



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL

Stay Positive, Test Negative: COVID-19 at BLS

By Elyssa Cabey (II)
& Halima Mohamed (II)
Staff Writers

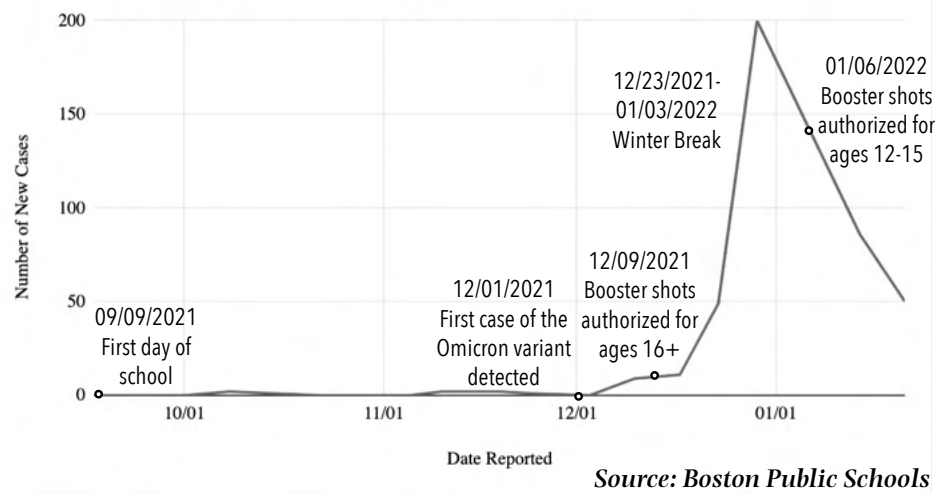
Beginning in late December, the number of Boston Latin School students and staff testing positive for COVID-19 has increased dramatically.

This rise comes in the midst of a nationwide surge of COVID-19 cases, driven by the highly contagious Omicron variant which emerged in mid-November of last year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The surge started in early December and reached its highest point in early January, with the current national seven-day average of new daily cases around 800,000.

Over the winter break, nearly 200 students tested positive for COVID-19 and could not return to school. An additional 55 students tested positive during the week following break. School attendance, which is typically around 97 percent, dropped to about 80 percent in the first two weeks of January. In response to the low attendance, many teachers have suspended major in-person assessments and have instead turned to platforms such as Google Classroom to assign work that can be done both in school and at home.

Like many others, BLS AP United States History teacher Mr. Dominic Rinaldi postponed previously scheduled exams until next term and reframed the structure of his classes to prevent absent students from falling behind. "After break, I was forced to effectively alter all of my planning that was done, and in some cases redone multiple times, since August. [...] Needless to say, this is not a sustainable existence long-term," says Mr. Rinaldi.

Boston Latin School COVID-19 Cases



In late December, Boston Public Schools temporarily paused all student athletics, with the original expected return date announced as January 10. Athletics practices resumed on January 18, with competitions expected to restart the following week. Athletes must consent to weekly pool testing in order to participate.

Following the break, the music department also had to temporarily pause in-school practice for wind instruments and chorus.

According to the *Boston Herald*, 1,202 BPS staff members were absent on January 10. At BLS, 20 to 30 teachers were absent on average in the two weeks after the winter recess. Due to a lack of substitute teachers, the administration sent students with absent teachers to the dining hall and auditorium, where they used the period to complete assigned work remotely.

"Whether we are focusing on students or staff, if the total number of people absent hits a certain threshold, it 100 percent hinders our ability to function as an in-

stitution, from the classroom level on up," says Mr. Rinaldi.

Despite the recent rise in cases, BPS is not currently looking at a full transition to remote learning. The state's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the ultimate decision-maker regarding remote learning, currently only counts in-person learning as part of the state's required 180 days of school.

In an article published by the *Boston Globe* on January 13, Mayor Michelle Wu stated that "closing schools and moving to remote [learning] is a last resort, but it is one that we are prepared for, given that there are COVID-19 and pandemic challenges that affect staffing beyond our control."

School districts can apply for a waiver to current DESE policy for closures on a school-by-school basis in partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission if a public health emergency is declared in the building.

Head of School Rachel Skerritt says,

"Currently, our positivity rates at BLS are significantly below the city average, though our large school size, of course, makes the individual number of cases significant."

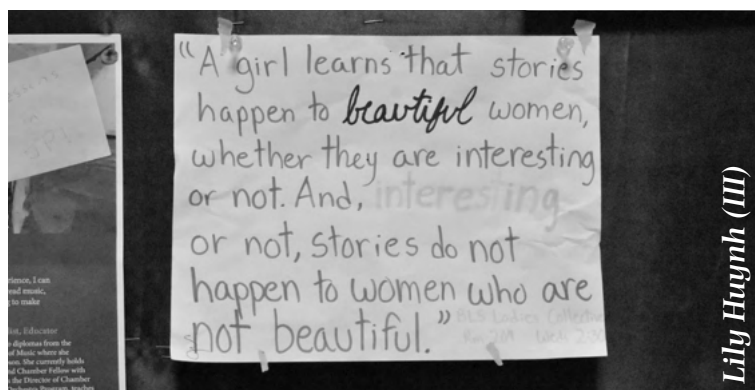
About 900 to 1,000 BLS students participate in pool testing each week. Concerning the importance of pool testing, BLS Director of Operations and manager of pool testing, Ms. Jesse Kwan, describes it as a "community effort." Students not showing any symptoms can still carry and spread the virus, so participation in surveillance testing, along with other methods of prevention such as limiting visitors to the building, helps mitigate that risk.

Still, students across the district have expressed their concerns with remaining in the building as COVID-19 rates continue to rise. Increasing numbers of students are choosing to stay home in order to avoid crowded public spaces as a precautionary measure against COVID-19.

On January 14, hundreds of BPS students staged a walkout to call for closures of school buildings and to promote better COVID-19 safety measures in school. In addition, William Hu (I) created a Change.org petition requesting that Massachusetts schools give students the option of virtual learning, which has currently amassed over 9,000 signatures.

Associate Head of School Steven Chen hopes that people continue to take the pandemic seriously, saying, "What I would like for students to recognize is, this is still a really serious thing even though we are starting to see more and more people that we know who get it and are being okay. And I think that's a credit to the vaccines, that's a credit to the boosters. It's great, all good news. But, we still have a lot of protocols, we still have a lot of safety measures that we have to follow."

Period Products and Posters: Work of Ladies' Collective



Ladies' Collective posters hang on the walls of BLS.

By Jenny Chen (III)
& Rachel Starr (IV)
Contributing Writers

Since the transition back to in-person learning, the Boston Latin School Ladies' Collective has provided boxes of period products and created motivational posters for the school bathrooms.

The placement of menstrual products in the school bathrooms was mainly for the sake of convenience. The club wanted to eliminate the difficulty of accessing period products around the building. Before this initiative, students had to go to the nurse's

office to get pads or tampons.

Katherine Martin (III) reflects, "The period products are working to normalize periods, [and] they're definitely helpful." The boxes work to create a more comfortable and confidence-boosting environment.

With these boxes becoming a staple of the girls' bathrooms around the school building, Ladies' Collective has expanded this initiative to include a period product drive as well. This drive took place in December 2021 and was largely successful. It was a way to shine a light on an issue in the building, publicize the club's efforts and enlist the help of the

school community.

Since access to these products was previously limited to the nurse's office, Mayara Ryland (I), co-president of the club, says, "We thought it'd be easier to just make a drive, so people from the community could also help out."

The club currently restocks the boxes every four weeks at club meetings.

In addition to the boxes of products, Ladies' Collective is known for its motivational posters, also located in the girls' bathrooms. This project started before the pandemic, but with students back in the building for the first time in almost two years following remote learning, it was a good time to bring back the posters and share some positivity to a common space of the building.

Laurel Nyhan (II), a member of Ladies' Collective, explains that the goal of these posters is to "spread positive messages and that it's okay to speak up, especially against sexual assault."

The posters feature fun and uplifting messages from influential female figures such as former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and

Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, which highlight body positivity, the importance of consent and the unification of all women in the fight for women's rights.

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent," reads a poster, citing a quote from former First Lady Roosevelt that promotes confidence in one's identity and consent in both physical and emotional relationships.

Ryland also mentions, "A lot of what we do is trying to show other women and girls that we can make a difference in our community." With both projects being the first of their kind, the club hopes to inspire others around the building to start an initiative that can lead to a greater effect.

Ladies' Collective aims to provide a safe space for all who identify as women, even if members do not use "she/her" pronouns. They look at feminism through the lens of intersectionality to include voices of all races, sexualities and other identities. The club focuses on raising awareness for gender-based and sexual violence, advocating for women's rights and unifying all girls and women in the school community.

Though the ongoing surge of COVID-19 cases has derailed some plans within the school community, the club will continue to collect period products to resupply bathrooms. They also plan to work with the school to improve BLS health class curricula, specifically to include LGBTQ+ education.

CHECK OUT PAGE 16 FOR
**The Argo Asks:
COVID-19 FAQ**

EDITORS' NOTE



Hello Crewmates,

Happy (belated) New Year! We are thrilled to present yet another collection of thinly-sliced, thoroughly-inked trees for your enjoyment: the *Argo's* January Issue!

For better or worse, 2022 has gotten off to a hectic start. Nevertheless, we're doing our best to stick to a consistent routine. So, in an effort to hold ourselves accountable, we've attached a list of our respective New Year's resolutions below:

Aidan's Resolutions:

- Learn to cook
- Keep dominating at board games (specifically Codenames — shoutout to my Operative)
- Continue to bash New England Patriots quarterback Mac Jones for being aggressively average (I miss you TB12)
- Keep pushin' P
- Water my plants more
- Stop drawing Among Us crewmates on my math worksheets

Elizabeth's Resolutions:

- Learn to cook better than Aidan
- Stop panicking when I am asked to translate in AP Latin (my greatest fear)
- Grow four inches (a girl can dream...)
- Stop randomly playing "All Too Well (10 Minute Version) (Taylor's Version)" at any given moment (I'm not going to stop)
- Resist the urge to vomit when I think of the upcoming college application process
- Stop losing my agenda book

In the meantime, while we try our best to stick to these aforementioned goals, please enjoy the January Issue! We really hope you like it.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and stress-free end of the month!

Aidan and Elizabeth,
Editors-in-Chief

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Argo

Boston Latin School

Ad Veritatem Petendam

The *Argo* strives, in accordance with the highest standards of journalism, to inform and inspire its readers, to provide a forum for constructive debate, and to foster understanding among all members of the Boston Latin School community.

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LATIN
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has proudly supported and funded Boston Latin School's sports, extracurriculars, music, academics and publications — including the Argo — for over 160 years

Proposed Schedule-Change Fails to Pass

By Alex Strand (II)
& Ailin Sha (IV)
Contributing Writers

On December 21, 2021, Boston Latin School faculty voted on a new proposed schedule for the 2022-2023 school year, which failed to pass.

A committee of 20 teachers, led by BLS physics teacher Mr. Aaron Osowiecki, developed a schedule with the aim of improving the learning environment at BLS. The proposal consists of a six-day cycle that includes longer lunch periods and wellness blocks. Perhaps one of the most striking differences is that certain classes would meet every other day for 90-minute periods.

Mr. Osowiecki first proposed the possibility of a new schedule to faculty members over four years ago, but few teachers showed interest. During the pandemic, however, many found that having fewer classes a day was beneficial for students' learning.

In the remote learning model, most students had four classes per day and a Friday Flex block every week. As a result, teachers had more time with students and an easier time planning for classes.

Mr. Osowiecki incorporated these elements into his proposed schedule, and seeing that teachers had now experienced something similar to his model, he presented it to teachers last spring. No students, however, were involved in the development of the schedule, as Mr. Osowiecki wanted faculty approval before it was introduced to the student body.

BLS history teacher Mr. Brian Smith, an advocate for the new schedule, believes that the frequent transitions students and teachers currently undergo produce a hectic environment that is not beneficial to learning. He argues that students often have insufficient time to process material before moving on to their next class. Longer class periods would allow students to reflect upon the content they learned.

Many students agree that the current model is too fast-paced. Maya

| Time | DAY 1 | DAY 2 | Flex sched | DAY 3 | Time | DAY 4 | DAY 5 | Flex sched | DAY 6 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 7:45-8:30 (45 mins) | FACING HISTORY (pt 1) | AP SPAN LIT (pt 1) | 7:45-8:24 (39 mins) | FACING HISTORY (pt 1) | 7:45-8:30 (45 mins) | AP SPAN LIT (pt 1) | FACING HISTORY (pt 1) | 7:45-8:24 (39 mins) | AP SPAN LIT (pt 1) |
| 8:35-9:20 (45 mins) | FACING HISTORY (pt 2) | AP SPAN LIT (pt 2) | 8:29-9:08 (39 mins) | FACING HISTORY (pt 2) | 8:35-9:20 (45 mins) | AP SPAN LIT (pt 2) | FACING HISTORY (pt 2) | 8:29-9:08 (39 mins) | AP SPAN LIT (pt 2) |
| 9:25-10:10 (45 mins.) | APUSH (pt 1) | HS BAND | 9:13-9:51 (38 mins) | W BLOCK | 9:25-10:10 (45 mins.) | HS BAND | APUSH (pt 2) | 9:13-9:51 (38 mins) | FLEX BLOCK |
| 10:15-11:00 (45 mins) | APUSH (pt 2) | STUDY | 9:56-10:35 (39 mins.) | APUSH (pt 1) | 10:15-11:00 (45 mins) | STUDY | APUSH (pt 2) | 9:56-10:35 (39 mins.) | HS BAND |
| 11:05-11:50 (45 mins) | PRECALC | PRECALC | 10:40-11:19 (39 mins.) | APUSH (pt 2) | 11:05-11:50 (45 mins) | PRECALC | PRECALC | 10:40-11:19 (39 mins.) | STUDY |
| 11:55-12:40 (45 mins) | LUNCH, THEN WELLNESS | LUNCH, THEN WELLNESS | 11:24-12:03 (39 mins) | PRECALC | 11:55-12:40 (45 mins) | LUNCH, THEN WELLNESS | LUNCH, THEN WELLNESS | 11:24-12:03 (39 mins) | PRECALC |
| 12:45-1:28 (43 mins) | ENGLISH 11 (pt 1) | AP BIO (pt 1) | 12:08-12:47 (39 mins) | LUNCH, THEN WELLNESS | 12:45-1:28 (43 mins) | AP BIO (pt 1) | ENGLISH 11 (pt 1) | 12:08-12:47 (39 mins) | LUNCH, THEN WELLNESS |
| 1:32-2:15 (43 mins) | ENGLISH 11 (pt 2) | AP BIO (pt 2) | 12:52-1:31 (39 mins) | ENGLISH 11 (pt 1) | 1:32-2:15 (43 mins) | AP BIO (pt 2) | ENGLISH 11 (pt 2) | 12:52-1:31 (39 mins) | AP BIO (pt 1) |
| | | | 1:36-2:15 (39 mins) | ENGLISH 11 (pt 2) | | | | 1:36-2:15 (39 mins) | AP BIO (pt 2) |

Ms. Judi Freeman

A sample schedule of a possible new model was presented to teachers last month.

