

# How To: Kick Butt This Junior Year

The infamous, most unforgiving year has finally arrived for yet another junior class, bringing both the privileges of an upperclassman as well as the stresses associated with standardized testing, heavy course loads, varsity teams, and the beginning of the college application process. How can you balance it all without having mental breakdown after mental breakdown? Although the occasional stress-cry is inevitable for hardworking, successful students, *The Mirador* has a few pointers to ensure that your junior year will be the best year yet!

**Start SAT/ACT Studying Early:** Whether you are an ACT or SAT person, we strongly recommend starting your studying earlier rather than later. Try out both tests to find which is your best bet for success, and then start the practice tests. Before you know it, you'll be knee deep in English papers and physics labs, and the thought of dedicating an hour of your precious Tuesday night to practicing the reading section of the SAT will be simply indigestible. Even though it can be time consuming, it is well worth that precious time. Most seniors trying to sneak one more score onto their college apps highly recommend start testing as soon as possible!

**Take the AP Test:** By the time AP testing rolls around, you may be a bit burnt out from months of standardized testing and AP courses. However, for both the parents' bank accounts and your integrity, rally for just one more test. If you are able to score above a three, those credits may transfer over for college depending on what school you attend. In addition, the peace of mind you'll have after realizing that those late nights you spent grinding, in order to remember the timeline of the civil war or understand that chemistry problem, actually did pay off is truly indescribable. Do yourself a

favor, and get acknowledgement for a year's worth of hard work.

**Get Your Sleep:** Although it may feel as though every single night you have a year's worth of homework and every important test is on the same day, it is crucial you get at least eight hours of sleep. Try to start your homework as early as possible, and hit the hay when you start having to reread the same sentences over and over again. If you aren't rested for the school day, you'll be so exhausted you won't be comprehending any new material, and in turn will fall behind even more than before. Sleep is much more important than that extra point on your math homework!

**Maintaining a Social Life:** Let's not forget high school is also a time to have fun and make memories with your friends. Make sure you ditch the books for a minimum of one enjoyable outing per weekend, not including Fridays. Even if you aren't a party-goer or a school-sport attendee, something as simple as lunch with a friend or a local run with your dog will do. Even though junior year can be stressful and overwhelming, letting your GPA dominate your life will just turn one of the best years of high school into a crummy couple of months. So grab a pal with a plan, and have yourself a night!

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## **Lady Mats Volleyball Welcomes New Coach**

Miramonte girls volleyball is welcoming new coach, Peter Chao. Chao coached the boys volleyball team at Monte Vista for the past two years until recently joining the Mats family. Last year, Chao's Monte Vista boys team had a strong season going

23-10 overall. Along with Chao, Nicholas Monroe is coaching the girls junior varsity team and is an assistant coach to the varsity team. "Miramonte has a strong volleyball culture and players who would like to learn and improve their skill sets. It's close to home and my nieces may attend Miramonte in a couple years," Chao said.

Chao started coaching 25 years ago. He hasn't coached girls volleyball in over 10 years and overall has mostly coached boys volleyball. Chao believes that the girls team has a strong foundation. "This is the first time where I am not rebuilding a program. I have strong veteran players who know what it takes to win games," Chao said. Chao doesn't only think of volleyball as a game, but also believes the importance of teaching life lessons through the sport.

Many players miss their old coaches but are excited for a fresh start this upcoming season with Chao. "I really like our new coach this season. He has been pushing us hard in practice, but I definitely think that it is paying off and that we are really improving," junior Audrey French '20 said. French has been playing volleyball at Miramonte since her freshman year and it is her first year on varsity. "Our new coach is great. He's really harsh, but in the end I know it will benefit our team," senior Jen Giron '19, a returning varsity member, said. The team is enjoying getting to know the new coach and look forward to improving together.



### [Alec Niehaus](#)

Freshman Casey Roy is warming up with her varsity volleyball teammates during their rigorous daily practices.

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## **Newlyweds Return to Miramonte Campus**

It is a typical day at Miramonte High School when Jilliane Smith, chemistry teacher at Miramonte, leaves her classroom at lunch to find Jamie Mather, history and leadership teacher at Miramonte. As the two dine together, many people comment and even question their status: Are they related? Do they like each other?

