Pennypacker

Pax, a fox, is rescued by a boy named Peter, and they eventually lose track of each other. This story is about loss, reunion, and learning to move on. Despite a somewhat slow overall pace, the story is very fluid and never gets boring.



The Librarians

(from pg. 6) ... during the school day—on Mondays and Thursdays, unless otherwise announced. The librarians will be happy to see them. Scott and Grover-Khoury have operated the library for over 10 years, since its inception at WISH Elementary. Of their favorite parts of being librarians, Grover-Khoury said, “One of the things I love the most is getting to know a student and their interests, and then introducing them to books, or challenging them by introducing them to something new that they might not have [thought] they’d be interested in.” Scott concurred, recounting one of her proudest moments: “So this girl came over, and she was like, ‘Can I have a card and a pen?’ ... I was like, yes, here, have a card. And then she came running over and was like, ‘look at all the books I can’t wait to read.’ ... Just witnessing the joy that comes with having unlocked that love.” ~ Nicholas Steinman

Dr. J’s Goals

(from pg. 6) ... to be happy. I want students to be seen and heard. I want teachers to be okay with the student asking why—“Why is this a thing?”

I want us to all walk away at the end of the day having given the best version of themselves that we can for that day. And we'll come back and try it again tomorrow. And maybe we get better results, maybe we get the same results, but my goal is to always create an environment where there is acceptance—where everyone is accepted, and everyone is thriving.

Are there some ways you could see the school growing more specifically?

Yeah. I think, because of the sports conditioning, which is a great class—but it threw our house teamwork building thing into a little bit of ... (see pg. 8)

Theater Grant

(from pg. 6) ... school site with both schools on it at some point.

The items that I got were things that I have run across in my four years here that were really glaringly absent from us being able to have a spectacle aspect to our performances, with sets and so forth. So I got 28 pieces of sets, with doors and platforms and flats and stuff so that we're not relying on recycling Westchester's or recycling Orville Wright's or anything like that. [Now] we have our own.

I also got risers because I feel very strongly about choirs being able to perform on risers, and we have three choirs. They need to learn how to perform on risers. That's where the sound really becomes so much better.

And then I got a lot of lighting and sound because we were really in a deficit in that department. Although, I know Mr. Sky has fixed the lighting [in the auditorium], I don't know how long we're going to be able to use that space and to what capacity. And so this gives us the flexibility of using the social hall more extensively for performance, which is likely.

Then another item I ended up getting that was pricey was a stage. That way we can do performances outside. So the kids have already come up with a really clever way to do some Shakespeare outside in the spring for a performance. I liked the idea of an open house Back to School [Night], the band being able to perform on a stage outside welcoming families to the school—or at any event, for that matter.

Before we conclude, why should people join the VAPA program? Why go to theater productions?

Well, there was a really great article in the New York Times [four] ... (see pg. 8)

Charter Controversy

(from pg. 5) ... charter approved by a school district, which sets out details on how they can operate. Charter school advocates claim that this model allows high-performing and innovative approaches to education not yet implemented by large school districts to be realized in charter schools, which also often serve educationally disadvantaged communities and, like district-operated schools, cannot charge tuition or enact selective admission requirements.

Charter schools can interact with their school districts and other public schools in a number of ways, but perhaps the most controversial is co-location: when a charter school operates on the district-owned campus of another public school. Often, this occurs when a campus has extra space due to a decline in enrollment, whether due to changing demographics, parents sending students elsewhere, or other factors. School districts have been legally required to offer available space to nearby charter schools in such circumstances since the approval of California’s Proposition 39 by voters in 2000. In the case of LAUSD, charter school supporters are keen to point out that the district has more than enough total classrooms to accommodate all public schools, including charters. However, many district-operated schools oppose co-location with charter schools, feeling that accommodating them takes up space they could use for their own programs and services. Co-location can also lead to administrative and logistical tensions between the involved schools, especially when shared facilities like auditoriums and outdoor spaces are involved.

Since elections late in 2022, the LAUSD Board of Education has had an anti-charter majority for the first time in many years, which may have provided the impetus for the board’s recent measures. The resolution on charter school co-location, known in short as the Goldberg-Rivas Resolution, was passed at the Board of Education’s monthly meeting on September 26th, which lasted over 5 hours and featured impassioned statements from students, parents, and educators on various sides of the debate.

The resolution states that “[t]he co-location of charter schools, pursuant to Proposition 39, is often detrimental to District schools and the students they educate” and directs the Superintendent to return to the board within 45 days with a proposed policy to, “as operationally feasible and permitted by law... avoid Proposition 39 co-locations that: (1) are on school sites with the ... (see pg. 8)

Goldberg-Rivas Resolution

(from pg. 7) ... District’s 100 Priority Schools, BSAP [Black Student Achievement Plan] schools, and Community Schools, (2) compromise District schools’ capacity to serve neighborhood children, and/or (3) result in grade span arrangements that negatively impact student safety and build charter school pipelines that actively deter students from attending District schools.” The resolution also calls for more information-gathering prior to co-location proposals and a clarified definition of which classrooms count as “empty”, in order to avoid district schools’ spaces for music rooms, robotics and computer labs, student services and intervention, and more counting as “empty” and being taken over by charter schools. The details of this new policy are expected to be reviewed by the board in November for final approval.