Koreth (IV) says, "Though I've gotten used to [the current schedule] over time, I can't help but wish for some time to sit and gather my thoughts. Having a longer lunch and more time to hang out with friends would also be a great bonus."

Teachers also face a dilemma with the current schedule. Mr. Smith, like many other faculty members, alternates between classrooms. He says, "It often takes too much time to set up. This leaves less time for instruction."

Multiple students and staff, however, argue that longer class periods limit productivity. BLS Latin teacher Ms. Veronica Lau believes that the original schedule benefits her students more since she thinks most students will not stay actively engaged for a 90-minute class.

"Learning languages requires regular, daily instruction," says Ms. Lau.

Mr. Jeremy Birkline, the only sub-

stitute teacher allowed to vote on the schedule, also believes that the new schedule would disrupt the availability of substitute teachers, an issue that has been highlighted by the recent increases in absent faculty.

Mr. Birkline points out that if certain teachers have longer class periods and others do not on a given day, a substitute would no longer be able to use a free period to cover for a teacher because the schedules may not align. This creates a challenge for the administration to ensure coverage for teachers who are absent.

"Since daily substitutes did not even get a vote on this [schedule], this situation might discourage them from choosing to cover classes at this school," says Mr. Birkline.

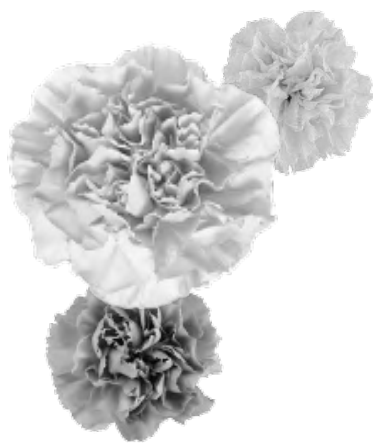
After several divisive weeks, faculty members voted on the schedule proposal on December 21 by submitting physical ballots. Those who were absent submitted their votes online.

Ultimately, 51 teachers voted for the schedule change and 72 were against it, so it did not reach the two-thirds threshold needed for the schedule to pass.

Though those in support of the schedule are disappointed by the outcome of the vote, Mr. Osowiecki is hopeful that the BLS community will still create a new schedule that suits everyone's needs. He plans to "return to the drawing board," hopefully with more faculty support in the coming years.

Many, regardless of their stance on the schedule itself, agree that the schedule proposal uncovered issues with the democratic system at BLS.

Mr. Smith concludes, "I personally don't think we had the best discussion about it as a full school community — including students' and parents' voices. Maybe we need to think about the way we hold a conversation this big and this important at the school first."



VALENTINE'S DAY carnations

What?

1 flower for \$1
6 flowers for \$5

Who?

Buy from any Argo editor
or email blsargo@gmail.com

When?

Feb. 3 to Feb. 11



Topol Fellows Advocate for Nuclear Nonviolence



Topol Fellows host their annual Human Rights Day.

By **Caitlin Donovan (II)**
& **Darren Seto (II)**
Contributing Writers

On December 8, 2021, Boston Latin School Topol Fellows for Peace and Nonviolence, in partnership with Nobel Laureate Dr. Ira Helfand, proposed the Back from the Brink resolution to the Boston City Council. This resolution, which passed unanimously, calls upon federal leaders to make nuclear disarmament the centerpiece of the United States' national security policy.

The resolution aims to terminate first-use, which allows the U.S. to fire nuclear weapons only if another state has

already done so against them. The campaign also proposes the elimination of the president's sole nuclear launch authority as well as the U.S.' hair-trigger alert, which could launch 400 nuclear weapons in a matter of minutes.

These objectives were outlined this past November on Human Rights Day, an annual day of presentations at BLS organized by the Topol Fellows. The Topol Fellowship, sponsored by alumnus Sidney Topol ('41), is a program composed of BLS seniors whose goal is to bring awareness to peace and non-violence efforts.

Topol Fellow Jack Trapanick (I) collaborated with Dr. Helfand in a presentation titled "The Other Existential Threat:

The Growing Threat of Nuclear War and What We Can Do About It." Dr. Helfand, who has published studies on the medical consequences of nuclear war in journals such as *The New England Journal of Medicine* and the *World Medical Journal*, exposed the audience to the impact of nuclear proliferation. He began his presentation by explaining the radiation and effect a nuclear attack would have on the human body, as well as the nuclear winter and crop failure it could cause.

"Hearing this was surprising because this was the first time hearing about the topic of nuclear war. Dr. Helfand's presentation really called for urgency [regarding] this issue," says Isabella Guthrie (III), an audience member at Human Rights Day.

After wrapping up their presentation with a Q & A session, Dr. Helfand and Trapanick encouraged students in the audience to sign a petition that would be presented to the City Council as a supplement to the Back from the Brink resolution.

Other measures were taken in order to collect more signatures and increase awareness for those who were not able to attend. Topol Fellow Emmanuelle Bogomolni (I) says, "One of our Fellows created an infographic regarding the overarching issue, which we shared through social media platforms." In the end, the petition received over 300 signatures, and it was referenced during the City Council meeting.

The biggest challenge for the campaign was getting the attention of the Boston City Council. Dr. Helfand says, "The reaction that we got from almost all of them was they thought this resolution was important, but they were too busy with other

issues to be the person who would champion the resolution and bring it forward."

In an attempt to spark interest in the issue, the Back from the Brink organization put together an open letter to President Joe Biden that addressed their objectives. After asking individual members of the City Council to sign the letter, the campaign received support from six out of the 13 members.

In November 2021, Councilor Liz Breadon, who demonstrated increased interest in the cause after reading the letter and seeing the student signatures, introduced the resolution to the City Council. Two weeks later, it was passed unanimously, and each member of the council joined as a co-sponsor.

The Back from the Brink resolution is part of a larger nationwide campaign called Back from the Brink: The Call to Prevent Nuclear War. The campaign was first formed in 2017 through the Union of Concerned Scientists and Physicians for Social Responsibility with the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

Given that one of the next steps of Back from the Brink is to pursue a resolution at the state legislature, support from Boston City Council had a significant impact on raising the profile of the resolution as well as the issue of nuclear weapons as a whole.

When asked about the Topol Fellows' contributions to this vote, BLS history teacher Mr. Andy Zou says, "It's really good for young people to have these conversations, because at some point, you will be the leaders in this world, and we can really again denuclearize [...] for a more peaceful world."

Transit Time Troubles

By **Sylvia O'Hearn (III)**
& **Iris Tian (IV)**
Contributing Writers

Transit delays have always been frequent in the Boston Latin School student commute, but recently, there have been more delays than usual due to an overwhelming surge in COVID-19 cases.

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) sends many students to and from BLS each day. Many of these students have encountered situations where their bus or train arrived late or did not arrive at all.

Rajika Bajgain (IV) recounts the delay of the 39 bus in the beginning of January: "[The bus] usually comes at 7:12 [A.M.], but that day, it came at around 7:28 [A.M.]."

In addition to the delays, she says that some buses have not shown up, forcing students to wait for the next bus. As a result, later buses are packed with students.

On the subway, Hailey Tran (III) recently encountered issues on both the Green and Red Lines. She recalls, "During a storm, [the Green Line was] shut down, and we had to take the bus instead, which added another two hours to be able to get home. [...] On the Red Line, [delays are] a lot more frequent, where either the Ashmont or the Braintree train will be stuck at a different stop for ten to twenty minutes."

Many have attributed the uptick in delays to the recent rise in COVID-19 cases, which has led to staffing shortages, and therefore, delays in transit services. These factors have forced students to wait significantly longer in order to get to where they need to go.

The rise in COVID-19 cases has affected all workers, but the situation has especially worsened for drivers, whose jobs expose them to people coming from different places every day. The lack of ventilation in buses and trains makes it difficult to stay safe while working,



Students endure long waits for delayed trains.

so drivers have been at high risk for catching COVID-19.

An MBTA spokesperson noted to the *Boston Herald* that the shortage of drivers has not only been attributed to those who actively have COVID-19, but also those who are close contacts, feeling sick or awaiting test results.

While driver shortages have recently exacerbated the number of delays, there are other reasons for this ongoing issue.

BLS Transportation Lead and Assistant Head of School Ms. Cynthia Webb notes that another cause for delays is the nearby construction at Simmons University, which

blocks off some of the lanes on the street. With fewer lanes to use, a busy street like Avenue Louis Pasteur is prone to crowding, which has slowed the movement of vehicles. On top of that, bicycles share the lanes that buses use, adding to the time they take to arrive at or leave school.

The effects of these delays are all but positive. Transportation Lead Webb says, "During the past few months, there's been an increase in students arriving late because of public transportation." Although tardies are marked as excused when buses arrive late, students still miss class time. Furthermore,

if buses are delayed bringing students back home, students are then late to activities or jobs.

Additionally, buses that do not arrive cause those that follow to be more crowded. Students have noticed that this could lead to an increase in COVID-19 cases, as close quarters would allow transmission of the virus.

Whether it is by watching the weather forecast to plan to take an earlier train, trolley or bus or checking MBTA.com for live updates, Transportation Lead Webb advises students to stay proactive in order to avoid these scenarios.

History Bowl Buzzes to Top 16 Finish

By **Azalea Thompson (I)**
& **Mary Deng (V)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On December 12, 2021, the Boston Latin School History Bowl Team finished in the top 16 at the National C-Set History Bowl tournament.

The team featured Chris Dech (I), Hanson Huynh (I), Khugan Chan (II), Biya Brook (III), William Liyuan (IV) and Kevin Wang (IV). In the tournament, the team worked together to answer questions in a buzzer-based system. Out of the 32 teams in attendance, 16 teams made it past the four preliminary rounds, placing in the octofinals.

In previous years, History Bowl tournaments took place in person, but due to the pandemic, this year's tournament was held on Zoom. Participants responded in the chat box and answered questions on a website. Those who clicked fast enough were given the first chance to answer the question. Correct answers earned bonus questions, and incorrectly answered questions were passed over to the opposing team.

On December 11 and 12, the team advanced through four preliminary rounds. Questions covered topics ranging from ancient history to the present. This tournament tested competitors using the National History Bowl's C-Set, which is

one of the three different sets of questions. Since the BLS team has participated in a C-Set Bowl this academic year, they cannot participate in another C-Set Bowl because they will have already heard the questions.

Preparation for the competition began with in-person practices on Tuesdays, where materials from the websites were distributed, as well as online Discord practices on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Each team member specialized in a few topics from the study outlines.

Prior experience from another *Jeopardy!*-styled competition helped substantially with the History Bowl competition for Brook.

"Previously, I did Certamen, which is [similar to History Bowl], but for Latin, basically. I've been [participating in Certamen] for the last two years. And by doing that, I gained a really good foundation of Roman history, a little bit of Greek history, [and] mythology as well." reflects Brook.

In addition to the individual preparation, which involved practicing problems from past years, a crucial part of the preparation was dedicated to developing strong collaboration and communication.

"As a team, we worked on teamwork and discussing things and [to] make sure we have a clear and concise strategy against different teams who may be better at different subjects," explains Liyuan.

BLS history teacher and faculty advisor, Mr. Andy Zou, was also a valuable re-



Regina Chiem (I)

History Bowl members prepare for another victory!

source in preparing for the competition. He assisted with the registration process, obtained materials for studying and answered questions related to the material and how the History Bowl works.

Mr. Zou credits the participants and the History Bowl organization for the BLS team's performance: "This is their first official [tournament]. They did really, really well. It's really a credit to the students themselves and the effort they put in. The History Bowl does an amazing job preparing these kids and giving them content knowledge."

Though the tournament was competitive, as they were placed against schools across the nation such as Stuyvesant High School in New York and Newton South High School, the BLS team was satisfied with their results in the top 16.

The finish, however, also meant looking back at what more work needs to be done. Brook concludes, "I definitely could have advanced more. But I mean, I think it was the first tournament that we've played together as a team, and we did pretty well. We showed that we were competent."

Pops of Boston Politics

2022 Massachusetts Governor's Race

As the new year starts, the election for Massachusetts governor is right around the corner. In December 2021, incumbent Republican Governor Charlie Baker and Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito announced that they would be not running for reelection to a third term, citing the need to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic recovery and not on political campaigns.

Governor Baker has maintained high approval ratings as a Republican in Massachusetts, a state that often votes for the Democratic party. Considered a moderate Republican, Governor Baker has frequently been at odds with former President Donald Trump. In the Republican primary, the former president endorsed former State Representative Geoff Diehl over Governor Baker.

On the Democratic side, Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey announced her candidacy for the governor's office on January 20, while State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz and Harvard professor Danielle Allen have announced bids before Governor Baker's decision. Attorney General Healey, however, enters the race with statewide name recognition and millions in campaign cash.

Labor Secretary and former Boston Mayor Marty Walsh was reported to have considered a run for governor, but has announced he will not seek the office.

The Massachusetts governor's race will take place on November 8, 2022, with primaries happening on September 20, 2022.

By *Katie Rouse (I), Joanna Lin (III), Alanna Quirk(I) & Kevin Zhong (III), News Editors*



Joanna Lin (III)

New Faces on The Council

On January 3, new and returning Boston City Councilors were sworn in by Mayor Michelle Wu. Get to know the newcomers in the City Council and their plans for making change in the city, and specifically its education system.

Tania Fernandes Anderson broke down barriers on election night as the first Muslim-American to be elected for Boston's City Council and District 7. Representing Roxbury, parts of Fenway, Dorchester and the South End, she has done social work in issues that disproportionately affect Roxbury residents, such as poverty, mental health and affordable housing. As a BPS alumna and parent advocate, she plans to develop resources to facilitate the relationship between families and schools, recruiting an intergenerational school committee and reforming curriculum to prepare students for the workforce.

Tania Fernandes Anderson



(Credit: WGBH)

Covering West Roxbury, Jamaica Plain and Roslindale as District 6 City Councilor, Kendra Hicks is the first woman of color to represent the district. Starting her career of activism at age 19, Hicks worked to provide trauma support with the StreetSafe Boston Initiative and continues her impact work as the Director of Radical Philanthropy for the Boston-based activism group Resist. As a BPS graduate, Hicks keeps education in mind, aiming to disrupt the school-to-prison and deportation pipeline, modernize school buildings and prioritize the return to elected school committees.

Kendra Hicks



(Courtesy of Kendra Hicks)

Erin Murphy



(Credit: Jes Stout)

Longtime BPS teacher Erin Murphy secured the final seat for Boston City Councilor At-Large with a fourth-place win. Murphy states that her experience in public education has helped her develop a deeper understanding of the issues that families and youth experience, such as "educational challenges, economic setbacks, substance use disorder and recovery." Having set education as a priority, she plans to advocate for vocational high schools, an increase in options for students with disabilities and schoolwide mental health education.