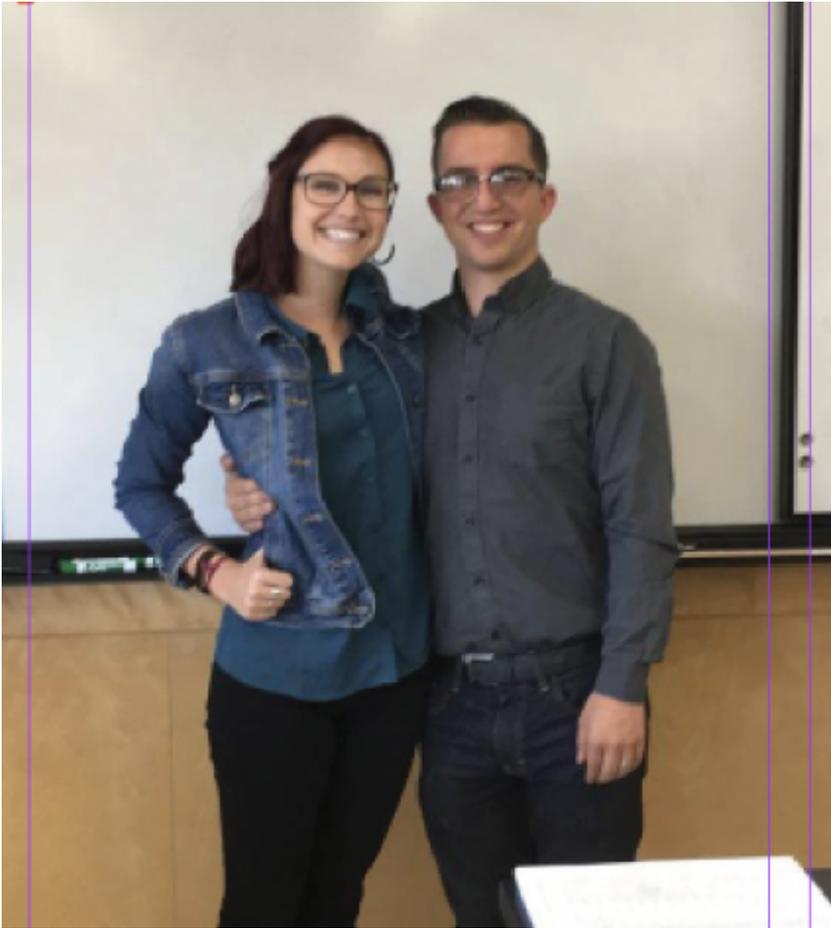
Over labor day weekend, these two lovebirds journeyed down to Paso Robles to celebrate their marriage with family and friends. Ms. Smith and Mr. Mather are just married!

This is Mather's third year of teaching freshman World History and the leadership class for the school. As a child, Mather

grew up in Morro Bay and attended California Polytechnic State University. Mather originally taught at Freedom High School in Oakley for two years before coming to Miramonte. This is Smith's second year teaching chemistry at Miramonte in addition to also teaching Special Education one year prior to teaching chemistry. She grew up in Orange County and also attended Cal Poly for college. The two met at college and began dating their first year there.

"We met on the first day of college," Smith shared, "he asked me to go to the beach and get burritos, I couldn't say no of course! The beach and burritos are my two favorite things!" Smith said. Through college Smith explained, they became a serious couple and eventually got engaged. "Working with Jamie on campus is fun and there is always a lot to talk about," Smith said. Carpooling to and from school and sharing common ground is Smith's favorite part of being on the same campus as Mather. "I love running into her in the halls and teachers' room and just catching up for a few minutes before returning to work, it is super convenient," Mather said. "Returning home at the same time and talking about our day is easy and fun because we know the same people and students which makes it easy to relate." Aki Neugebauer, like many other students at Miramonte, had both Smith and Mather as teachers. "I didn't realize they were engaged until I overheard someone mention it a couple months into our school year. There are times when she will stop by our classroom and say hi, and other times I will see them walking to the teachers room for lunch, I think it is so cute," Neugebauer said.

This year the two are both planning on teaching their same classes in addition to returning as newlyweds. "I love coming home and sharing our days with each other and being able to communicate easily because we are familiar with students and teachers on campus," Smith said.



