



January 2026

CHECK IT OUT!

News from the JMS Library

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Mark Your Calendar!

Join us for the Scholastic Book Fair, March 2–6, in the library! The fair will be open daily from 7:30 AM – 3:00 PM, and during Curriculum Night on March 3 from 5:30–7:00 PM. Explore new books, share the joy of reading, and support our library—all earnings will go toward new books for our library. View the flyer [here](#).

Super Readers Spotlight

Super Readers are selected by the ELA teachers for their outstanding effort in reading. As a reward, they earn a canteen pass to enjoy during school hours. January honors went to Zadie Parsons, Morgan Bellflowers, McKenzie Davidson, and Jayceon Graham. Congratulations to these students.

Keep turning those pages!

Beyond the Plot

To kick off a new unit, Mrs. Tanner and Ms. Castro teamed up to help students tackle one of the most challenging parts of reading—finding a story’s theme. Using examples from *Finding Nemo*, they modeled a four-step strategy: first, students identified three to five topics in the story; next, they chose one topic and wrote what the author seemed to believe about it; then, they rewrote that sentence into a concise theme statement; and finally, they dug for evidence to support the theme. Students put this strategy in action after reading a short story with a partner. Before finishing the final step, they swapped papers with another group and found evidence to support their classmates’ themes. By collaborating and practicing these steps, students not only strengthened their understanding of theme but also learned to support their ideas with evidence and think critically about their peers’ interpretations. While 8th graders led the way using this strategy, it didn’t stop there. These photos capture Mrs. Dennis’ 6th graders successfully applying the strategy to *New Kid* by Jerry Craft—shout-out to Miller Lyerly for his leadership and to Ms. Castro and Mrs. Dennis for their collaboration on this lesson!