Ruthzee Louijeune



(Credit: Elias Duncan)

Making history as the first Haitian-American to be elected to represent Boston citywide, Boston Latin School alumna Ruthzee Louijeune ('04) was elected City Councilor At-Large. She worked as a senior attorney for Senator Elizabeth Warren and as an attorney with the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance. Louijeune wants to prioritize developing diverse school staffs, improving education services for those with disabilities and special needs and investing in education that prepares students for the workforce.

Brian Worrell



(Credit: Kaiser Doricent)

Although new to the political scene, Brian Worrell was elected as City Councilor for District 4, which covers Dorchester, Mattapan and sections of Jamaica Plain and Roslindale. As a Jamaican immigrant with a background in community service, Worrell helped families build generational wealth through his real estate business. Along with a focus on sustainable workforce development and public safety reform, Worrell plans to advocate for reforming curriculum to include social and emotional learning, expand resources from schools for students and families and develop programs to prepare students for their next steps in education.

Acknowledge Our Past to T.H.R.I.V.E.



Portraits of former heads of school remind students of the school's past.

By Selina Tang (II)

Staff Writer

How many students are aware that Nathaniel Williams, who served as a Boston Latin School Head of School in the mid-eighteenth century, lived on school grounds with Richard and Hagar, a Black man and woman whom he enslaved? This information comes from a 2015 excavation of the former BLS site conducted by the Boston City Archaeology. The finding of cowrie shells and straight pins at the head of school's house prompted Joe Bagley, a city archaeologist, to search city records, as these items are linked to American enslavement.

This is merely one history lesson out of many that BLS students could

significantly benefit from, but ultimately miss out on. The curriculum needs to be adapted to include all of United States history and not just the white American man's history to truly uphold BLS's core values, T.H.R.I.V.E.

The day before winter break, Facing History students inspected the AP U.S. History textbook and discovered that it was formulated around white history – specifically, wealthy white men in politics and economics. When any other population, such as Indigenous peoples, Black Americans or women, is mentioned, it is presented in regards to its interactions with white men. The authors condense any history that does not relate to white men onto one page that is sprinkled at the ends of chapters. Their stories, however,

are central to U.S. history. They should not be treated as an “other people” peripheral to “real” American history, nor be viewed solely through a white, male perspective.

Together, we are stronger when we unearth the full history which we are heirs to as members of the BLS community. Facing History and Ourselves teacher Ms. Judi Freeman concurs, “The minutia might not be all that interesting [...] the dates and the places don't matter as much; it's the aggregate effect that people who look like me or you are restricted.”

Understanding the historical experiences of people of all races and genders in the U.S. enables students to realize that “most of us experience these [same] restrictions on some level [today]. I don't think this is ancient history,” says Ms. Freeman, and it needs to be taught to honor our history, speak truth to the present and lead into the future.

Indeed, a lack of historic understanding enables present-day racism. The WGBH reported that Mayor Michelle Wu recently faced racist backlash after announcing new vaccination requirements. Comments to Mayor Wu included “Communist Wu needs to go back to China” and labels such as “Michelle Wuhan.”

Failing to recognize our biases fueled by a skewed education prohibits students from respecting our diverse communities; if we are unable to even hold our history accountable, we remove the obligation to hold our current selves accountable. This is imperative to respecting each other, our unique identities and the fundamental humanity of each person.

A curriculum overhaul could

change this. First, Ms. Valerie Uber, the BLS archivist, explains that “our archives [...] are treasure troves of primary sources that can provide a lens into the culture and time being studied,” and include reports on Head of School Williams and the 2015 excavation. “These help to highlight the difference between how he was viewed and described by his contemporaries and the perspective from our times,” since former histories paint him in a positive light.

Gabriela Vasquez Rosado (I) adds that we should “include a more honest history that includes topics before the enslavement of groups of people of color that teaches about the Indigenous and African societies that thrived and gave so many societal advances before colonialism and imperialism.” We should not only celebrate communities for their resilience during struggles, but also for their accomplishments.

Ultimately, the City of Boston decided that out of the 8,104 artifacts uncovered at the former BLS building and the house of the heads of school, the cowrie shells and their consequential discovery of Richard and Hagar were the most important to highlight in their results. Why then, is this information not discussed more regularly with the students of that very school?

While we value our bodies, minds and holistic well-being, we should also value the time and effort dedicated at this school. Receiving an education that will prepare us to become the most engaged and responsible citizens can only be accomplished through lessons on the entirety of our history, not merely the white man's history.

Food Biases Need To-Go

By Jessie Wang (III)

Staff Writer

With American dieting culture as prominent as ever, one must question and eliminate the prejudices and exclusion of cultural cuisines from a mainstream “healthy” diet. After decades of American nourishment shifting towards processed and junk foods, a nutritious revolution has sparked and largely impacted the diets and mindsets of many.

In simple terms, American dieting culture can be summarized in a few words along the lines of “green,” “fresh” or “clean.” The foods at the forefront of this culture are salads, smoothies and other low-calorie or low-carb foods. American dieting culture is marketed for a mainly white society, a fact shown in its discrimination against other ethnic cuisines.

Many believe ethnic foods to be unhealthy and label them with words like “filling,” “greasy” or even “dirty.” Some also tend to perpetuate the stereotype that they are bad for digestion or full of additives. For example, how often have you heard that Mexican food would give you diarrhea or that the monosodium glutamate (MSG) in Chinese food would lead to high blood pressure?

Such labels indicate an intersection between racism and food. Italian, French and other European cuisines are regarded as “refined” and appear in mainly dine-in restaurants. Meanwhile, the cuisine of other cultures is seen as “cheap” or “low-quality” and fit for only takeout. This large disparity demonstrates the racism embedded deep within American dieting culture.

The exclusion of ethnic foods from the American diet is puzzling, as they are often healthier. Traditional American

foods include excessive amounts of red meat, starch and processed ingredients. Despite other cuisines being statistically and empirically healthier, the stigma continues to persist.

A prime example is MSG. It is often regarded as dangerous when used in Chinese food, but not when it is found in Chick-fil-A's Deluxe Chicken Sandwich. In fact, over-consumption of the seasoning supposedly can induce “Chinese Restaurant Syndrome.” It is not difficult to observe the blatant sinophobia that has impacted public perception of food.

Ethnic foods are not as unhealthy as they seem, but still, America has adopted aspects of certain cuisines and made them more “suitable” for the palate of predominantly white society.

For instance, the adaptation of Japanese cuisine has become quite prominent. Mochi traditionally consists of chewy rice balls filled with bean paste. American brands popularize, however, mochi balls filled with ice cream or made into doughnuts. A similar effect has occurred with ramen, which has been transformed from a rich noodle soup into a dehydrated package of instant starch in the American public eye.

In contrast, sometimes the American adaptation of certain aspects of cultural cuisines markets them as supposedly healthier. Even when ethnic food is healthy in the first place, it might be repackaged in a nonthreatening, “Americanized” way to appeal to consumers.

This reclaiming of elements is extremely controversial as it seemsto alter or repurpose ethnic foods, thereby disrespecting their origins. For example, turmeric has been used as a medicinal spice in South Asia for thousands of years. American dieting culture, however, has reformatted and repurposed it into pills



Trader Joe's changes its name to “match” the region of its products.

and face masks.

Faria Zaman (II), co-president of Boston Latin School Desi Society, a club dedicated to connecting students of the South Asian culture, says, “No one is trying to ‘gatekeep’ foods or spices or anything like that. It is just the ignorance and lack of awareness of where these things originated and what they were originally used for. That's what people here don't know about.”

The same effect occurs with kombucha and coconut milk. Kombucha, originating from China, has been popularized in American supermarkets like Whole Foods. In terms of coconut milk, when used in curry or stew, it is considered fattening. When it is mixed into Starbucks drink, however, its negative connotation is forgotten.

Jasmine Lee (I), co-president of the BLS Food Club, illustrates that “[American manufacturers] often disregard the culture and create a dish entirely tailored to the ‘American’ diet and label it as ‘authentic.’”

While one might argue that adaptation indicates a step towards embracing other cuisines, it is misleading. American diet culture cherry-picks certain ethnic foods and claims to improve them. This intersection of food and racism blatantly requires more attention from the society it impacts.

Ms. Leah Lipschitz, a BLS health teacher, says, “Food, yes it is a building block for our health, but it is a way that people connect. It is a way that communities gather, and there is no one way to do it.”

Should There be a Virtual Option for School?

Yes, BLS Should Switch to a Remote Learning Model

By Amy Cui (III)

Contributing Writer

The strikingly low attendance among the Boston Latin School community is becoming a new norm. Classrooms have not looked the same since the pandemic, and the latest surge of the Omicron variant has further altered the atmosphere of schools across the country, especially at BLS. With over 51,000 positive COVID-19 cases and the 20 percent absence rate in Massachusetts schools alone, Governor Charlie Baker and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) should consider virtual learning as an option to relieve the overstretched education system.

Governor Baker and Massachusetts officials are upholding a false sense of normalcy that jeopardizes both the individual and overall health of school communities. As with other issues, the more options the better, so why isn't virtual learning on the table? The recent rise in cases has only

highlighted the lack of protection and unsafe situations students and staff are exposed to every day. Virtual learning is a safer alternative that offers flexibility and adaptability with the rapidly mutating COVID-19 variant.

While going completely remote certainly has many negative effects because not all students can learn through a screen, it is crucial to understand that when discussing a virtual option, it is about giving schools the autonomy to make decisions that work best for their community.

Incorporating remote learning days opens up safer arrangements for individuals who need to quarantine. Staff shortages and large class absences would be accounted for, as students and teachers with COVID-19 could attend classes from the safety of their home.

When asked about her COVID-19 quarantining experience, Keeva Donoghue (III) says, "I didn't have very harsh symptoms. [...] I definitely feel like there were no symptoms that were stopping me from being able to take notes if I was in a virtual class or paying attention or attending class if it was virtual." Many other students share similar experiences with Donoghue, where the largest effect of COVID-19 was the pressure and stress from falling behind in school. BLS English teacher Ms. Lynn Burke also agrees that "if we went remote, we would be able to keep everybody on the same page."

Not only does virtual learning accommodate infected people, it also prevents infection among the immediate and extended members of the school community. Particularly for students who are awaiting COVID-19 test results or have family members positive with COVID-19, a virtual option significantly reduces the risk of transmission to high-risk family members with underlying health conditions.

William Hu (I) says, "They should have the option to be at home and feel safe, and it opens up so much more space for those who need to go in person." As Hu points out, COVID-19 hotspots like the cafeteria, auditorium, staircases, hallways and entrance ways would be less crowded. Those who do need to attend in-person school due to varying home situations would be in overall safer learning conditions.

Pushing for a remote option in Massachusetts schools means a greater say in their approach to the recent COVID-19 surges, which promotes better physical and mental well-being in all school communities. In such an uncertain time and unwavering administration, it is critical to make one's voice heard. Sign petitions and share information about the lack of choices for Massachusetts schools, and as Hu sums up, "[The governor's administration and DESE] are not really giving us the option to feel safe, [but] safety shouldn't be an option. It should be a right."



No, BLS Should Not Switch to a Remote Learning Model

By Thomas Oakes (IV)

Contributing Writer

With the recent surge of the highly contagious COVID-19 Omicron variant, many Boston Latin School students and staff have raised concerns about the school staying open with no virtual option.

Though these concerns are understandable, a BLS remote response to this virus would disrupt students' social and academic development. It would also place a heavy burden on struggling families to find the resources necessary for their students to thrive. Going remote is neither a fair nor ideal solution to education during a pandemic.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), only 582 people under the age of 18 have died solely from COVID-19 since 2020, well under one percent of the youth population of the United States.

The risk of death in the BLS community and in the families of students is further

reduced since Boston Public Schools has extended its mask mandate to February 28. Furthermore, the majority of BLS community members have been vaccinated against COVID-19, with students now having the opportunity to get the booster as well.

The fully remote model of 2020-2021, with students attending all classes through Zoom, wreaked havoc on student mental health. Many were isolated from real social interactions with people their age. Tragically, according to the CDC, suicide rates among youth were skyrocketing, with suicide attempts among girls aged 12 to 17 increasing 50 percent in 2021 compared to 2017.

Though it may seem ordinary, face-to-face interaction and social development — both which school provides students — is crucial, fragile and irreplaceable by online interaction. "It made me more stressed [...] to not be able to be in the building and interact with people face to face. I lost some social development," says Lorelei Currier (IV).

This sentiment is not unique. Anxiety and depression, particularly among high school students, rose dramatically over the course of school lockdowns. Guidance counselor Ms. Elaine Sylvester states, "I think there was an uptick [in mental health issues]. Being able to put eyes on students, students being able to put eyes on teachers and peers [...] really helps socialization and mental health."

The mental health challenges that isolation provoke are further exacerbated by the stress of remote learning. For many families, remote learning can be a nightmare scenario for parents who are unable to stay home with their kids during the day or for students who lack adequate access to Wi-Fi and technology. Online learning is not a realistic or beneficial option for students whose home life cannot support it.

Remote learning also has a negative effect on student academic performance. Due to declining mental health and the convenience of cheating, and consequently falling behind, during the disengaged style of remote learning, an overwhelming number of students struggled to complete assignments, take assessments with academic honesty and even show up for class.

BLS Classics teacher Mr. Patrick Finnigan explains, "There are students who have more responsibilities at home. Not having the structure of being in school, [or] having a common touchpoint with adults to keep you going, was harmful."

Now that students have returned to the engaging, in-person style of learning, the contrast between the two learning methods is clear: sitting in a house all day on Zoom is not a replacement for the academic support, basic levels of social interaction, daily routine and healthy environment that in-person learning offers. Going back to remote learning would be an ultimate disaster.

American Democracy is Failing

By Valerie Dam-Nguyen (III)

& Neil Jin (III)

Contributing Writers

According to the *National Public Radio*, over 60 percent of Americans believe that the United States democracy is "in crisis and at risk of failing." This is not unfounded, as the democracy of this country is falling apart from its very core: the simple right to vote. From the birth of our nation to the present day, marginalized groups have been silenced time and time again. January 6, 2021 was the most blatant modern-day attack on democracy.

Just over a year after the original incident, it is clear that the violence at the Capitol will never be forgotten. *The Washington Post* finds that the Capitol riot injured 140 officers, and the FBI reported that an estimated 2,000 rioters attacked the nation's capital in ob-

jection to the "stolen" election. The attack was largely contained by the end of the day, but its implications will last for a lifetime. Rebecca Verreault (III) recounts that the government failed to respond to the insurrection: "The president at the time did not try to stop the riot and didn't condemn the people responsible for the attack on our government." The government's unwillingness to denounce the attack or encourage nonviolent ways of protesting the alleged fraud directly caused the consequences that were seen on that day.

