

Jackie Thomas Awarded SPSL Coach of the Year

"Teamwork and passion for the sport were the keys to Curtis High School's phenomenal season," said Jackie Thomas as she wrapped up a 16-4 regular season record in her sixth season as head girls' basketball coach this year. When she was a player here—graduating in 2004—she led her team to great success, but there was a sharp decline in the sport after she graduated and moved on to be the point guard at Seattle University. When she was brought back to be the coach in 2008 after receiving her bachelor's and master's degrees from SU, the team was coming off a 1-19 record, and interest in women's basketball had waned. "We needed to reignite the passion that had been the hallmark of our program in the past," said Thomas.

"I set out to build not just a team, but the foundation for a successful program." That meant organizing off-season basketball camps, summer workouts, and clinics to teach skills to younger students and start inspiring them to continue playing basketball through high school. She opened up the gym for girls,

and encouraged her players to organize a free camp over winter break that now takes place every year, entirely run by her senior players. "We're just now starting to reap the benefits of all that work. We have students in our program who have been playing for years instead of having to start from scratch as they come in," she said.

"Jackie has worked tirelessly to rebuild the foundation of the Lady Viks program from the ground up," said Assistant Principal Terry Jenks. "The growth and success of our girls' basketball program can be directly linked to her mentorship of present and future Viking student athletes on and off the court." Thomas had 44 girls playing this year, fielding a varsity team that won a tournament in Alaska and was ranked for the first time since Thomas was a player here, while the JV squad dominated with an 18-1 season record, providing optimism for a bright future. In addition to on-the-court excellence, her team boasted a 3.3 combined GPA, winning a scholastic award as well. "There's something



about coaching at my home school where I played that just makes me passionate about what I'm doing, and I think that rubs off on them. I'm just so proud of how hard my players have worked, both in the classroom and on the court."

At top are this year's varsity girls' basketball team with Coach Thomas at the far right. Below, the team competes against Federal Way High School in a league victory en route to a 16-4 record.

Aquatics Programs Thrive in State-of-the-Art Facility

Aquatics in University Place, from school and community instructional programs to competitive swimming to water polo, have been flourishing since the new, expanded aquatics center opened two years ago, said manager and assistant swimming coach Holly Arasim. More students are now able to include swimming as part of their physical education, and the larger sized pool has given educators an opportunity to offer a broader spectrum of PE (physical education) classes, a luxury rare among school districts in the state. "The health and fitness of students of all ages in University Place is one of our top priorities," says Assistant Superintendent Jeff Chamberlin. "The CHS aquatics facility is a key resource in achieving our goal of making sure students are healthy and fit. The programs we offer as part of the regular school day provide opportunities for all students in grades 2, 5 and 8 to become better swimmers, stay fit and learn about water safety." It also enables Curtis High School to host major water polo and swimming events, bringing growth in participation and success in both of these sports.

Youth Instruction
The expansion brought an increase in instructional offerings as students move through the grades, according to Arasim. In second and fifth grades, all students receive swim lessons from high school students who are taking an elective class to become Water Safety Aides. This symbiotic approach has proven educational for both the high schoolers and younger students. In eighth grade, a full quarter of students' PE year consists of intensive swim instruction as well. For each of these levels, students are tested for swimming ability early on, then placed into skill level groups to maximize their learning potential. "In that way," said Arasim, "we can meet the needs of each student more effectively. Another benefit of this approach is identifying swimmers at an early age who may want to pursue competitive swimming as they grow older." More than 200 students use the pool each day during school hours as part of their physical education.

The facility also plays host to a number of aquatic activities open to the public, including swim lessons, water aerobics, and the University Place Aquatic

Club's age-group swim teams. It also offers recreational swimming and lap lanes three nights a week.

Swimming and Water Polo Teams

According to long-time head coach Mark Olson, both the boys' and girls' swim teams are flourishing. This year, the boys' team was undefeated in league meets. They won their regional meet as well, eventually placing 12th in the state. The girls' team also went undefeated, coming in first in the league and 14th in the state. "Both teams had terrific depth of talent," said Olson, "and interest in the sport is very high in UPSD."

CHS also boasts very successful water polo teams, according to head coach Dennis Piccolotto. Another past Curtis swimmer under Coach Olson, Piccolotto graduated in 1998 after swimming all four years and playing on the water polo team.