[Ava Fischler](#)

After the wedding over Labor Day Weekend, the newlyweds Ms. Smith and Mr. Mather pose in the classroom.

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## **New Voices Legislation Protects Student Voices**

Out of ten Miramonte teachers polled regarding knowledge of the New Voices laws in California, four replied that they had no knowledge on the subject, two claimed to have some knowledge, and four said they have full knowledge on the subject. In comparison, nine out of ten students said they have no idea what the contents of these laws are.

But why are the New Voices Laws so important for students who want to share their views on the world? New Voices Laws are state level statutes that protect the free speech of student journalists and protect them from censorship unless the material is considered an invasion of privacy, libelous, distracting, or dangerous to the school. This legislation also protects administrators from professional backlash for defending the student publications. Without these laws in place, school administrators have the right to censor content of school publications and any other type of expression on school campus, if they deem it inappropriate in any way. This precedent was set by the 1988 U.S. Supreme Court case Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier when the court ruled in favor of a principal that pulled two controversial stories from a school newspaper. The court concluded that the students' First Amendment rights of freedom of speech were not violated because "the paper was sponsored by the school and, as such, the school had a legitimate interest in preventing the publication of articles that it deemed inappropriate and that might appear to have the imprimatur of the school," according to US Courts. While this logic makes sense in theory, it effectively prohibits students from sharing their opinions about anything that could potentially cause uproar in the community. This national stifling of young voices is what sparked the flame for the New Voices movement.

"New Voices is a project of the Student Press Law Center, a nonprofit advocate for the rights of student journalists. Our hope is that this bill will restore the Tinker standard of student expression in America's high schools. That standard protects student speech unless it is libelous, an invasion of privacy, or creates a 'clear and present danger' of a 'material and substantial disruption' of the school," according to the New Voices website.

The protection of student voices is an integral part of the future of society. Many accurate and honest reporters are bred

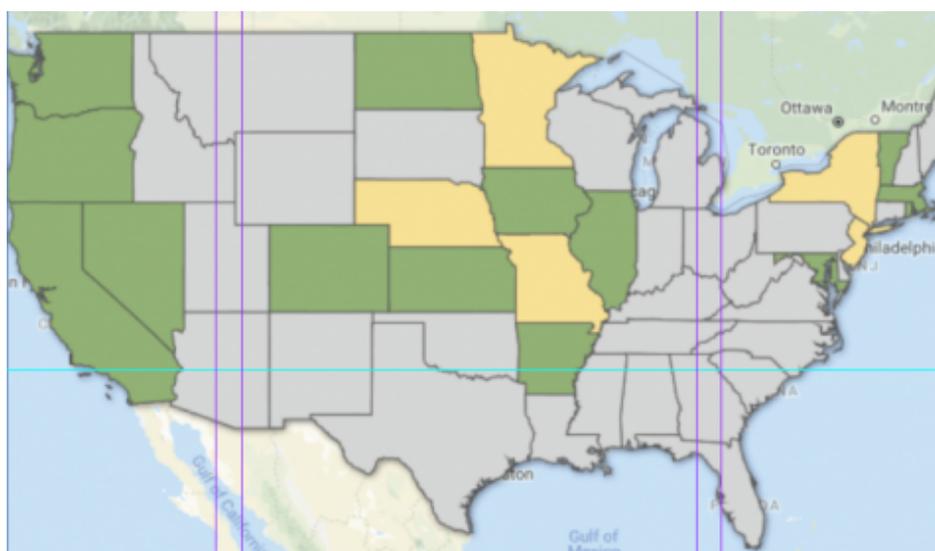
from high school journalism classes. *The Mirador* mission statement, "Placing truth, accuracy and objectivity first," serves as an outline of how everything that is published is evaluated. Luckily, student voices in California have been protected since 1977, making it one of the first states to pass New Voices legislation. Under the California Student Free Expression Law students attending public and charter schools are protected from administrative censorship allowing students to express their views on any issue, as long as it is not libelous, obscene, slanderous, or dangerous. According to the Student Press Law Center and California Education Code Section 48907, endorsing illegal activity on campus, or causing disruption of the orderly operation of the school, is subject to censorship.