Social media also played a crucial role in spreading misinformation about the election, and it provided these attackers a platform to organize events. According to *The New York Times*, movements such as "Stop the Steal" were some of the most popular on the platform, specifically *Facebook*; it even managed to gain ten members

each second. As Zach Chen (III) puts it, "Media companies are for-profit, [so] incentives are misaligned to prioritize wealth over the truth." Banning people, even dangerous users, on social media platforms would minimize their user base, which in turn reduces their revenue. Verreault further adds, "[The] media can train people how to think [...], which can cause less individual knowledge on current issues and more mainstream ideas that cause tears in our democracy."

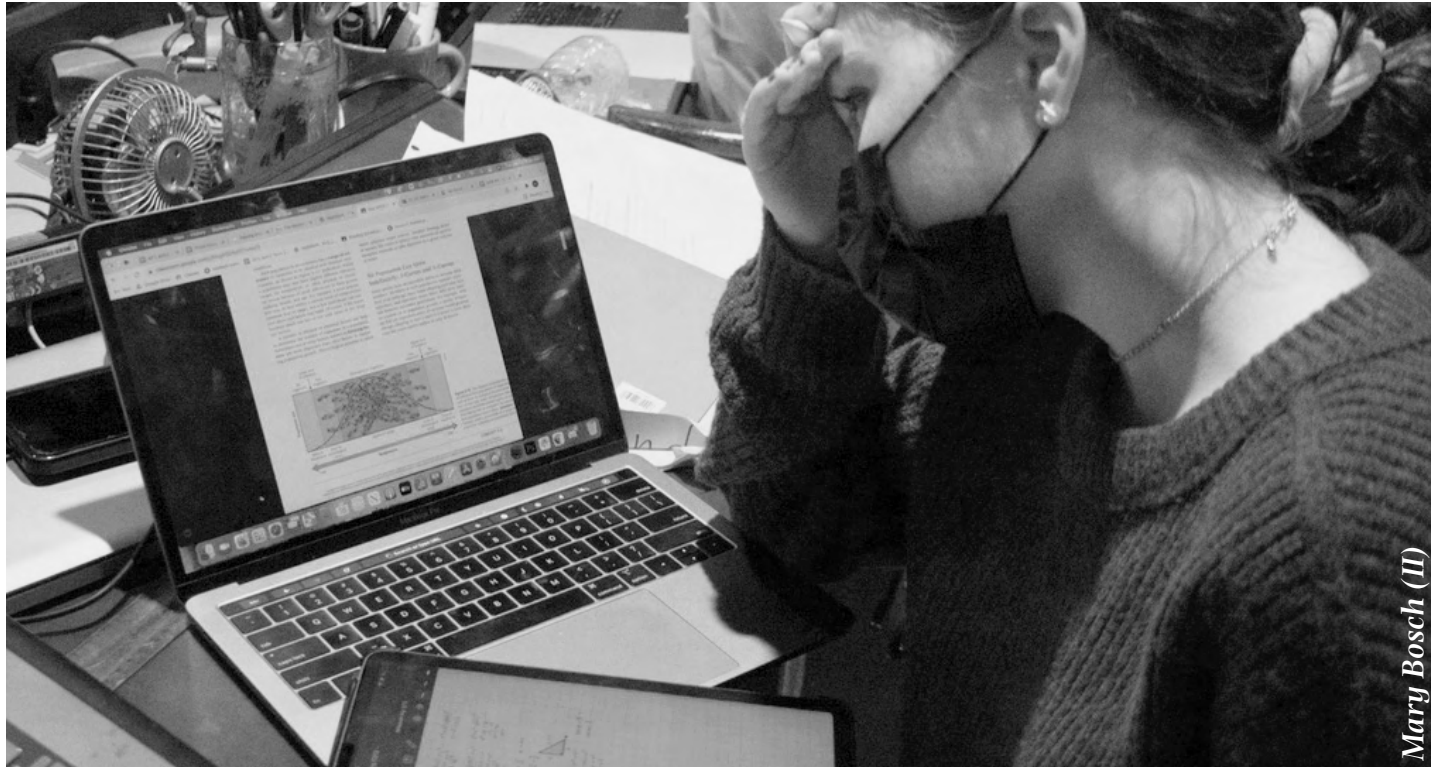
Although January 6 was a case of citizens attacking the U.S. government and democracy, the government also played a key role in depriving the people of democracy. Throughout history, voter suppression laws have been prevalent, turning away Black voters from polls through poll taxes, literacy tests and fraudulent accusations. Even after the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was enacted to overcome

these discriminations, policies were immediately replaced by mass incarceration and felony disenfranchisement.

Although there will never be a perfect system, there are steps we can take to make democracy more equitable. Boston Latin School history teacher Mr. Andy Zou proposes setting "term limits" to the Supreme Court and Congress, thus preventing politicians from overriding democratic processes to stay in office. Because the two-party system is unfair to other parties, Mr. Zou also suggests to "set limits on campaign funding" and give third parties "equal funding to the Democrats and Republicans."

As we reflect on the events of this past year, it is important to recognize that democracy is fragile and must not be taken for granted. We must continuously work to protect democracy through our words and actions.

Toxic Productivity is the New Burnout



Mary Bosch (II)

Toxic productivity stunts students' enthusiasm to learn.

By Michelle Wang (IV)

Staff Writer

Oftentimes on school holidays or on days off, students spend their time getting ahead academically, committing to extracurriculars or pursuing a new activity rather than taking a mental or physical rest. Many high school students feel that they are never doing enough. Boston Latin School students, especially, associate academics with productivity and anything unrelated with unproductivity. This builds a toxic mindset that causes students to fall into a void of living for the future instead of in the present.

BLS can be a stressful environment, which may lead to students constantly feeling that they are underachieving. BLS Latin teacher Mr. John Kerpan says, "There are real-world pressures [like] college, parental approval and athletic expectations that are putting a huge amount of pressure on students, and trying to keep up with it all is unhealthy, but [it is] the norm. The fact that some people seem to thrive under that pressure only reinforces the idea that students should be able to do this,

that you need to do it all to be successful, and if you cannot, you must be some sort of failure."

Because of this pressure, students overload their plates — they begin taking on too many activities without knowing how much is too much. This ultimately has a heavy impact on their mental health, leading to feelings of anxiety, fatigue and eventually, burnout. BLS students often set unrealistically high expectations for themselves, and when they are not able to meet every single expectation, many find themselves believing that it is the equivalent to failing.

Many high school students already struggle with time management. Additionally, the pressure to succeed in a variety of extracurriculars leaves no time for many students to sort out their schedule. Not only do teenagers now lack free time, but they also begin participating in extracurriculars for the wrong reasons.

Think of the BLS Debate Club, the *Argo*, Model United Nations and other clubs that have strong reputations of being notable assets to one's resume. While these clubs are enjoyable to many, they

also spark interest in others because of their high reputation. This leads to many students joining extracurriculars with the intentions of merely "getting involved" or of one day adding an authoritative-sounding position to the Common App.

As William Hu (I) puts it, "Yes, there have been times where I'm just like, what am I doing? I am drenched in work. I can't hang out with friends. I have this and this to do after school, [it] just becomes so laborious. I don't want to do anything anymore. And it's kind of ironic, really, because you want to do so much. But at the same time, you lack the motivation to do anything at all."

Hu describes a common feeling among many students. The more work one forces themselves to do, the less motivation they have to do everything else. Students should instead try to participate in extracurriculars that interest them. The result is fewer activities, but a higher chance of success because there is real motivation in participation.

BLS guidance counselor Mr. Samson Luu stresses the importance of quality over quantity, saying, "For example, if sports are your passion and that is all

you can manage after school, then be committed to that. If you have to work after school because your family depends on your income, there is no expectation that you are supposed to commit to five other things. Colleges would like to see well-roundedness, but oftentimes students misinterpret this as a requirement to be involved in ten different clubs and organizations. I always encourage students to find activities that are meaningful to them and not just necessarily something to check off a box."

Furthermore, this toxic productivity mindset forces students and even friends to view each other as competition. Since sixth year, students have constantly been told that they may have once been the top student in their class, but at BLS, everyone was once a top student. While this is supposed to remind students to work hard, it unintentionally nurtures unhealthy competition among students.

Friends can subconsciously turn into each other's greatest and toughest competition. Oftentimes friends have the same interests and join the same extracurriculars. This, however, turns into a race of who can have a higher position in said club. These friendships are, no doubt, genuine, but this competition in the back of one's mind can still be a malign force in their relationship.

Sam Chen (III) says, "If we are treating school and life like a game of 'I win, you lose,' our relationships are at a fundamental level, incredibly fake. The success of others is somehow now a bad thing."

Remember that one is worth more than their academic achievements and extracurriculars. This advice has been repeated countless times to teenagers everywhere; nevertheless, it remains a fact, not just a hollow cliché. It is always hard to obtain a healthy balance among mental health, social life, academics, extracurriculars and self care. Take breaks, and spend time with friends and family instead of squeezing work into so-called free time. Productivity is not maintaining straight As and Bs or becoming an officer in multiple clubs; rather it is spending one's energy in an effective and positive way.

New Year, New Store Prices

By Athena Yee-Wadsworth (IV)

Contributing Writer

The Boston Latin School store may look like a place brimming with school spirit, but there is a reason why the price tags are not displayed. The school store is a convenient place for students to buy school supplies and merchandise, being especially popular among incoming students. The school store's items sell at high prices, supposedly to benefit the school and the students, but the prices are not fair for all. These high prices are not beneficial to students and are problematic. The school store should lower their prices in order to create a school community more inclusive to all students.

Estimates of BLS's overall endowment have varied, with one *Boston Globe* article citing 39 million dollars — which is very possible based on the 3.4 million dollars they made from endowment in 2020 alone. So why is it that they charge 40 dollars for a plain black sweatshirt with a generic purple paw?

Based on Boston Latin School Association's 2020 Operating Funds Statement of Activities, BLSA saw an

increase in their net assets of 189,788 dollars, which, when considered along with the 3.4 million dollars BLSA made off of BLS's endowment, these sweatshirts along with other items are overpriced.

When asked about these prices, Elda Alibeaj (IV) comments, "Some of the merchandise is [reasonably priced], but most of the time, not really. For instance, take the BLS masks, they're ten dollars. That is way too overpriced, compared to your average mask at an average store, just because it has a BLS logo on it." Most BLS masks cost 15 to 16 dollars, proving how absurd their prices can be.

While some of the items seem reasonably priced, a majority of the items are unaffordable for BLS's economically diverse community. Gabriel Vidalis (IV) explains, "Students come from all walks of life to this school, so one can truly never tell another's situation, and I think our school store does a poor job of reflecting that with its prices." The prices of the school shop are unacceptable and should be more reasonable to incorporate all members of the school community.

As a result of the economic diversity in the BLS community, not everyone can afford merchandise from the school store. This leads to the exclusion from



Alex Strand (II)

Students purchase merchandise from the school store.

popular school events like Spirit Day and Valentine's Day. Vidalis adds, "Dressing up in BLS apparel and showing your school spirit are staples of our school's spirit day. [...] Just by excluding some students from buying a sweatshirt, you can destroy our school's sense of community."

The exclusion from exciting school events can rattle an individual's sense of school pride. A student should not have

to be left out of a schoolwide event, and their participation in events should not be determined by their economic status or their ability to afford school merchandise.

The BLS school store needs to lower their prices to be fair and accessible for all students in BLS, regardless of financial status. Attending a prestigious school like BLS is a privilege, but being a part of its community is a right.

The Case for Reading

By **Hannah Stoll (IV)**

Staff Writer

Reading is a classic pastime and a timeless source of knowledge that is highly accessible in the modern age. Due to days filled to the brim with school, work, extracurricular activities and easy access to digital content, however, reading has sadly become an obsolete hobby for many.

Many Boston Latin School students are former avid readers. As elementary school students, many ravenously devoured books — up to several a week, or even daily. Now, however, reading can feel like a tedious chore.

In classes, highly structured reading schedules require students to read a certain number of chapters, pay meticulous attention to seemingly insignificant details and take careful notes, which removes the joy of reading a new book and prevents one from becoming truly invested in the story. Zach Chen (III) says, “I think trying to memorize ‘the color of the main character’s dress’ [...] shouldn’t matter. But that’s the questions we get on tests.”

Books read in class, most of which are required by the Boston Public School curriculum, often feel out of touch with the present day. For many students, it is difficult to enjoy reading when one

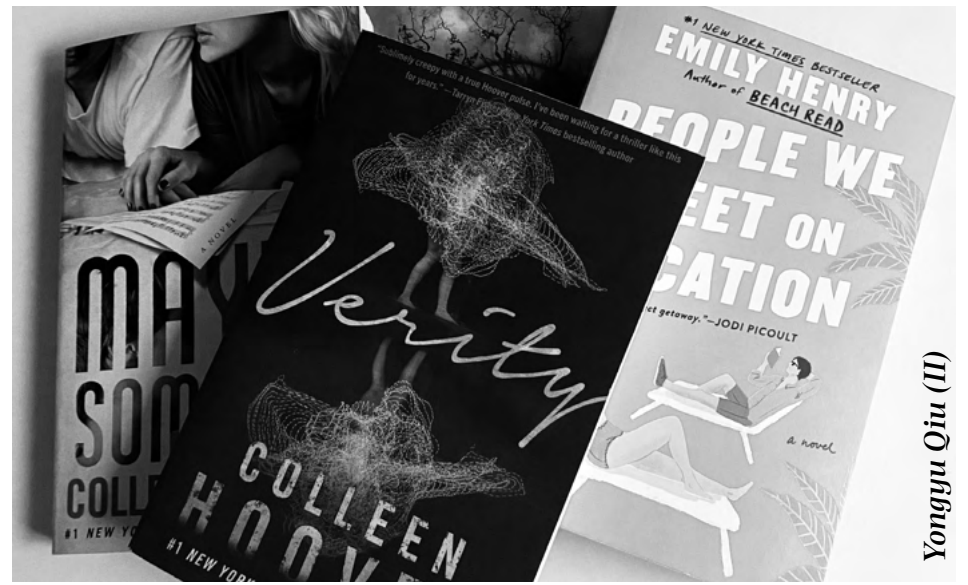
can not relate to or find much relevant meaning in a story. This phenomenon makes it difficult for students to be motivated to read night after night because their experience with reading feels like a forced march through the pages.

Deterred by these classroom experiences, it can be challenging to pick up a book again and read simply for pleasure. BLS Keefe Librarian Ms. Susan Harari explains, “If you stop reading books, it’s harder to transition [...] after you haven’t read one for a little while.”

Reading the right book, however, can be an extremely enjoyable and beneficial experience. Reading gives students a chance to escape their busy and unpredictable lives and allows them to understand the world through a different lens.

“I really enjoy long books that are just stories and draw you in and help you understand humanity in a way that you yourself wouldn’t necessarily be able to. One of the most important parts of reading is that it does allow you to connect deeply to the human experience,” explains BLS Keefe Librarian Ms. Deeth Ellis.

Various genres, from science fiction and fantasy to romance novels, young-adult fiction, nonfiction and biographies, give readers a plethora of opportunities to find a book that fits their



When was the last time you read a book for your own enjoyment?