The program itself is thriving, with 46 girls out for water polo this year—a number Piccolotto believes is a record number.

Each water polo team has collected four state championships over the past decade.



Brian Woodbury was a key component of the boys' swim team this year, winning the gold medal in the 200 individual medley at the state championships, and garnering a silver medal in the backstroke. He spent the last four years on the varsity swim team, and is a product of the youth swim program as well. Woodbury will attend Georgia Tech University next year on a swimming scholarship and will study computer science.



Above, members of the girls' water polo team go over strategy during a break from drills in the pool. There are 46 girls on the team this year, the largest team Curtis High School has ever had.

A TYPICAL DAY AT THE AQUATICS CENTER		
Time	Activity	People
5:30 a.m.	Girls' water polo practice	20-30
7:30 a.m.	8th grade PE	35-40
8:30 a.m.	8th grade PE	35-40
9:30 a.m.	2nd grade water safety	30-35
10:20 a.m.	5th grade instruction	35-40
11:15 a.m.	CHS Lifeguarding Class	20-25
12:05 p.m.	8th grade PE	35-40
1:00 p.m.	9-12 water sports class	50-55
2:00 p.m.	Girls' water polo practice	50-55
4:30 p.m.	UPAC swim team practice	30-40
6:30 p.m.	MWF public laps, aerobics	10-50
7:15 p.m.	Public swim	10-50
Total community members served daily:		360-500

UPSD Providing Free All-Day Kindergarten to All Students

Responding to research documenting the early-learning value of all-day kindergarten (ADK), the district decided to fund it for all students in the 2014-15 school year, according to Sunset Primary Principal Allison Drago. In the past, she said, some students attended either morning or afternoon half-day sessions, while others went a full day but had to pay tuition, relying on a lottery system when classes ran out of available spots. First-grade teachers were seeing a marked difference in the preparation of full-day versus half-day students, and a commensurate gap in classroom performance.

"We're excited with the additional teaching opportunities this will make possible," said

The deeper exploration of reading and math concepts is an incredible tool, and gives students a huge leg up in their preparation for first grade...

Chris Backman, principal of Evergreen Primary. "The deeper exploration of reading and math concepts is an incredible tool, and gives students a huge leg up in their preparation for first grade," he continued, "but it's just as exciting that they'll have more exposure to our wonderful music, PE, and library specialists; there's limited time for that with only half a day to work with."

Drago knew this was the right direction for the district as the state has instituted more rigorous Common Core standards. "Our school system has always done more than the minimum requirements for its students, and when we laid out the vision for how to exceed these new standards, starting all kids out with this opportunity was the best way to allocate our resources. All of the latest research shows that five-year-olds are capable of handling a full day of learning, and we want that for our kindergarteners."

This summer the district will create a "kindergarten institute," where teachers with experience in ADK will partner with the Teaching and Learning Department to train those who do not have that experience.



Above, an older student reads with a kindergarten student at Sunset Primary. Below, kindergarteners work on art projects.

Registration is open now for parents with school-aged children. To determine your home school, visit www.upsd.wednet.edu/domain/21 and click on the web query to enter your address.

Non-profit Org. U.S. POSTAGE PAID Tacoma, WA Permit No. 411

POSTAL CUSTOMER

Educational Service Center 3717 Grandview Dr. W. University Place, WA 98466



DEVELOPING COMPETENT CONTRIBUTING CITIZENS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

SCHOOL DISTRICT

UNIVERSITY PLACE

Dialog

Volume 34

Number 3

May 2014

Looking Ahead

A Message from School Board President Christine Kilduff



A heartfelt thanks to you, the University Place voters, for approving two critical levy proposals that will fund teachers, staff, programs and important technology upgrades. These dollars will directly and tangibly affect classroom learning and enhance the safety of our students, staff and schools. With deep gratitude for your continuing support, the district moves forward maintaining a clear focus on preparing our students for the future. Research has shown again and again that there is a strong correlation between quality schools and community interest and involvement in the educational process. We are eager to hear your ideas and input about how we can accomplish our shared mission of educating competent, contributing citizens. We hope that you will take time to connect with us through one of the many opportunities provided at School Board meetings and community linkage meetings that are held throughout the year.

