How do I get my child into the VNMS VEA program? Your child must be identified GATE or qualify for GATE.

If your elementary school doesn’t feed into VNMS: echoices.lausd.net
If your elementary school feeds into VNMS you are automatically enrolled. but go to VanNuysMS.org and sign up under VEA—application.

Our Vision
Every student can learn and succeed. By working together, the teachers, school staff and family can help foster a climate of superior academic work, a close camaraderie amongst students and a sense of individual pride and accomplishment in each student.

Our Mission
To teach our youth how to create healthy environmental communities through our students’ appreciation for the environment learned through the curriculum, field trips, and community partnerships.

Contact us
Van Nuys Middle School
5435 Vesper Avenue
Sherman Oaks, CA  91411
818.267.5942
www.vannuysms.org
Lesleigh Alchanati
VEA Coordinator

Principal Cristina Serrano
VEA focuses on the whole child intertwining an innovative environmental science curriculum and social and emotional growth.

**Community**—VEA students not only learn from our community through educational speakers, environmental experts, and field trips, but we give back to the community by helping those around us in need and our VEA community through our Big Buddy/Little Buddy program. Our monthly activities build comradery, healthy competition and life long friendships. We also offer students an opportunity to participate in community service, trips to watch college sports, and overnights to Yosemite and DC.

**Assemblies**—All students gather together on Tuesdays for team building, student recognition, and environmental focused presentation opportunities.

**Awards Recognitions**—Our students shine and are recognized for their efforts in our weekly assemblies, honors breakfasts, park days and pinning ceremonies.

**Projects**—Students participate in and plan Earth Week activities. They make and sell items for our market day and experience ways to heal the earth, have fun, and enhance their learning.

---

**About Us**

We are a small learning community focusing on the environment located in a quiet Sherman Oaks neighborhood. VEA is a school for advanced studies (SAS) for identified gifted students and those that qualify and have been verified gifted.

VEA teachers receive special training to meet the needs of gifted and high ability students. They provide individualized, differentiated instruction. The academy offers proven, research-based curriculum and instructional strategies that reach, challenge, and engage each student.

Curriculum is built around the theme of the environment, where students make important connections between what they are learning and current events. Students experience real world project based learning through hands on activities in a variety of cooperative groups while integrating technology into their learning and projects. Teachers use the NGSS and California State Standards as their guide in teaching.

---

**Curriculum**

Sixth grade Academy students take an environmental studies elective class that teaches research and computer skills, presentation and public speaking skills, and awareness of environmental issues locally, nationally and globally. Students become critical thinkers by using collaborative and effective communication.

All VEA students experience an extra opportunity during a homeroom rotation to garden and care for our environment. Students also learn about and organize our school wide composting and recycling projects.

All students experience our service learning program where students reach out to the community to make a difference in the world. Upon completion of these volunteer hours, students participate in a pinning ceremony to recognize their contribution to the community.

---

**Program Highlights**