



## A SEAT AT THE SPECIALIZED H.S. TABLE By A. Emmanuelli('10)

In our school's history, the criteria for admissions have relied on one thing, and one thing alone: The Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT). This test has been taken by every HSAS student, current and past alike, as well as by many of the rising ninth and tenth graders in New York City.

Each year as many as 26,000 students take the SHSAT, and in the case of our school, about 90 seats are filled. *Common Sense* investigates how exactly the Department of Education (DOE) grades the SHSAT and decides who gets admitted.

According to the DOE website, the SHSAT results are graded as "scaled scores," which are determined by the number of questions answered correctly combined with the difficulty of those questions.

The DOE also reports the composite score, or the combined scores of the math and verbal sections. A student's composite score, combined with their school choices, determines where they are admitted.

The cutoff scores for each



Picture staged by Alex Emmanuelli('10)

Many students bow to the Specialized High School Admissions Test.

school changes each year depending on choices the applicants make that year.

For example, the students selected for the freshman classes at HSAS are made up of the top scores of students who put down the school as their first choice. If the seats aren't filled up by students who selected HSAS as their 1<sup>st</sup> choice, then those students who put it second, but didn't get into their 1<sup>st</sup> choice school, are accepted to HSAS. So

the cutoff score for each school is the same as the lowest accepted score.

As confusing and frustrating as it is to understand the admission process, this reporter believes no student here needs reminding of the annoying test.

Lizzie Merrick('13) said of the SHSAT, "I really didn't like the test, it was really long and really boring."

Ben Hoffman('12) described similar feelings toward the SHSAT,

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## A ZONE BETWEEN TIME & SPACE

*By Jemaal Alexander('10)*

Have you ever been stuck in a class wondering, "When will this class end already?"

For many students at HSAS, this is not a new thing. Many of us have often caught ourselves observing the clock and are noticing some unusual patterns. *Common Sense* investigates the reliability of our school's clocks.

Only a few classes a week, usually our least favorites, actually go by terribly slowly and this has led us to question whether or not our teachers have control over the clocks.

John Beltrez('12) wishes time went slower so that he could get to school on time. He shared that he usually gets to school around 8:30, 30 minutes after school begins.

John was kind enough to support our investigation by supplying the following story:

"It was 7<sup>th</sup> period on a Friday, and I fell asleep...I woke up thinking it was over and it was only 2:15. I then fell back to sleep and woke up and it was only 2:37. *(Continued on page 2)*

## SENIORS BE TRIPPIN', MAYBE

*By Deshawn Lynch('10)*

A little less than a quarter of the HSAS students are now seniors. Those students can recall a meeting that took place back in September, where various committees were formed. The trip committee was one of them. *Common Sense* examines this year's senior trip planning.

As the name suggests, the trip committee is responsible for planning the senior trip. However, very few students know what the trip committee has planned with the exception of the trip committee members themselves.

Senior class president Julian Watts('10) says that while there are two or three ideas, "I can't really say much but what I can say is that the first two ideas are really good."

It seems like the senior class president is keeping us in suspense. What we can be sure of is that the trip is an overnight one.

Charisse Thompson('10) elaborates a bit on one plan telling *Common Sense* "we want one day for like a theme park trip and the other a spa day I believe."

Very few people enjoy waiting *(Continued on page 2)*

## REWARDS FOR OUR INNATE TALENTS

*By Troion Marshall('10)*

The Talent Show. It's a way for the students of our school to get to show off a particular skill for the viewing pleasure of everyone else. The Talent Show has always been the day before Winter Break, and through the years there have been many good performances, with well deserved winners.

One thing that has been noticed is that, while it is a competition, the winners have never received any prizes to commemorate and boast of their victory. With this in mind, *Common Sense* investigates.

After asking our principal, Mr. Weiss, this reporter was directed to Mr. Iurato. He is the advisor of the Student Government, which subsequently runs the seen and unseen work behind putting on the annual Talent Show.

When asked why none of the Talent show winners has ever received any gifts, Mr. Iurato replied: "It always seems like something goes wrong with transferring funds and the hoops to go through to get the prize."

He admits that "by the end of the year, we forget, and we've got to work on that." He promised: "this year will be different."



HSAS Website photo

Ariana Solis('10) & Rene Cardona('10) sang their way to the title last year. Yet they never received a trophy.

René Cardona('10), the 1<sup>st</sup> place winner in last year's talent show, along with his partner, Ariana Solis('10) were asked how they felt about not getting anything for winning.

"Well, I don't know how I felt, but I was glad I won... but it would have been nice (to win something)," says Rene.

Reuben Moreland('11) stated that he "won a pair of orange contact lenses for getting third place during his freshman year (in 2007-'08.)" So quite clearly this means

that... wait, what?

Returning to Mr. Iurato, who was asked to further elaborate on the disconnection between the more important winners and their prizes, he told this reporter, "I'm sure that students will agree when I say that it's not about the prize, it's about the recognition."

Keeping this in mind, this reporter moved on to the underclassmen, who know less about the Talent Show and its workings. Jonathan Eckman('12), a self-proclaimed musician who's

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