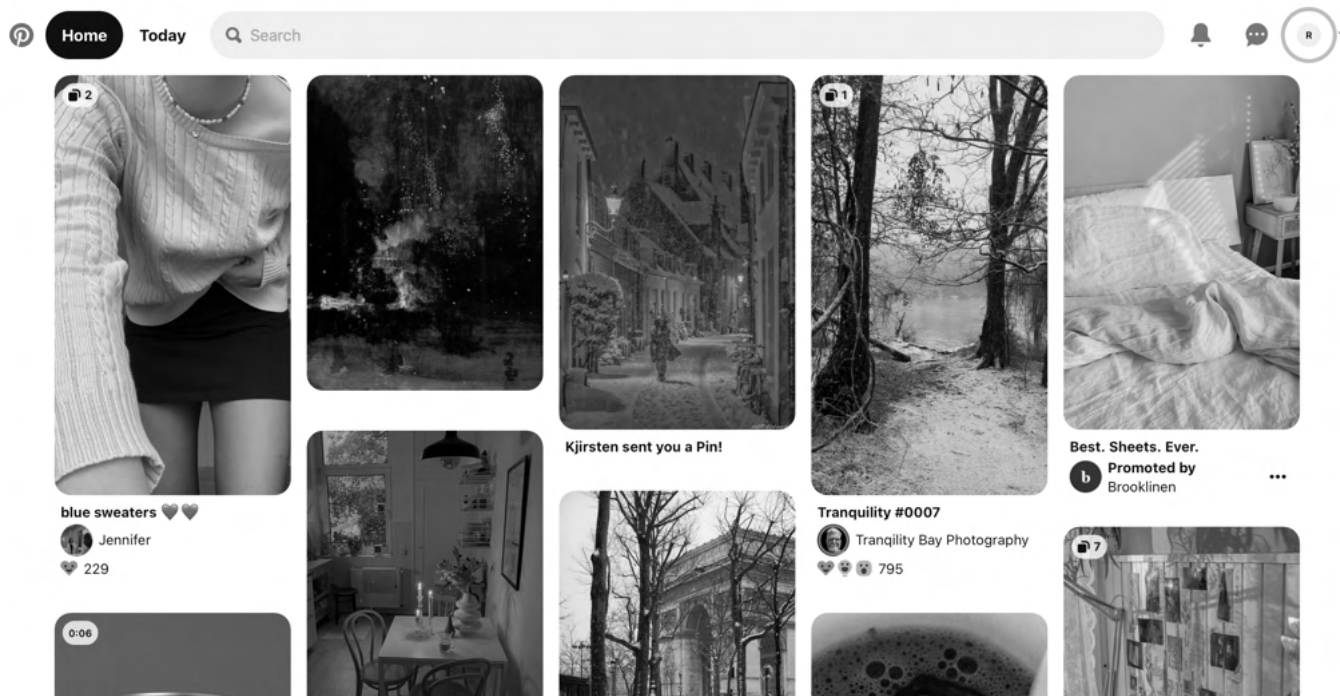
interests. The Keefe Library at BLS provides easy access for students looking for independent reading books. BLS students can browse the shelves and ask for assistance from the school librarians or even go to their local library branches. The Keefe Library website also provides excellent resources for finding new reading materials, in both online and physical media.

Despite these accessible materials, other activities often take precedence over reading, such as homework or social media. “I think homework, mixed

with tests and quizzes and extracurriculars makes it very hard to read when reading feels like a secondary thing. In addition, it’s very hard to start [...] reading a book, compared to looking at your phone or watching a YouTube video,” comments Chen.

When breaks and long weekends come around, students should take the additional time to pick up a book. By reclaiming the joy of reading for themselves rather than for a banal school assignment, they are able to reap the multitude of benefits a book can offer.

The Trend of Conforming Youth



Social media platforms such as Pinterest influence the ways teens act and express themselves.

By **Catherine Wang (II)**

Staff Writer

With the rise of influencer culture across all social media platforms, teenagers are beginning to look and act more like each other with every passing generation. Every day, social media and influencers bombard teens with information about how they are supposed to dress or act and what music, foods or brands to like. Ultimately, evolving one’s lifestyle to adhere to these trends molds teenagers into the same people with the same interests and opinions, leading Generation Z to lack individuality as a whole.

Teenagers are especially susceptible to influencer culture and rapid trend cycles, as they are the most receptive to peer influence and pressure. This anxiety and need to belong fuels the never-ending cycle of trends seen on popular social platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and Pinterest.

Over the past year, trends have spanned from students stealing school items to collectively “canceling” public figures such as Billie Eilish and Char-

li D’Amelio. These seemingly absurd “trends” go full-circle, appearing on several platforms until they have captured the attention of every teenager. So, why do teens follow absurd trends without thinking critically?

Boston Latin School history teacher Mr. Andy Zou reflects, “Teens have always been impressionable, but with social media, they are now constantly being bombarded by current trends and influencer culture. It’s hard to really turn away because each teenager and their social circles are all connected by social media.”

As teenagers are developing interests and hobbies, they are especially susceptible to peer pressure and a desire for belonging, which makes these trends throughout social media especially appealing.

The rise of TikTok has given trends a larger platform to reach a wider group of audiences more effectively. TikTok’s algorithm is made to push certain trends repeatedly — whether it be the same songs, videos or creators. Seeing these trends appear repeatedly can lead to the assumption that they are more popular

or desirable than they actually are. The more one is aware of something, the more likely one is to want it.

This phenomenon is known as the Baader-Meinhof phenomenon or the Frequency Illusion, which explains how the repetition of an ad can cause people to desire the advertised product. Especially at a time when social media influencers are becoming further integrated into marketing, targeted ads and the Frequency Illusion are becoming increasingly effective, slowly causing teenagers to want to buy the same products they see on their favorite influencer.

Christina Zhu (I) reflects, “I feel like TikTok does a lot less of molding people into the same personality because the ‘For You’ page’s algorithm is based on content that you normally interact with. [...] Sometimes, there are videos that become trends that everyone sees, like using certain slang or an audio that’s really catchy, and everyone starts saying those phrases for a couple of weeks or [even] months, which does create people that have similar personalities.”

It is not, however, just clothing brands and catchy songs that circulate

the internet. David Rivkin (II) warns, “Influencer culture can be extremely toxic at times, when there is a certain ideal being pushed, especially towards a younger and more impressionable audience. There can be a lot of issues with body image and other things that harm self-confidence.”

In particular, TikTok trends such as the “BBL” and “body checking” force unrealistic beauty standards onto unsuspecting minors, causing them to aim for an impossible goal of looking like the influencers they see.

Trends and influencer culture are especially appealing to the younger generation, as they are being taught from a young age that they must conform to pop culture in order to be liked. Rivkin continues, “I think it is healthy to follow influencer culture as long as you understand that the internet is not always an accurate representation of peoples’ actual lives, and you shouldn’t do something simply because a lot of people are, if it’s not right for you.”

Not only are teenagers starting to look increasingly similar to one another, but they are also starting to appear older and more mature with each passing age group, blurring the line of identifiable age. This is a cyclical trend that marketers call “KGOY”: “kids getting older, younger,” which describes younger children wanting to appear more mature and adopting the media that older audiences typically consume.

Ultimately, the phenomenon of influencer culture has afforded advertisers and creators a method to connect with young audiences. These uncharted territories, however, also bring a generation that is declining in creativity.

Generation Z has become a generation that is image-obsessed, wanting to be seen and heard, but simultaneously wanting to belong. Going forward, influencers and teenagers alike should embrace the uniqueness in everyone and build off of one another’s ideas and opinions. The prevalence of influencer culture should not come at the expense of dampening individuality.

Pinterest

The Show Must Gogh On



Museum-goers immerse themselves in van Gogh's works of art.

By Mary Bosch (II)

Staff Writer

Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience is a digital art exhibit on display in the Strand Theatre from October 6, 2021 through February 20, 2022. This exhibition was made possible through the partnership of Fever, a global entertainment platform, and Exhibition Hub.

Upon entering, you are greeted with a projected face of the famous Vincent van Gogh on a statue of a

head, creating a 3-D effect. While a good thought in theory, the reality of this is a little terrifying, and the rather horrifying expression on van Gogh's digitized face foreshadows the theme of the rest of the exhibit.

The exhibit begins with reproductions of van Gogh's most famous works grouped together and displayed under harsh spotlights. With the use of reproductions, one is able to inspect more pieces at a time, while in a museum, it would be unheard of for so many paintings to be displayed

together. Upon examination of these prints, however, it is clear what is lost from them: the life. When looking at a real painting, and especially one of van Gogh's oil paintings, the impasto and the texture of the paint make the viewer all the more aware of the brush strokes that created it. Ms. Judi Freeman, a Boston Latin School history teacher and former art curator, emphasizes, "It is critical [...] to see van Gogh in the flesh [because] his works of art consistently look as if they've come right off the easel." A cheaply-made print on canvas does it no justice.

As you move from room to room, you'll discover a different period of van Gogh's life and artwork. There is his sunflower series — his work with Japanese style, landscape and rooms — all accompanied by descriptions of the paintings and the state of his life during their creation.

Parker Hastings (III), however, feels that the descriptions "gave the average person a lot more knowledge [...] and much-needed insight." Prior to the exhibit, Hastings only knew van Gogh as "that painter who cut his ear off," so he enjoyed getting "insight into the history of the paintings." The descriptions were Hastings' favorite part of the experience, but that can also be attributed to the allure of the artist's life.

Following the reproductions of van Gogh's paintings and some photos comes the truly immersive part

of this experience: the 35-minute, 360-degree digital show. When I first entered the room, I was mesmerized. Boats moved, clouds drifted across the sky, lights shimmered on water and raindrops fell onto the floor. Images of different perspectives of the same subject morphed into each other, and an entire section was dedicated to watching van Gogh's self-portrait drift farther and farther from reality.

It was beautiful seeing people around you immersed in the same experience. There was a silent appreciation of what was happening around us, but that silence was soon broken, both literally and figuratively. The show was over; children ran around the room, and reality dawned on me. I paid 50 dollars, including fees and services, to sit on IKEA furniture printed with *Starry Night* and see images projected onto walls. Moreover, all the money from the nearly sold-out exhibition went to the companies, and not a penny went to the late Vincent van Gogh.

These kinds of exhibitions succeed in making a profit because of people's hunger for entertainment. There are many other "immersive" van Gogh experiences in the country, and people attend them. While the shows excel in giving the average person insight into an artist's life, they are gimmicks. Ms. Freeman puts it best: "Money cannot replace the uniqueness of a work of art, but we're living in a world where it's all been monetized."

An End to a Golden Era

**By Rachel Roncka (I)
& Catherine Cox (IV)**

Staff Writers

As 2021 came to an end, so did an era of entertainment defined by the "First Lady of Television," Betty White. Known for her outstanding work in the film and television industries, White sadly passed away on December 31 from a stroke that occurred six days prior. She was just a couple of weeks shy of her hundredth birthday.

Born in Oak Park, Illinois just before the Great Depression, White did not initially plan on becoming an actress. In a 2016 interview from the Television Academy Foundation, White shared her previous dreams of becoming a park ranger. Although this love of wildlife was never fully extinguished (as shown by her book *Betty & Friends: My Life at the Zoo*), White soon discovered new passions. She took a great interest in acting as a teenager, even writing and performing the leading role in her high school play. That same fervor and drive brought White great success later in her acting career, earning the admiration of millions along with numerous awards, including a People's Choice Award and the Screen Actors Guild Lifetime Achievement Award.

Most recognize White for her character Rose Nylund in the beloved sitcom *The Golden Girls*. Airing for seven years (1985-1992) and still streaming today, the show focused on the lives of four older women living in Miami. In an entertainment industry that often sidelines the experience and existence of older women, this show stands out for its treatment of characters like Rose. *The Golden Girls* audience spans all ages and demographics, including students at Boston Latin School. Caroline Hubbard (IV) remembered White for her warmth, stating, "I think Betty White became so famous because of her charming charisma and her all-around kindness. Her character on *The Golden Girls*, Rose Nylund, had a sense of innocence that people across the United States and around the world loved to watch."

Younger fans are less familiar with the work that first made White a household name. White starred in her first sitcom, *Life With Elizabeth*, beginning in 1953, but her pioneering work did not end once the cameras stopped rolling. As the first woman to pro-



Betty White played Rose Nylund in *The Golden Girls*.

duce a national TV show, White was making strides for women both behind the scenes and onscreen. She appeared as Sue Ann Nivens in the sitcom *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, which highlighted the lives and independence of working women in the 1970s. Reflecting on White's role in the show, BLS English teacher Mr. Mark Sanford says, "She had a presence. She was a comedic actress, but there was a very fine line between what she did for her comedy roles; you could tell that she could turn the switch and be serious too."

Over the years, White has also used her platform to speak out on relevant issues including animal rights, marriage equality and racial equity. In 1954, she hosted gifted tap dancer and singer Arthur Duncan on *The Betty White Show*. The program received racist backlash for featuring a Black artist, and some networks refused to even air it. White, however, did not regret her decision to highlight Duncan's talent, and they reunited decades later in 2017.

A Betty White fan and BLS AP Government and Politics teacher, Ms. Meredith Elliott reflects on

White's legacy: "With all the negativity and polarization in the country, the response seemed to be pretty universal that this was a kind woman who made people laugh, who cared about her issues, who followed through with her money. [...] Because of that kindness and generosity, even though she died peacefully in her sleep, it still felt too soon."

White's success in the entertainment industry did not end in the twentieth century. Her recent appearances in movies like *The Proposal* (2009) and comedy show *Saturday Night Live* (2010) have introduced a younger generation to White's comedic talent and wit. In 2010, she made a guest appearance on the TV show *Community*, playing a formidable anthropology teacher who inspires fear in her adult students.

Betty White was one of the rare artists who both defined and defied the standards of the industry. She will be remembered by fans young and old as a pop culture fixture, and her on-screen presence will forever be immortalized in the numerous television shows and films she contributed to.

Artist Spotlight: Tessa Catalano (I)

By Maddie Murphy (I)
& Harrison Tran (II)

Contributing Writers

If you plan on walking down the hallway of Boston Latin School's art wing anytime soon, be sure to look out for Tessa Catalano's (I) pieces pinned to the wall. As an editor for the BLS literary magazine *The Register* and a current AP Studio Art Drawing student, Catalano has been active in the school's artistic community for years. She also practices art outside of school with help from her family.

In her AP Art class, Catalano has chosen the topic of time as her concentration. She explains her decision, saying, "I chose to concentrate on time because it was always something that scared me as a kid; I never wanted to grow up or let a moment pass." Catalano, however, now feels that she has gained a more mature perspective on time from her five-month-long exploration into the subject. She also believes that the journey has been therapeutic and rewarding. Her first and favorite piece in AP Art was a colored pencil drawing, depicting the head of a baby melting into a skull. For her, the piece represents the cycle of life.

Catalano seems to draw much inspiration from her childhood. She began drawing at a young age because art was a tradition passed down in her

family. Her grandfather and father often critiqued her work and included her on their own artistic projects, which inspired some of her artworks.