Miramonte Principal Julie Parks is a proponent of allowing student voices to be heard. "I think it's critically important that all of us have the right of freedom of expression. Students can be a vulnerable class because they are under the direction of the administration or institution that they attend and I think extra protections to ensure that there's not repercussions for students who exercise their First Amendment rights are really important," Parks said.

While California students have enjoyed freedom of expression at school since 1977, states such as Minnesota, Nebraska, Missouri, New Jersey, and New York are currently fighting for New Voices legislation, and 30 others have no protection against administrative censorship at all. The main purpose of publications on high school campuses across the United States is to get people talking about important issues and events in the community, and incite change when necessary. If students are only allowed to talk about matters that have been filtered by school authorities, then nothing will ever change, and the monotonous trend of similar opinions and viewpoints will persist well into the future.

Students in California, especially at Miramonte, are lucky to

have many platforms to express their voices. Even if someone is not involved with Leadership or The Mirador, they can find a way to talk about what they deem as important, without the looming fear of administrative interference. Additionally, the student body can expect protection from harassment by their peers about their ideas, because the administration can take their side without fear of losing their jobs. It is important to take advantage of the rights students have by raising discussion and not being afraid of change.



## New Voices

This map represents the states that have New Voices Law in place, states with pending the New Voices Law, and states without the New Voices Law. Many West coast states already have New Voices legislation, but mid-western states and most southern states are still fighting against censorship to achieve full freedom of press.

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# New Wellness Center Premieres on Campus

Miramonte High School's Wellness Center made its debut this school year in the old art room near the theatre on campus. Elisa Nevarez, the Wellness Coordinator and Wayne Hunter, the Wellness Intake Specialist run the new center to aid and provide support to students during their rigorous school endeavors.

According to the site dedicated to the Center, the main goal of the space is to "improve both academic and mental health outcomes for all students." The safehaven, which is open weekdays from seven in the morning until four in the afternoon, provides assistance to all students. Students are referred to the Wellness Center by teachers, parents or guardians, or students. Students can contact the center by text or email.

"I think the fact that students have an outlet like the Wellness Center to go to will reduce stress levels, in of itself," senior Isabel Fine said.

Some of the services include, but are not limited to, Health Education, Parent/Guardian Education and Consultation, Support Empowerment Groups, Case Management, Individual Consultation for various topics, and more. All meetings with the center's staff are free and confidential.

Wayne Hunter and Elisa Nevarez are new additions to the staff, looking to improve mental health on campus. "(We strive to) relieve day to day stresses for high school teens and also create a healthy environment for students in need of encouragement or just a few words of wisdom," Hunter said.

"What appealed most to me about this position was that I would have the opportunity to be part of something long lasting and

that would positively impact students,” Nevarez said. According to Hunter, the Wellness Center has been raising been a popular place on campus, with over 50 kids stopping by to see the new facility. In the future, the two Wellness Coordinators hope to create a safe place for students to come and feel comfortable.

“We want to create a space that students can use to get social-emotional support, counseling, and resources to improve their overall wellness. When students feel well they can participate more fully in their classes and really make a difference in the world,” Nevarez said.

Miramonte is one of the many schools that have implemented a Wellness Center on campus. Other schools in the Acalanes Union High School District, Las Lomas, Acalanes, and Campolindo have implemented Wellness Centers as well. However, Miramonte is one of the few schools that has a space solely dedicated to the Wellness Center. Many of the other schools’ centers such as ones at Las Lomas and Campolindo share space with counseling offices or the College and Career Center. Las Lomas started its Wellness Center last Fall and have since observed its effects on students. “A wide variety of students use the Wellness Center, some to have a place to ‘de-stress’ with Mindful Meditation podcasts, music, art, or other support items,” Marilyn Lewis-Hampton, Las Lomas counselor, said.

The Wellness Center is a place on campus that is continuing to shape itself and create its own unique identity. Although the center is still in its early stages, it is a safe space at school where students can have personal, confidential conversations with trained professionals.

Students are getting used to the new facility on campus and are starting to embrace the change. “While some students might be hesitant to use it at first, I think it will become a common place where students go to receive help and de-stress, once they realize how beneficial it is,” Fine said.



[Jayson Fernbacher](#)

Wayne Hunter and Elisa Nevarez pose next to the Wellness Center board outside.