Your input is especially important to our work as Board members. For example, at the first March meeting of the School Board, we had an opportunity to talk with members of the community about how we are implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Staff members provided an overview of the CCSS, and explained the many steps our schools and teachers have already taken to prepare for this important transition. As you may know, 44 states and the District of Columbia adopted these new standards for English language arts and mathematics. The CCSS were formally adopted in July of 2011 as the official learning standards for the State of Washington. Implementation began in 2012 and required state testing on these new standards will begin in the 2014-15 academic year. The broad goal of the CCSS is to better prepare students for the world of work and economic self-sufficiency by placing an even greater emphasis on such skills as critical thinking and analysis, problem-solving, comprehension of informational text, collaboration, and communication.

Although these standards are new, academic rigor, high expectations and strong student support have been, and will continue to be, a mainstay in all University Place schools. Later in March, we conducted one of four special linkage meetings with the public at the University Place Senior Center. Administrators shared a report detailing district progress made on a key board policy that identifies expected outcomes for students in the areas of character and contributions to home, family and community. Community members who attended this event were given an opportunity to respond to the report and talk with us about their hopes for our students and this important Board priority. In May, our outreach efforts will continue when we meet with a group of graduating seniors at Curtis High School to learn about their experience in University Place Schools and hear their suggestions for improving the quality of our schools. This continuing discussion with the UP community is essential to our growth and success. Ideas drawn from our dialogue with the community have led to some exciting new programs that will take effect beginning in the 2014-15 school year. I invite you to read more about some of these offerings in this edition of the Dialog. With your help and trust, we will move forward with confidence.



ALL-DAY KINDERGARTEN Starting next school year, UPSD will provide all-day kindergarten classes at no charge throughout the district. The decision was based on well-documented research, which shows that students who attend all-day kindergarten are more successful in the future. At left, kindergarteners work on a math readiness lesson. See story on page 6.

Leveraging Our Resources

A Message from Superintendent Patti Banks



Dear Friends and Families of UPSD:

Thank you so much for your strong support of our school district’s educational programs and technology levies in the February election. Your reinvestment in our schools preserves not only our excellent comprehensive educational, athletic, and co-curricular programs, but also the quality of our wonderful community. We are very excited to share with you some of the ways we leverage all of our resources, not just to

maintain the status quo, but to expand learning opportunities for all of our students. We want to ensure that our students graduate from Curtis High School both college- and career-ready. For that reason, we are launching powerful new programs next year at both the entry level—kindergarten—and at the high school. I hope you will take the opportunity in this issue of the *Dialog* to learn more about some of these new initiatives, and why we believe they are the essential next steps toward further enriching our already strong academic programs. I’d like to take this opportunity to tell you about two of those initiatives.

All-Day Kindergarten to Be Offered District-Wide

There has been a great deal of national media attention in recent months underscoring the importance of students’ earliest school learning opportunities. That learning gaps emerge early, particularly among disadvantaged students, is one of the better documented findings in educational research. In fact, it is clear that more early learning significantly affects later learning—students who already know more have a much easier time learning new information, and early exposure to knowledge stimulates students to want to learn more.

All students benefit when our schools offer a curriculum that is rich in knowledge- and vocabulary-building opportunities. For these well-documented reasons, UPSD will offer free all-day kindergarten at all of our schools next year. A key focus of our program will be to ensure that all of our young students are exposed to rich content in a wide range of subject areas, including science, history, and art. See story on page 6.

New STEM Programs at Curtis High School

At the other end of the K-12 spectrum, we will offer new integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs at the high school beginning next year. Inspiring more of our students to engage in high quality math and science curricula will better prepare them for an increasingly technology-based economy. From a purely economic standpoint, students benefit from STEM education because jobs in those fields are expanding very quickly; by 2018, 1 in 20 global jobs will be STEM-related. Over 90% of those job opportunities will require secondary degrees, and over two-thirds will require a bachelor’s degree. So, college- and career-readiness are critical outcomes for this generation’s high school students. At Curtis next year, we’ll be implementing new courses in two STEM-related career pathways, and renovating an unused auto-shop, formerly located in the 500 building, to support them.