For Catalano, art has always been a way to connect with her family. She remembers a favorite memory when she had finished the first drawing that she was truly proud of. She had shown it to her entire family, thinking she was the "next da Vinci." Catalano admits, "Now, looking back at the drawing, I can see that that was not the case, but it was still nice to be truly proud of something I created."

Beyond being a visual artist, Catalano is also a dancer. She plans to incorporate her love of dance into her future AP Art pieces. Catalano's dance background recently influenced her current fascination with the idea of movement in relation to the passage of time. She shares her recent revelation: "I discovered that for a clock in movement, time moves more than for a stationary clock." Catalano hopes to explore this connection between time and movement in her next concentration pieces.

For beginners, Catalano admits that art can be intimidating because everyone is afraid of making mistakes. She says, however, "Breaking past that fear and just making whatever it is you want is the first step to exploring art."

For seasoned artists, artist's block is a whole other monster. Catalano confirms that she too, struggles from this



Regina Chiem (I)

debilitating hindrance. To overcome this challenge, she recommends one remedy: trying new mediums. Right now, her favorite is pastel pencils because it feels most natural to her, but paints intimidate her because translating what she sees into art is harder when using them. Catalano says that if she could try any new medium, she would try depicting with oil pastels since she thinks that they will allow her to step out of her comfort zone.

As of right now, Catalano has no

plans to pursue an art degree in college. She does, however, hope to continue taking art classes. She wants to find a career in which she can utilize her artistic talent, but she still sees art mainly as a hobby. For Catalano, art is something that has always been a part of her life. It is something that is therapeutic for her and has been passed down for generations. Her inspirations are evident in her artwork through intricate diligence that one can see in every fine line.

Performances Persevere Through the Pandemic



Lorne Thomson

Despite the rise of the Omicron variant, Clairo still sings for her North American tour.

By Bryanna Upton (II)
& Penelope Meisel (III)

Contributing Writers

Concerts have always been a staple in Boston. From the House of Blues to Symphony Hall, they bring in not only business, but also a sense of community and connection. While many eager artists have begun to reschedule previously postponed national and world tours, concert arrangements and procedures are still looking different from those pre-pandemic.

Over the last few months, some of

the largest names in music and visual arts — including Olivia Rodrigo, Justin Bieber and Tyler, the Creator — have announced concerts coming to the Boston area this spring. The unprecedented emergence of the Omicron variant, however, has thrown a wrench into many of these plans.

Various artists have enforced stricter vaccination, testing and masking policies, while others have canceled their shows all together. Singer Omar Apollo was supposed to play Boston in October 2021, but he postponed his tour until this May. Amelia Landry (II), who had tickets to the October show, remarks, "I was dis-

appointed — I was looking forward to it."

With the new vaccine mandate in Boston, which took effect on January 15, all indoor concert halls now require proof of vaccination for all individuals over the age of 12. Children between the ages of 2 to 11 will be allowed entry with a negative test. Major venues such as TD Garden are one step ahead of the game when it comes to mandates. TD Garden's website displays a reminder of the vaccine mandate, and it provides a link to TD Garden's personal requirements. Masks for every individual over the age of 2 are required.

Annual music festivals have also begun to make a comeback after prior

cancellations. The surge of the Omicron variant, however, threatens the return of these events. For instance, the iHeart Jingle Ball, an annual music festival, has faced canceled performances. The 2021 lineup for the ten-city tour included big names such as Doja Cat, Megan Thee Stallion and Jonas Brothers. Unfortunately, at stops five and six, which were New York and Boston, a member of Doja Cat's crew tested positive for COVID-19, and she had to cancel her performances in those cities. "We are following all the appropriate safety measurements and necessary precautions [...] I'm extremely disappointed," writes Doja Cat on Twitter.

Unsurprisingly, Broadway has also taken a hit from the surge of the Omicron variant. Many actors and actresses have had to take a step back in light of infections. But amidst all of the chaos that the Omicron variant has brought to the stage, understudy performers who serve as substitutes for unavailable actors have been stepping up and saving performances. In a 2021 interview with *Forbes*, Jennifer Blood, an understudy for multiple parts in *Girl from the North Country*, says, "I think there has never been a better time or a worse time to be an understudy. Better because understudies are not an afterthought. I think the industry came back investing a lot more in their understudies." Hopefully, this newfound appreciation for Broadway's secret heroes will give them more credit in the future.

Despite the cancellations, hopes remain high throughout the entertainment industry. Following the surge of the Omicron variant, singer and songwriter Clairo had to postpone her European tour until September 2022, but the North American tour is still on. Parker Hastings (III) has tickets to the upcoming show this February. "Honestly, I think [the concert] will get cancelled, but I'm really hoping that it isn't," says Hastings. When asked about the new COVID-19 precautions put in place, he says, "I feel like it's enough; I really want it to be enough."



None of the BLS guys meet my standards but I am kind of getting bored of being single and watching happy couples make me want to puke, like how did everyone pair up? Do I lower my standards because I feel like experiencing a relationship is useful practically speaking or do I just continue to give couples a withering glare when I see them together? Also how do I tell guys to back off like I have done everything to tell them I am not interested but I think they still think they have a chance? I want to be nice but simps get on my nerves - Epic Gaslighter

Epic Gaslighter,

We're going to answer your questions, assuming that they are real...

Let's address the puking issue first. We did some research for you, and Amazon does sell airplane vomit bags. So, before you finish reading this, we advise that you stock up on those.

Just because none of the BLS guys meet your standards doesn't mean you'll be single forever. Even though this may be surprising, there are also guys outside of BLS. Still, we don't recommend lowering your standards. As for death glares, those might just make you seem jealous.

To fill the obvious void in your heart, you could get some gifts for yourself! We hear that Valentine's Day chocolates are in stores, and you could even buy some carnations from the *Argo* and send them to yourself.

For shooing away the simps, we recommend barking. Aggressively. For extra emphasis, you can also add in a sort of dog-like gait. If you want to get them to stop texting you, we have a great recommendation: text them "SMS: SERVICE ERROR 305: Message delivery failed. Further messages will be charged to your account," and then immediately block them. It really is a great plan, and hopefully, your simps will stay away.

I have this issue. There was a tragic death in my family at one point in my life and it kind of led me to be a little overprotective. This caused my son to run away from me because I was so overbearing. Now I'm stuck with this idiotic other person and I can't even find my son and I almost got eaten by sharks. I don't know what to do anymore. Do you have any advice??? - notaclown

Howdy notaclown,

We are so sorry for your loss (or losses) and the terrible news about your son.

We recommend that you remember the address "P. Sherman 42 Wallaby Way Sydney" if you do not want to rely on your companion for directions. On the plus side, you didn't get eaten by sharks, and it must have been because they were friendly.

Being the prophetic people we are, we think that your son may be stuck in a fish tank. But not to worry, power through the struggles. Although you might have to swim through a sea of jellyfish, we know you'll find a guide as wise as a turtle. We're sure you'll find your son. About leaving the idiotic person you're stuck with, we're not so sure on that part.

Everyone is telling me that I'm not allowed to dab down the hallways between classes but like gabriella from high school musical I just gotta go my own way. What do you think I should do? Do I bet on it or stick to the status quo?

- sickballerdabbercoolkid100

What's up our bruh, sickballerdabbercoolkid100,

Well, for you, it's "Now or Never." So don't let the naysayers ruin your dabalicious vibe. We're sure that you're the coolest person in your grade, and the others are just jealous of your swagginess. We think it's time for you to start "Breaking Free" from others' advice and instead take ours.

Be cautious of where your elbows are, especially in the sixie hallways. We wouldn't want you taking out someone's eye. But, if someone tells you to stop, simply "Walk Away."

"We're All In This Together," so we support your dabbing. But since we do not want to take away from your sick street cred, we'll refrain from dabbing in the hallways.

On behalf of my Class IVB (2025) and Class VI (2027) beautiful people, what are some of the best strategies to manage the lifestyle of BLS without over-stressing about everything at once?

- Kasaan Kirby, Class II

Hello Kasaan Kirby (II),

What an excellent question! As seniors at BLS, we are most qualified to answer. In truth, BLS is stressful; there is no way around it. But with our helpful tips, you'll be one step closer to managing it!

First of all, we recommend keeping track of things you need to do, including extra-curriculars, homework and anything in between. This way, you'll always know where you have to be and when to eliminate extra stress.

Next, you should realize that BLS is really only four or six years of your life, which may seem like a lot now, but it will be minuscule years from now. With this in mind, make the most out of your high school experience. Go ice skating after school, try to figure out how to work Google Maps or just walk around downtown.

Soon you'll realize that a single missed homework or failed pop quiz doesn't mean your entire life is ruined, even though it may seem that way in the moment. So, find a balance between fun and school, and remember that life goes on after BLS.

Don't Look Up Critiques Climate Change Deniers

By Mai Babila-Weigmann (II)
& Eliza Duff-Wender (II)

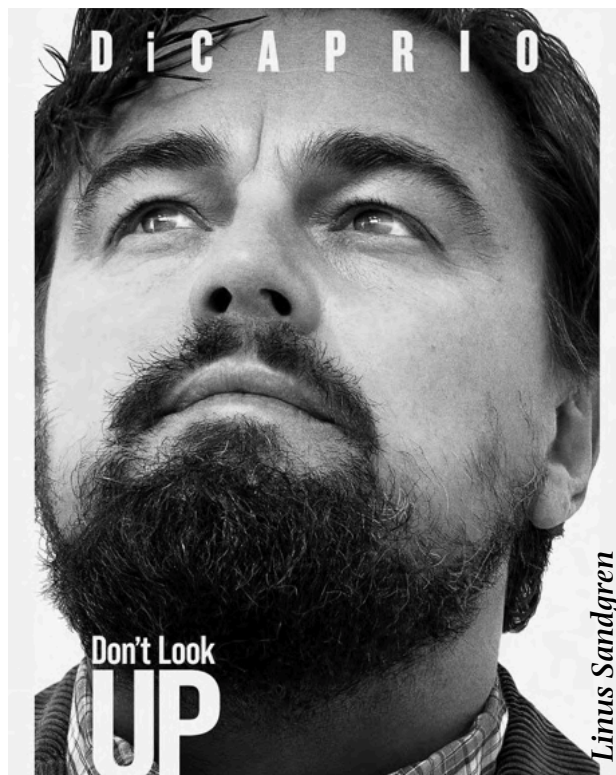
Contributing Writers

Many Bostonians likely remember the fuss of the Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer Lawrence and Timothée Chalamet sightings in Boston early last year. Amid the monotony of the pandemic, the actors' filming process for an upcoming movie provided entertainment for the bored and dreary in addition to giving people a film to look forward to.

Don't Look Up, a satirical science fiction movie that critiques the global disregard for science, was released on Netflix on December 24, 2021. Along with DiCaprio, Lawrence and Chalamet, its star-studded cast also features Cate Blanchett, Meryl Streep and others. The crude humor, strong language and nudity warranted an "R" rating for *Don't Look Up*, and is definitely not suited for younger audiences.

The film's blunt authenticity, however, reinforces its purpose: to criticize society's ignorance and to urge the audience to believe in science, no matter the emotional prejudices. This message is particularly relevant amid the COVID-19 crisis, despite the long prevalence of scientific distrust in our society.

Specifically, climate change has been consistently ignored and denied. DiCaprio, who is known for his environmental activism, comments on *Don't Look Up's* relevance: "We have this very finite window of ten years to make this transition. If we are not voting for leaders or supporting everything that has to do with climate mitigation, we are going to have a fate very similar to these characters." Despite the film's message, audiences did not enjoy *Don't Look Up* as much as director Adam McKay may have expected. With a 55 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes' "Tomatometer" and 78 percent



The new movie *Don't Look Up* becomes a hit.

"Audience Score," its low performance was an utter shock.

After watching the movie, Boston Latin School Youth-Can member, Maia Frost (II), does not "think that it'll convince as many people to change their minds completely." Although the film aimed to spread awareness, many people who watched the movie were already aware of the disregard of scientific issues. Ultimately, the movie was largely unable to reach and change the minds of those who deny its message.

In the movie, the depiction of the public's reaction to a comet about to strike Earth is accurate to many. AP Environmental Science teacher Ms. Jennifer Dorcy says, "In today's 'fake news' climate, I think that [*Don't Look Up*] accurately portrays both the political powers' responses and the general public's responses." As an environmental science teacher, she must deal with the pressures of informing students about the severity of climate change.

Ms. Dorcy explains the vitality of obtaining accurate scientific information: "We try very hard at BLS to make sure that the students know how to obtain information from reliable sources with good reason. There is too much misinformation out there and it is starting to create situations that are harmful to individuals and society at large." *Don't Look Up* illustrates the damage scientific misinformation can produce, emphasizing the importance of checking sources and spreading awareness.

Don't Look Up resonates with viewers no matter their scientific background. Claire Lantsman (I) says, "Sometimes the sad truth is a hard pill to swallow, and it is easier to live in denial." The film represents a common fear: denial of science will devastate the Earth and all life.

Don't Look Up tackles a difficult but relevant issue all while making its critiques consumable to viewers, with satirical humor and a cast of prominent actors. Despite this, the film has not created an increase of awareness, as so far, it has primarily reached viewers who already share similar views to those that the movie communicates. The exaggerated satire and storyline also walk on a fine line between emphasizing the importance of scientific discoveries and desensitizing messages. Modern media can be used to inspire protest and meaningful change, but the means of delivering this inspiration must be carefully calculated to produce more good than harm.

Peter and the Starcatcher Shoots for the Stars

By Olivia Chen (VI)
& Alice Li (VI)
Contributing Writers

This winter, Boston Latin School Theatre presented the play *Peter and the Starcatcher*. The three performances took place from December 9 to December 12. Audiences hoping to enjoy the show could have watched it either in the Black Box or live on YouTube. The play was directed by Sam Ringrose (I) and Cam Elwell (I) and included a cast of students from all grades.

There was evident preparation required to produce the play. Rehearsal started in September and was initially only three days a week. As the performance days drew near, however, the crew entered two production weeks into the schedule. During this time, rehearsals increased to four days a week, and the students sometimes worked as late as 7:00 P.M.

The comedic and adventurous play, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, is based on a novel by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson. Taking place in England in the 1800s, it explains the origins of *Peter Pan*. Ringrose

adds, “[The play] also [...] talks about how certain other kinds of iconic characters [stand] where they are in the *Peter Pan* story.” For example, the audience learns the story behind Captain Hook’s lost hand. This play also explains the existence of Star Stuff, a magical substance that allows one to transform into whatever they wish.

The lead character in the play is Molly Aster, who was portrayed by Bea Samuels (VI). Samuels says, “I was [...] surprised when I got Molly, but I am very happy that I did get it, and I [...] have that experience in the play.” She joined the play because she loved comedy and acting, and she looks back fondly on her participation.