The policy developed by LAUSD staff under the Goldberg-Rivas Resolution will, if approved, “guide District decisions” in requests for new co-locations and whenever existing arrangements change, such as if a school adds new grade levels or increases its enrollment. Therefore, while the resolution is unlikely to result in immediate changes for most of the students enrolled in charter schools co-located on district property, it could cause more such schools to move onto different campuses over time as student populations and school charters change. While critics of the resolution point out that this could cause a substantial increase in schools co-locating on the remaining eligible campuses and could lead to new transportation hurdles for school families and staff, Goldberg and Rivas argued that

the resolution was a necessary first step to shield the most vulnerable district schools from suffering further impacts.

The charter school debate is just one part of a national conversation about how public education should be administered. Charter schools are part of a movement towards school choice, in which parents have multiple options for where to send their students. Believers in school choice claim that competition breeds better schools for everyone and provides options for students who have been failed by traditional public schools, such as many with special needs. However, in light of the U.S.’s long history of unequal access to public education, some fear that too much choice could encourage the most privileged students to jump ship first, depriving already-struggling school districts of the funds and resources needed to sustain or improve their offerings. Within LAUSD alone, over 150,000 students—about a quarter of LAUSD’s total—are enrolled in 275 charter schools. While charter school advocates attribute this to strong performance, opponents, such as Goldberg and Rivas, believe that charter schools have taken students and resources away from the most vulnerable schools in a district in which upwards of 80% of students live in poverty.

LAUSD staff have still yet to publish a final co-location policy, as required by the Goldberg-Rivas Resolution. When they do, it will be discussed and voted on again by the Board of Education before taking effect, in what will surely be an opportunity for further debate over the future of public education in Los Angeles and the nation.

~ Nicholas Steinman

Why Theater?

(from pg. 7) ... months ago about how so many of our leaders right now were involved in the VAPA programs at their schools. Because it takes creativity, a sense of presence, and being able to speak to people to be a good leader. And being able to work collaboratively with people in a creative way to solve big problems is something that you learn in theater more than any other art form.

I also think it's been proven that theater is the only way that people have learned empathy, because you get into the mindset of a character; you walk in the shoes of another person. And so it forces you into another person's perspective, which then carries over into your life. The thing about art and music [is] they are both things that can be done by yourself. Theater, you can't do by yourself. You have to do [it] with other people and you

have to have an audience. It's required.

I come from a family of lawyers, and all of them have referenced in a case at one time or another, some theater experience that they had. They have had that experience where they know what it's like to be false, to be true, to be human, and they can use all of that to influence other people. I just think that the skills you learn [in theater] are not things that are easy to grade, but they're really important life skills.

Thank you so much. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about?

I hope that there is a way to encourage the WISH community audiences to attend and support the artists at their school in the same way they do their athletes. I hope that, and I expect that—because what I see in this community is all-encompassing support. And so I hope we can really grow that.

~ Ms. Landon with Hannah Benveniste

Principal’s Advice

(from pg. 7) ... disarray, and we haven't been able to stand that up this year. So that's something I'm wanting to have more conversations with the counselors and Dr. Branch and Ms. Zendejas [about] to see if we can do something significant for second semester.

Also, just ensuring that there are smaller, more low-key activities and events that don't require as much as a homecoming or require as much as a prom, but still give opportunity for you guys to socialize and build community.

Do you have any advice for our students reading this?

Yes, I have several pieces of advice. From a personal space, it's okay to be who you are and be okay with who you are. And if someone else is not okay with you, who you are, that's okay too. Be always true to yourself. And from an academic standpoint, don't procrastinate—and ask for help.

Don't procrastinate, ask for help. Everyone literally gets up and comes here every day to support you all. And when we don't know [you need help], we can't support, and we don't ever want a student feeling that they are sort of flailing and no one's there to help guide them to the shore.

What has been your proudest moment as an educator?

I think my proudest moment as an educator is always when I'm able to put on my cap and gown and oversee graduation. Seeing the growth every single graduation—doesn't matter if it's high school or university, just to see the growth. I get really excited about that. As a matter of fact, I'm going to buy a new cap and gown for you guys' graduation in the summer. So that's my pride right there.

Anything else you wanted to say?

Um, I'm a proud cat mom. And I enjoy regular stuff. I enjoy TV. I enjoy movies. I enjoy hanging out with my friends.

I'm a regular person. And I'm comfortable with my trajectory over the course of my career and my life. I'm okay in my own skin.

Do you foresee more “Get to Know Dr. J,” or the administrators as a whole, quizzes [such as the House Challenge activities last year] in the future?

I would love to do that. Absolutely.

What would be your advice for students on preparing for them?

Just come in here and just talk to me. Just say hi. That's it. I love to chat with you guys. So things just spill out when I talk with you guys. So that's the best way to get intelligence, as it were.

Thank you so much.

Okay, thank you. Have a great day.

~ Dr. Johnson with Nicholas Steinman