It is an exciting time in University Place School District, and it is your strong support that makes it possible for us to continue to improve program options and learning opportunities for our students. Thank you again for your support of our schools as we take these next steps to prepare our students for rewarding futures.

Grant to Help Finance CHS Project

As part of their commitment to increase STEM participation in the district (see stories at right), University Place School District applied for and received a grant from the state to help create a new technology center, said Principal Eric Brubaker. Two new curriculum pathways will be taught there as part of Project Lead the Way: biomedical sciences and engineering. “We plan to have two classrooms with a full suite of computers,” said Brubaker, “and a common area for shared technology, such as a 3D printer.”

He is especially excited that they can

“We are very excited to share with you some of the ways we leverage all of our resources, not just to maintain the status quo, but to expand learning opportunities for all of our students.”



Three UP Schools Win State Awards

Evergreen Primary, Chambers Primary, and Curtis Junior High were recently honored by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction with Washington Achievement Awards for academic progress. Representatives from each school attended a ceremony on April 24 in Olympia to receive their awards.

The Washington Achievement Awards are sponsored by the Washington State Board of Education and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. They celebrate Washington’s top-performing schools and recognize achievement in many categories. These highly-selective awards are based on a school’s performance on the Achievement Index and use criteria set by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act flexibility waiver.

The Washington Achievement Award is given in six categories: overall excellence, high progress, reading, math, science, extended graduation rate, and English language acquisition.

Chambers is being recognized in three areas: Overall Excellence, High Progress, and Special Recognition – Reading. Evergreen and CJHS are both being recognized for High Progress.

“These awards reflect the tremendous work that is being done in our classrooms, our high levels of teacher collaboration made possible by our early release planning and staff development sessions, and by our ongoing use of achievement data to guide our work with students,” said Superintendent Patti Banks.

Dialog

The *Dialog* is published periodically by the University Place School District 83, 3717 Grandview Dr. W., University Place, WA 98466, for University Place residents and businesses. The District complies with all federal laws, rules, and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, or disabilities in student education programs, cocurricular activities and employment practices. The District is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer encouraging application of qualified minorities, women, and disabled persons for employment and other opportunities. For elevator access at a school site, contact the principal’s office. The UPSD is a drug-free and smoke-free workplace and educational setting. Direct inquiries regarding compliance, grievance, or appeal procedures, or concerns involving students, should be made to the District Affirmative Action Officer/Section 504/FAPE/ADA/Title IX Officer, John Sander, (253)566-5600, 3717 Grandview Drive West, University Place, WA 98466.

Board of Directors

Christine Kilduff, *president*
Mary Lu Dickinson, *vice president*
Michael Ehart, *legislative representative*
Annie Fitzsimmons
Rick Maloney

Patti Banks, *superintendent*

Science Technology Engineering Mathematics

MESA Chapter Encourages Study of STEM Subjects

MESA—mathematics, engineering, science, achievement—is an academic preparation program aimed at taking educationally disadvantaged students with ability in math and science and ultimately helping them attain a four-year degree. The original chapter was founded by the University of California in 1970, according to Curtis Junior High’s MESA advisor Marci Krogh, and Pacific Lutheran University brought it to Tacoma in 1984. Krogh herself has been overseeing it first at Narrows View, and now at CJHS for the last 12 years with great success; this year she had 20 junior high and high school students attending her weekly after-school meetings. “It’s very rewarding to see their interest in science and math

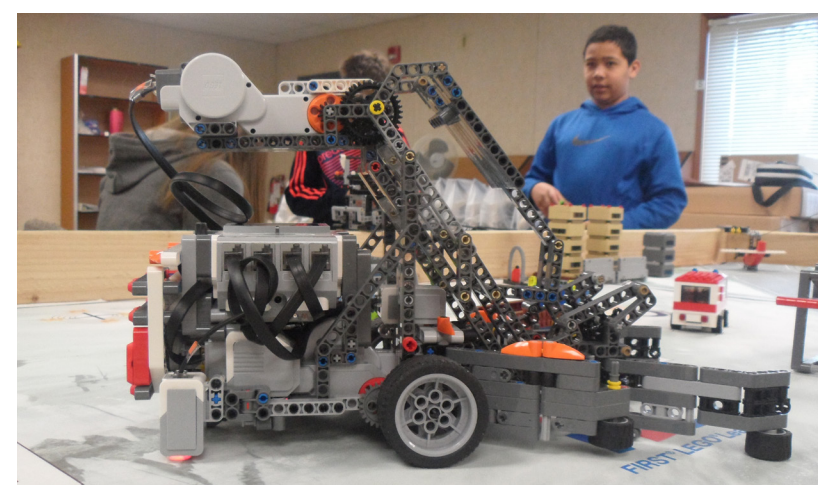
blossom each year,” said Krogh. “I’ve had so many come in and excel, eventually applying for and earning scholarships, and moving on to study engineering or science in college. It’s a terrific program.”