One of the most exciting experiences for the cast was learning how to do acrobatics. During one of the rehearsals, members of the Commonwealth Circus Center were invited to the school and taught tricks to the cast. Ringrose comments on the entertaining nature of these lessons: “We were basically standing on top of each other [and] building human pyramids. That was really fun because I think most of the actors have never experienced anything like that.” In one par-



Peter and the Starcatcher actors pose after a musical number.

ticular scene toward the end of the play, the cast had to raise Peter up into the air. These stunts contributed to the show’s huge success, and the scenes utilizing them were some of the audiences’ favorites.

The hard work put into the play’s

preparation greatly paid off, and the end result was beautiful. For Bailey Wright (I), their favorite memories were getting to meet and work with all of the actors. They reflect that the best part was “all of the new people and all of the new life the theatre department brought.”

Dawn FM Dazzles With Stunning Synth-Pop

By Ellis Seul (II)
Head Editor

On his new album, *Dawn FM*, The Weeknd presents an optimistic collection of songs that reflects on finding a new outlook on life and seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. Over the course of the sixteen soulful synth-pop songs interspersed with spoken-word interludes to set the tone, he tells a tale of reflection and rejuvenation that will enthrall any listener.

Released on January 7 with little prior announcement, *Dawn FM* is the fifth studio album by Canadian singer The Weeknd (Abel Tesfaye) and serves as a follow-up to 2020’s *After Hours*, which includes hits such as “Blinding Lights.” *Dawn FM* features production from renowned Swedish hitmaker Max Martin as well as American electronic musician Oneohtrix Point Never. The latter producer also collaborated with The Weeknd on his 2020 album *Magic Oneohtrix Point Never*. That album employs a radio aesthetic similar to that of *Dawn FM*, which features narration from actor Jim Carrey in its opening track and outro.

Upon pressing play on the album’s opening track, which shares its name with the album, it is clear that the listener is in for an immersive experience.

Atmospheric bird sounds and a meandering synth line immediately draw the listener in before The Weeknd’s breathy, chorus-backed vocals further the spacey mood. By the time Carrey’s narration kicks in, telling the audience that “it’s time to walk into the light,” the listener is absorbed and raring to go for the rest of the album. After the narration segment introduces the *Dawn FM* radio theme, a pounding synth line introduces “Gasoline,” an ode to a lover who helps Tesfaye cope with his unhealthy behavior. Notable on this track is the contrast between The Weeknd’s vocals on the verses, which feature deeper, moodier vocals as opposed to the chorus.

Following “Gasoline” is “How Do I Make You Love Me?,” which intersperses a simple three-tone synth line with fuller instrumental bursts and a soaring chorus, as well as a fluid vocal flow on the verses reminiscent of The Weeknd’s 2015 chart-topper “Can’t Feel My Face.” The song’s instrumental outro transitions seamlessly into an extended version of “Take My Breath,” which was released as the lead single in August of last year. The longer album version is a triumphant, synth-infused track and the first major highlight of the album. With spacey synths, an infectious bassline and

an enthralling interplay between Tesfaye’s different vocal styles, “Take My Breath” stands out as one of *Dawn FM*’s best tracks and a reminder of The Weeknd’s unmatched hit-making ability.

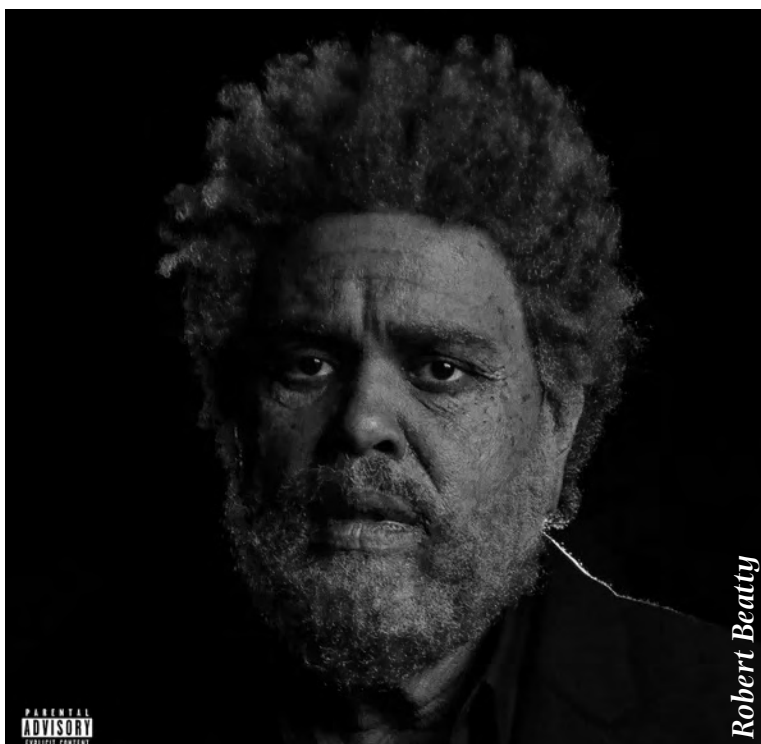
After funk-infused “Sacrifice” and “A Tale by Quincy,” an interlude featuring renowned producer Quincy Jones, the album’s pace slows down slightly with “Out of Time,” a more downtempo song in which The Weeknd laments lost love. This is followed by “Here We Go... Again,” which features a verse from Tyler, the Creator and lyrically reflects on The Weeknd’s fame and its effect on his feelings and relationships.

The slightly faster-paced “Is There Someone Else?” then transitions into “Starry Eyes,” another choice cut from the album that features interplaying synths similar to 2016’s *Starboy* and a vocal performance that stands out on an album with already phenomenal singing. This song also comes close to providing a climax in the album’s narrative, with The Weeknd reflecting on how he finds connections in his flaws and past traumas to be able to find love.

The interlude “Every Angel Is Terrifying” introduces the home stretch of *Dawn FM* by starting with “Don’t Break My Heart,” a soulful electro-pop track car-

ried by shallow synths. Next up is “I Heard You’re Married,” a fun, funky song featuring production by Calvin Harris, known for his fusion of EDM, disco and pop. This production can especially be seen during the verse by Lil Wayne, a phenomenal part of an already standout song on the album. Following this is “Less Than Zero,” whose cathartic chorus provides an emotional climax to the album as Abel reflects on feeling like he’s not enough for a lover. After that, “Phantom Regret by Jim,” a poem by Carrey set to a calm keyboard line, provides an optimistic closing to the album’s narrative.

Dawn FM is slightly flawed by inconsistent pacing, occasionally being unclear where each song lies in the overarching narrative and what purpose the interludes serve. This is offset by the quality of each song and interlude, however, as well as the seamless transitions, which offer outstanding cohesion. Thematically, The Weeknd describes *Dawn FM* to *Billboard* as encompassing “purgatory state” and “waiting to reach the light at the end of the tunnel.” By the end of the album’s runtime, the listener will have certainly reached this light. Overall, *Dawn FM* provides a refreshing boost of optimism both musically and lyrically during a difficult time.



Dawn FM

By: The Weeknd

Released: January 7, 2022

Label: XO, Republic Records

Genre: Synth-Pop, Dance-Pop,
Alternative R&B

Runtime: 16 tracks, 51:49

Highlights: “Take My Breath,”
“Starry Eyes,”
“I Heard You’re Married”

Rating: 8/10

Winter Sports Take a Hiatus in Latest Surge



Regina Chiem (1)

With the rise of the Omicron variant, players gear up with masks.

By Niall Reynolds (II)

Contributing Writer

Boston Latin School sports teams were shocked and disappointed when they heard their seasons had been canceled. Right before winter break, the news broke that Boston Public Schools postponed the winter sports season until January 10, a postponement that had been in contemplation for a while. Prior to the decision, BPS had already banned spectators from home games, and sports teams were struggling with the rise of COVID-19 cases among their student-athletes.

Many sports teams struggled with a lack of attendance due to Omicron variant cases increasing dramatically in the week before winter break. By December 22, 2021

there were already 36 new positive cases of COVID-19 in the BLS community alone, the majority having tested positive that day. This was evidence enough to postpone the reopening of sports until over a week after the end of winter break for fear of spreading the virus further.

Many athletes did not see eye-to-eye with the assertion that winter sports were inherently unsafe and called out other more “high-risk” situations that were not being addressed. “Right after the shutdown happened and we all went on break, a couple [of] kids got [COVID-19], I think from seeing their families,” says Sam Griffin (II), a captain of the boys’ basketball team.

It was clear from conversations with other student-athletes that a lot of cases have spread, not through school nor sports, but rather through large unmasked

gatherings with friends and family over the holidays. All BLS sports had to follow the same safety rules that students follow in school. Griffin confirms this effort, explaining, “I thought we were doing really well with keeping our masks on and staying distanced from each other when we weren’t playing.” It was clear that student-athletes were contracting COVID-19, however, and cases were only rising.

Other student-athletes, though they agreed with the decision to pause the season, still felt a negative impact on their overall well-being. Jill Keane (II), a captain of the cheer team, felt the impact on her routine and mental well-being because “it just felt weird not going to cheer every day.” She further explains that she truly “missed seeing [her] team.”

For many, their sports are a big part of out-of-school life and are important for a variety of reasons. Exercise is an important tool for bettering mental health, and the social aspect of team sports allows athletes to be a part of a supportive community, which is especially important during the stress of the pandemic.

This imbalance between physical safety and mental well-being has affected the sports community more than any other group at BLS over the course of the past few weeks. William Hu (I), a captain of the crew team and the founder of a petition for a virtual learning option with over 9,000 signatures, comments on this difficult balance: “I’m a crew captain myself, you know. I want to go to crew every single day of the week, and this week I’m not going, specifically just to let things peak off.” Though sports mean a lot to him, Hu realizes that going back during the height of the virus is not in the best interest for the health of him and his family.

Ultimately, after extending the pause on winter sports beyond January 10, BPS made the decision to finally resume its athletics in small groups, starting January 18. Required pool testing, among other measures, will hopefully keep the spread of cases minimal and allow athletes to safely return to their sports. Massachusetts appears to have passed the peak of the Omicron variant, but there is still much uncertainty for what is to come. No matter how the virus affects our athletes, they will continue to be resilient and enter back into the Dual County League that has continued without them for more than three weeks. As Griffin concludes, every team is “going to have to fight our way back even more than we did before.”

Coverage of Female Athletes in the News

By Madelyn Taylor (II)

Contributing Writer

As of January 16, the University of South Carolina is leading the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) women’s basketball, with Stanford University and the University of Louisville in second and third place, respectively. Missing from this top three is the longstanding legend, the University of Connecticut, which is struggling in the absence of leading scorer Paige Bueckers, following a knee injury.

Many avid NCAA basketball fans only follow the men’s teams, and they wouldn’t be able to tell you those rankings. Unfortunately, this is common for women’s sports across all levels. A lack of coverage is a large contributor to this issue. According to a 2019 study by Purdue University’s Cheryl Cooky, “Coverage of women-athletes on televised news and highlight shows, including ESPN’s SportsCenter, totaled only 5.4 percent of all airtime.”

From the perspective of young female athletes, being able to watch women play at a collegiate and professional level is crucial. Allie Golden (I), captain of Boston Latin School girls’ varsity soccer, basketball and lacrosse teams, says that seeing “successful female athletes serve not only as [an] inspiration for girls with dreams of going pro, but it also serves as a reminder that these goals are achievable.” Despite their importance, live women’s games are often difficult to access and not available to watch after they are aired.

Aside from the lack of coverage, female athletes often face inequalities in programming. The infamous weight room controversy of March Madness 2021 is a prime example. Despite the same amount of men’s

and women’s teams competing in the NCAA Division I basketball tournament, the NCAA provided the men with significantly more equipment and resources. Although this situation garnered a large amount of attention and support for the women, it is only one instance of the many unknown discrepancies between the treatment of female and male athletes that goes unaddressed.

The differences in treatment begin at a young age. Golden recalls having to join a boys’ hockey team at age 7, as there wasn’t one for girls in her neighborhood. Despite dealing with various similar situations since then, she says that gender discrimination in sports “is something that I notice less now, not because it doesn’t happen anymore, but because I’m fairly used to it.”

Even at BLS, there have been many examples of girls’ athletics receiving less than boys’ athletics. Both Golden and Head Coach of BLS girls’ varsity basketball, Ms. Keri Orellana, pointed to 2017, the year when the boys’ locker room was completely renovated. Despite pushback from female athletes at the school, however, the girls’ locker room did not receive the same upgrade.

Across professional sports, there is often a pay gap between male and female athletes. The United States Women’s National Soccer Team’s (USWNT) fight for equal pay to their male counterparts has been going on for a long time. Although they exhibit stronger performances, the United States Soccer Federation continues to pay them less.

USWNT athletes, including Megan Rapinoe and Alex Morgan, have been crucial in leading this fight. Head Coach Orellana remarks that those who are willing to speak up against inequity always face backlash. She, however, emphasizes the importance of their



Justin Tallis

Serena Williams wins her 22nd Grand Slam at Wimbledon.

activism: “When does it change if someone doesn’t take that chance? If someone doesn’t start setting that standard? [...] We need advocates.”

The Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) has advocated for athletes. The WNBA was founded in 1996 and has progressed tremendously since its beginning. There is, however, still much work to be done to make it comparable to the National Basketball Association (NBA). The WNBA has just 12 teams with 12 roster spots each. Professional women basketball players earn significantly lower salaries than their male counterparts, and the WNBA lacks an equivalent league to the NBA’s developmental ‘G’ league. After a major push for higher salaries

for women in the league, an agreement was made to gradually increase the salaries by 30 percent by 2027. Even in 2027, however, their salaries will still be less than that of those in the NBA.

Generally, women are underrepresented in the sports industry. The number of men coaching women’s sports teams is extremely high, and women are not very visible in other sports careers such as broadcasting, refereeing or team management. This is problematic because, as Head Coach Orellana notes, “The importance of being able to see people who look like you is huge.”

Progress continues in regards to improving the sports world for women; however, there is still a long way to go.

Music Flows Across BLS Sports Teams



Mary Bosch (II)

Ellie Haigney (II) pumps her pre-practice playlist!

**By Kuba Rozwadowski (II)
& Terence Xie (II)**

Contributing Writers

Although the winter sports season took a brief pause to ensure student safety during the surge of the Omicron variant, it has resumed and has been underway for over a month now. Among all the daily practices and games, teams share a common factor: music.

The importance of music and its effect on individuals cannot be overstated. It is present in almost every aspect of our lives — appearing at venues, in our cars, and in nature. But to what extent does music appear and impact the Boston Latin School sports teams, particularly hockey and basket-

ball?

Before a practice or game day, the boys' hockey team starts off with a team-curated playlist.

"We have a warm-up playlist that we play on a JBL to hype us up," Seamus Reardon (II) says. Fielding songs from Kanye West, Lil Uzi Vert and Polo G, the team playlist consists mostly of rap. He continues, "Everyone requests songs to queue if the aux isn't up to par."

Reardon's teammate, Benjamin Young (II), comments that "rap is probably the most popular with some classic rock and old classics."

To get the blood flowing, the hockey team blasts upbeat and "hype" songs. Following this, they typically end the day off with some calm clas-

sic rock. Music appears to be valuable to the hockey team, as Young also says the entire team "chipped in for a big speaker at the beginning of the year." The presence of music is clearly a necessity on their rink.

Similarly, Sam Griffin (II) of the boys' basketball team has a playlist that mirrors that of the hockey team's for wins and warm-ups.

"A win playlist is celebratory music. [...] Warm-up songs are hype up songs like drill, fast rap and motivational rap," Griffin says.

Although the girls' basketball team warms up to rap music with songs from Lil Wayne, Drake and DaBaby, there is a strong interest in pop music outside of warm-ups.

"Some of our favorite artists are Taylor Swift, FINNEAS and Conan Gray," Paige Fitzgerald (II) adds.

It seems that outside of the rap on the warm-up playlist, the girls' basketball team listens predominantly to Taylor Swift. Honorable mentions include Playboi Carti, Kid Cudi and Teyana Taylor.

A gender divide is present here, where most of the female athletes refer to themselves as "Swifties," the die-hard fans of Taylor Swift. Players on the boys' team, however, share a sharp distaste for pop artists to start their practices.

Across the hockey and basketball teams, there is a prominence of rap music in their playlists, with artists such as Kanye West, Drake and Playboi Carti.

As Boston Public Schools ushers in the return of sports due to a short pause induced by the Omicron variant, we are excited to see how the presence of music among our sports teams develops.

Spotlight On... Emelia O'Gilvie (I)



**By Anthony Duc Lai (II)
& Nhat Thai (II)**

Contributing Writers

Coming from a Dual County League (DCL) Championship in the 2020-2021 basketball season, Emelia O'Gilvie (I) aimed to continue her success into her senior year. She has done just that: only three games into the season, she has become the most recent 1000-points scorer.

Being the daughter of a basketball coach, O'Gilvie was familiar with the sport from a young age. The hobby transformed into a passion in the fifth grade, when she joined an Amateur Athletic Union basketball team.

The student-athlete tried out for the Boston Latin School girls' varsity basketball team in the eighth grade, recalling that "it was pretty scary because I was four to five years younger than most of my teammates and girls that I faced." Now, she has led the girls' basketball team to their first DCL championship, became the League's Most Valuable Player since 1999 and earned an All-Scholastic Award.

Due to the recent surge of the COVID-19 pandemic, O'Gilvie and her team were only able to play three games until sports were postponed, meaning that girls' basketball would miss their yearly Christmas tournament. The team was informed that their practices and games would restart after the winter break, before learning that they would be postponed once more until January 18.

O'Gilvie was distraught when she heard the news, saying, "We just hope that we can get back to playing because unfortunately, we are one of the only teams in our league that has delayed playing and practicing."

Fortunately, O'Gilvie was able to hit the 1,000-point milestone before the season was delayed.

Coming into the first game of the season, O'Gilvie needed 14 points to reach this achievement. She looks back on the event, saying, "It was a really special moment for me when I reached 1,000 points because it showed how much time I put into basketball and that my hard work paid off. My parents, coaches, teammates and even the opposing school made it a very memorable day by celebrating with me."

Even with such a monumental personal accomplishment on the horizon, O'Gilvie truly displayed her dedication by remaining humble, focusing on winning the game. Head Coach Keri Orellana remembers this game vividly, saying, "She struggled a bit with her shooting in the first half. She shifted her focus to doing what she needed to do to get us a win." In the end, however, she scored 15 points and "out came the posters, balloons and cellphone cameras."

When asked about her future after high school, O'Gilvie responds, "My next goal is to play college basketball. I don't know where yet, but I want it to be somewhere I feel comfortable and where I will be pushed to be my best."

Before continuing her basketball dominance at a collegiate level, O'Gilvie hopes to compete for back-to-back DCL Championships. She is eager for one last dance.

BLS "Playing Sports in College" Panel

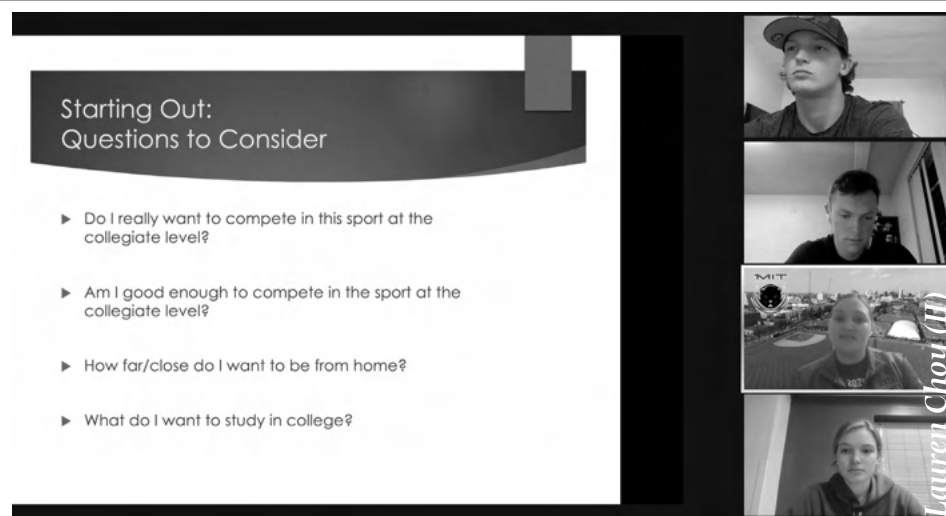
**By Thomas Olson (V)
& Christopher Choy (VI)**

Contributing Writers

On January 13, the sixth annual "Playing Sports in College" presentation was hosted over Zoom. The event was open to current Boston Latin School student-athletes and featured four successful BLS athletes that have taken their skills beyond high school, both at the collegiate and professional level.

Among the panelists was Packy Naughton ('14), who played baseball at BLS. In the panel, Naughton explains that BLS was challenging for him academically, but throughout his time at the school, he began to realize that he had a possible future in baseball. His hard work and dedication led Virginia Tech to recruit him. Naughton continued onto the major leagues, where he currently pitches for the Los Angeles Angels. He emphasizes that although he missed out on some things in high school for baseball, the hard work only made him more successful.

Aside from Naughton, the other panelists consisted of hockey player Frank Linso ('19), who was a hockey player at BLS and currently plays hockey for the United States Coast Guard Academy in Connecticut, as well as lacrosse player Quinlan O'Brien ('21), who is currently on the Johns Hopkins University women's lacrosse team. The fourth and final panelist was Holly Gillis ('21), who now



Students gather online to talk about college sports.

plays women's basketball at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).

After the Zoom meeting, Gillis further explained her personal recruitment process and her experiences at RIT. She elaborates, "The athletic community is pretty tightly knit because we all go to each other's games and support each other." Gillis never had trouble choosing between academics and basketball, as both her BLS and RIT head coaches always made it clear that academics come first.

BLS also played a pivotal role in helping Gillis manage her time between athletics and academics. "BLS taught a lot of time management skills," she says, "[because] it's hard and you have to stay on top of your schoolwork." Although Gillis played basketball at BLS, other opportunities came from Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) teams, where she played for a

Newton-based team called Basketball to the Limit. The team's head coach had several college connections and was able to find more opportunities for Gillis at the collegiate level. Regardless of this time with her AAU team, Gillis still described her experiences with BLS basketball as "great, [because] you get to be part of that family and you get to play more."

Gillis also emphasizes the difficulty of managing time at the collegiate level and the responsibilities that come with being a student-athlete. She states, "We had 6:00 A.M. practices and lifts all of last semester. I had to wake up at 4:00 A.M. and I was falling behind in school." Despite this, Gillis stresses the importance of having a strong support group. She concludes, "My teammates helped me get back on track. Then it all works out."

Antonio Brown's Outburst Sparks Discussion on CTE



Andrew Mills

Brown loses his temper on the sidelines after a midgame outburst.

By **Natalie Trapanick (I)**

Contributing Writer

On January 2, former wide receiver for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Antonio Brown, sparked controversy when he tore his jersey off and walked off the football field during the third quarter of the Week 17 game against the New York Jets.

At the conclusion of the game, Head Coach Bruce Arians stated that Brown was no longer a part of the team and that he re-

fused to play in the second half when asked to. Brown explains this refusal was due to an ankle injury — which had taken him out of training for three weeks earlier in the season — and that he was forced to play on it, allegedly increasing the severity of the injury.

After walking off the field, Brown's attorney released a statement, saying, "I relented to pressure directly from my coach to play injured. Despite the pain, I suited up, the staff injected me with what I now know was a powerful and sometimes dan-

gerous painkiller that the [National Football League Players Association] has warned against using, and gave it all for the team."

This, however, is not the first time Brown has been under the spotlight. The former Bucs player began exhibiting erratic and problematic behavior beginning in 2018, including sitting out of games or missing practices, Twitter rants and even being charged for battery and sexual assault.

With each controversy, Brown has initiated dialogue among the public on the issue of mental health and head trauma within the National Football League (NFL), although the cause of his behavior is unclear.

In recent years, many studies, including one done by Boston University (BU) have found that Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), which is a degenerative brain disease that can be found in people who have experienced persistent head trauma, was found in 99 percent of deceased NFL players. According to BU, symptoms of CTE include "memory loss, confusion, impaired judgment, impulse control problems, aggression, depression, anxiety, suicidality, Parkinsonism and, eventually, progressive dementia."

It is evident that CTE can have lasting and serious impacts and that the NFL may not be treating it as seriously as they should be, considering the likelihood that almost all of its players are being impacted by it in some way. Matt Chau (I), a captain of the Boston

Latin School football team, says, "There is currently no way of diagnosing CTE, so it can be scary knowing that our futures are on the line when we step on the field."

Currently, CTE can only be diagnosed postmortem, making it extremely difficult to understand its true impact. With studies such as BU's, however, it is clear that this affects almost all football players and that head trauma and mental health should be taken more seriously within the NFL.

BLS varsity football player Justin Stephenson (I) suggests that in order to protect players more, the NFL should implement mental health checkups, stating that "after every week during the season, the NFL [should] provide resources (mental health pros, therapists, doctors, maybe scientists) to ensure the health of all players, past and present."

This may help the league to discover potential symptoms of CTE earlier as well as work with current and former players to prevent serious impacts of head trauma. With so many players affected by this disease, it is important that the NFL take a stance against it and potentially work to protect players more when it comes to long-term effects of head trauma and mental health issues.

By recognizing these matters and working to prevent them, the NFL can create a safer and more enjoyable experience for players and fans alike.

The Argo Asks: COVID-19 FAQ

By **Lena Thai (IV)**
& **Ross Wilson (V)**

Contributing Writers

The recent surge of the Omicron variant has raised a great deal of concern in the Boston Latin School community. The school has been taking precautions and has implemented new measures to ensure the safety of families, but many members of the BLS community may have lingering questions regarding absences, procedures, pool testing and more. Please note that the information mentioned in this article is subject to change after January 2022, depending on further BLS, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention safety guidelines.

Q: How do I report a positive case?

A: If a student is positive, they should email both of the school nurses, Ms. Sally Almeida (salmeida4@bostonpublicschools.org) and Ms. Kimberly Brogan-Healy (kbroganhealy@bostonpublicschools.org). Students should also fill out the Absence Request form, which allows for make-up privileges, found at bls.org.

Q: What is considered a close contact?

A: According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), a "close contact" is defined as being unmasked and within six feet or closer of a confirmed positive case for 15 minutes or longer. If you are established as a close contact, the school will notify you.

Q: How long should I quarantine for?

A: A student positive for COVID-19 should quarantine for ten days, regardless of whether symptoms arise or not. The day an individual tests positive is considered day zero and the following day is day one of the quarantine. Students may return after day ten (that is, on day 11 or after, if day 11 occurs on a weekend), only if symptoms are no longer present.

Q: If I have symptoms, can I go to school?

A: No. During these uncertain times, no student or staff member should come to school with COVID-19 symptoms, mild or not. To ease students' concerns about falling behind when staying home, the administration has implemented a range of policies, including discouraging graded assessments for the remainder of Term 2 and posting classwork on Google Classroom, so absent students may more easily keep up.

Q: What mask should I wear in school?

A: All types of face-coverings, except neck gaiters, are permitted in school. The administration as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), however, suggest three-ply surgical masks (think of the disposable light-blue masks already

most common). Cloth masks do not provide sufficient protection against the Omicron variant. If you need a surgical mask, they are available in the main office or the nurse's office. Wear your mask above your nose!

Q: Is there a possibility that BLS could shut down?

A: The district has the right to recommend closure in partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission and the state if they feel that there is a public health emergency in the building. Despite significant individual case numbers, positivity rates at BLS are significantly below the city average; therefore, it is not likely at this moment that BLS will shut down.

Q: Why should I participate in pool testing?

A: Many positive cases remain asymptomatic for the duration of infection, and thus require pool testing to be identified and contained. Participating in pool testing is a vital way of doing this and giving the school and our community more reliable numbers about COVID-19 spread at BLS that can in turn inform our assessment of risk and safety at school. Many students are not currently participating in pool testing, so we encourage them to take this essential step to help stop the spread! Students who have contracted COVID in the last 90 days should not participate in pool testing.

Q: What do I do if the results of my pool are positive?

A: Faculty will pull you out of class to retest and see if you were the positive case in the pool. It will be a rapid test.

Q: How has BLS kept students up to date on classes?

A: The school has directed teachers to post assignments on Google Classroom. Students who are healthy enough to continue doing assignments at home are highly encouraged to do so. If a teacher has not posted assignments or class updates on Google Classroom, and you are looking to keep up with classes,

you should immediately contact that teacher to inform them of your situation.

Q: What safety measures have been taken in classrooms?

A: Every classroom is supplied with a HEPA filter (an air purifier) and is required to keep windows open at least three inches, no matter the temperature. Students may wear winter hats, hoods and coats in classrooms to stay warm.

Q: Is remote learning an option for BLS?

A: As of now, DESE has decided to not count virtual learning days as school days, an obvious disincentive to going virtual, as days of virtual learning would have to be made up. Safety remains the administration's number one priority, however, and they are evaluating the situation daily.

Q: Where can I get tests/tested?

A: There are free testing locations across the city of Boston in all neighborhoods. To find a testing site near you, visit www.mass.gov/covid-19-testing.

Q: Can students get booster shots?

A: The CDC recommends that adolescents ages 12 to 17 to receive their booster shot five months following their initial Pfizer vaccine. Adults over the age of 18 can receive either Moderna, Johnson and Johnson or Pfizer boosters.

Q: Who do I email with questions?

A: You may email Ms. Jesse Kwan (wkwan@bostonpublicschools.org) with questions regarding pool testing, Ms. Almeida (salmeida4@bostonpublicschools.org) or Ms. Brogan-Healy (kbroganhealy@bostonpublicschools.org) with any health-related questions, and Assistant Head of School Steven Chen (schen2@bostonpublicschools.org) can be contacted with any questions regarding absences.



Mary Bosch (II)

BLS students protect our school community by participating in pool testing.