In addition to advising, Krogh also oversees entrance into an annual engineering and technology competition in which her students often sweep the top awards. Recent subjects include designing a bridge out of limited materials that could support weight, creating a website from scratch, and building a model airplane that could fly and hit targets. For each of these competitions, she said, the projects from idea to implementation are completely student-driven.

New AP Java Programming Course Piloted This Year

Principal Eric Brubaker said that Curtis High School has already been teaching much of the rigorous curriculum of Advanced Placement Java Programming, although it did not count as an AP credit. “Given the course’s current content, it just seemed simple and appropriate to

convert it to AP status,” he said. “Even the textbook will stay the same.” This is the high school’s twelfth AP offering, and can fulfill the fourth-year requirement for math or science. The school already has two full sections of upperclassmen registered for next fall.



Advanced Robotics Students Learn Engineering Skills

Creativity, ingenuity, and patience are the qualities Curtis Junior High teacher Ben Fulton is trying to instill in his robotics students. Comprising grades 8-12, his team competes in the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) series from September to January each season, meeting after school at CJH all year long. A series of four competitions represents the culmination of months of design work, building, testing, and improving a robot that must accomplish multiple tasks in a ring with other teams’ robots, said Fulton.

In a regional gathering at Boeing last fall, the year’s task was unveiled: their robot must pick up blocks and place them in a basket, run a flag up a pole, drive up a ramp, and pull itself



Above right is a robot used in a Lego robotics competition. Above, members of the Night Wolves team present their competition project about volcano preparedness to a judge, while at left they make last-minute adjustments to their robot’s programming and configuration.

‘Project Lead the Way’ to Provide High-Tech Training

Curtis High School will be introducing a new program at UPSD called Project Lead the Way (PLTW) this fall, according to CHS Principal Eric Brubaker. “We are fortunate enough to live in a region with a lot of job opportunities in STEM areas,” said Brubaker, referring to the thriving technology industry in the Puget Sound. “We wanted to create opportunities for students to work directly with the same technology used in these tech companies, and were intrigued by the accessibility of this cur-

riculum to all students—it’s not just for AP students, or just for students who don’t plan on higher education, but can be a great route for anyone.”

Whether or not a student plans to enter engineering as a career, the curriculum is nationally respected for teaching students to think critically, work collaboratively, and explore how math and science work in everyday life, said Brubaker. Technology and software used in the classes will be the same as that used in the current job

market, giving attendees a huge advantage in higher education and directly in the job market. After considering all of the options available through the program, Brubaker selected from various PLTW pathways the “Pathway to Engineering” and the “Biomedical Sciences” programs, aiming for the broadest appeal for current students (see boxes below for descriptions of available classes in the fall within these two fields). The approach has worked, as early registration for the classes has exceeded all of

their expectations.

“We’re going to be busy between now and the fall getting this exciting new program off the ground,” said Brubaker, “but the sky is the limit with where it could take us.” Between now and then, teachers will be selected and trained to run the program, the four classroom spaces will be completely remodeled and readied for use in the 500 building (see article on page 2), and new computers and specialized equipment will be installed and ready for students.

PATHWAY TO ENGINEERING

INTRODUCTION TO ENGINEERING DESIGN Fall ‘14 Students dig deep into the engineering design process, applying math, science, and engineering standards to hands-on projects. They work both individually and in teams to design solutions to a variety of problems using 3D modeling software.

COMPUTER INTEGRATED MANUFACTURING Fall ‘14 This course illuminates the opportunities related to understanding manufacturing while teaching students about processes, product design, robotics, and automation. Students can earn a virtual manufacturing badge recognized by a national system.

PRINCIPLES OF ENGINEERING Fall ‘15 This course will be integrated in year two. Through problems that engage and challenge, students explore a broad range of engineering topics including mechanisms, the strength of structures and materials, and automation. Students develop skills in problem solving, research, and design while learning strategies for design process documentation, collaboration, and presentation.

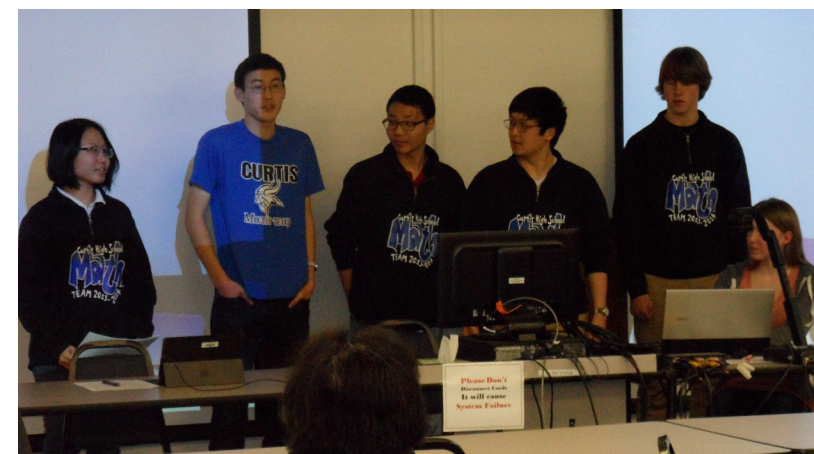
BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

PRINCIPLES OF THE BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES Fall ‘14 In the introductory course of the BMS program, students explore concepts of biology and medicine to determine factors that led to the death of a fictional person. While investigating the case, students examine autopsy reports, investigative medical history, and explore medical treatments that might have prolonged the person’s life.

HUMAN BODY SYSTEMS Fall ‘14 Students examine the interactions of human body systems as they explore identity, power, movement, protection, and homeostasis. Students take on the roles of biomedical professionals to solve real-world medical cases.

MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS Fall ‘15 Students follow the life of a fictitious family as they investigate how to prevent, diagnose, and treat disease. Through real-world cases, students are exposed to a range of interventions related to immunology, surgery, genetics, pharmacology, medical devices, and diagnostics.

CHS Math Team Shines in State/Regional Competitions



At top, members of the math team perform at a recent competition. Below, the entire team: back row, left to right are coach Jan Levenseller, Thuy Bui, Kenny Le, Micah Choi, Zachary Zehnder, Galen Chen, Daniel Kim, John Park, and Jane Romani. Front row, GiYeon Kim, JiYon Oh, JiHyun Shin, Nhi Tran, Soomin Park, Lauren Bray, Gabby Alampay, and Nhu Nguyen.

For some years the Curtis High School Mathematics Department has offered the opportunity for students to challenge themselves with the American Math Competition. Math teacher Jan Levenseller, who heads the effort, said that this competition is a regular event for members of the Math Team, but that the competition is open to all CHS students. Participating students have the opportunity to test their skills in algebra, geometry, trigonometry, probability, and statistics, and see how they measure up against other students across the nation. Tests are administered at CHS in February and qualifying students then participate in the American Invitational Math Exam the middle of March. This year’s qualifier was Soomin Park.

second place in the Knowdown. For Topical Individual, Galen Chen and Soomin Park took first and second. Zach Zehnder was recognized as Distinguished Junior and John Park as Distinguished Freshman. Daniel Kim and Gabby Alampay earned third place in the Topical Team category. In the Team Problem category, Galen Chen and Kenny Le took first place.

In the state competition held at Central Washington University in April, Curtis students took second for their Team Project. Galen Chen earned second place in the state in Topical Individual, and Soomin Park was recognized as Top Junior in the same category. Zach Zehnder finished 12th in the state in the Topical Individual just a few spots behind the other top Curtis finishers.

Levenseller says the math competition experience gives students a great preparation for college by developing their analytical and problem-solving skills. Many elite colleges ask for AMC scores, and Curtis math team students in the past have gone on to study at colleges and universities such as Duke, Yale, Harvey Mudd, CalTech, and the University of Washington.