



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL

MCAS Ballot Measure Sparks Debate

By Ross Wilson (III)
Staff Writer

A movement from educators has pushed for a proposed ballot initiative to repeal the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) as a graduation requirement while still keeping the test.

Currently, students must pass the tenth-grade ELA and math MCAS in addition to one school science MCAS to graduate high school in Massachusetts. Students have the ability to retake the MCAS if they fail, but cannot receive a diploma until they pass.

The movement is led by the Massachusetts Teachers Association with support from teacher unions around the state and the American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts (AFTMA). After getting enough signatures to qualify through the first round, the legislature is required to act on the petition. If the legislature fails to pass the petition or propose a substitute by May 1, then the movement will have to collect more signatures to send the ballot question to Massachusetts voters in November.

Out of about 70,000 students who take the tenth-grade MCAS every year, around 2,500 students, or about four percent of the test-takers, fail. Of those 2,500 students, over 700 students, or about one percent of those who take the test, pass the local graduation requirements but cannot receive a diploma because of the MCAS.

AFTMA president Beth Kontos shares, "The majority of students that can't pass after multiple attempts are students that don't have proficiency in English and students with disabilities. So we find it to be unfair and discriminatory that two groups that are affected are two protected classes of people."

Supporters of the change argue that it will give the over 700 students unable to graduate due to the MCAS each year a chance to move on with their careers. They also argue that it will take an unnecessary strain off teachers who could dedicate more time to instruction.

Boston Latin School English teacher Ms. Kristy Medvetz shares her opinion about the requirement: "I think [the MCAS] tends to reward those students in districts that are already privileged and it tends to unduly punish marginalized populations."

Opponents argue that the change would create different standards within the state that would cause



Isabella Endozo (IV)

This student uses skills from BLS classrooms to take their practice MCAS exam.

confusion for students and families. Secretary of Education Patrick Tutwiler, in an interview on WBZ's *Keller @ Large* explains, "That question, if it passes, would deliver us to a place of no standard — essentially, 351 different standards for high school graduation. I don't believe that is the direction to go. The governor does not believe that is the direction to go, so no, I do not support it."

Opponents also believe that the existing standard helps prepare students for future studies by setting specific benchmarks. BLS English teacher Mr. Andy Zou explains, "I think we should set high expectations for students because compared to other states, [the] MCAS is much more difficult, but you must have that because kids should be able to accomplish base levels in mathematics and reading [and] writing."

Originally created by the state legislature in 1993

to increase school accountability, the MCAS was first administered in 1998 and became a graduation requirement in 2003. The bar to pass was raised recently in August 2022 by the Massachusetts Board of Education and will be raised higher in coming years.

Past action attempting to end the graduation requirement included a 2021-2022 bill that made it out of the Education Committee, but died after no further action was taken.

Governor Maura Healey and Secretary Tutwiler have opposed cutting the MCAS altogether, but are open to making changes in order to support the students who are unable to graduate after failing. The MCAS cannot be cut by Massachusetts according to federal law, but the state can shift its graduation requirements as needed.

Boston Public Schools Faces ESL Lawsuit

By Olivia Chen (IV)
Staff Writer

Boston Public Schools is currently making changes to the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program after Former Assistant Superintendent of Boston's English Learners Program Aket Harang Kapur sued the district.

On March 15, Kapur filed a complaint in the Suffolk Superior Court after she was pushed out of her role. Kapur claims that retaliation started when she learned that about 200 intermediate English language learners had been transferred to general education programs.

The current BPS ESL program requires all parents or guardians to fill out a survey upon placing their child in school. In the survey, parents note whether they speak another language at home. From there, students take a screener test, which indicates if they need ESL services.

Many BPS schools, including Boston Latin School, require students to take the ACCESS test each year to assess their English skills. They must reach a

proficient level to be transferred out of the class.

The ESL curriculum at BLS, similar to that of other local schools, offers two methods of teaching. Students at a foundational level are enrolled in the Stand-Alone program, where students of the same grade and English level are pulled out of class to meet with an ESL teacher. Students at a higher level are put into the ESL Embedded Program, in which an ESL teacher co-teaches with the students' classroom subject teacher.

ESL students around BPS feel that the Stand-Alone program should be improved. Former ESL student Tien Ho (III) reveals, "My brother spent more time in ESL than I did. After he transferred out [of the program], he still struggled a lot because he wasn't used to the amount of work or the type of work that students did."

Thus, BPS is currently improving the ESL curriculum, specifically the Stand-Alone curriculum, which has three levels. For each level and grade, ESL teachers are required to write a curriculum similar to any other content area, but specially designed for ESL

students.

BPS is also improving the ESL Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Program. In this program, students are pulled out in groups based on level and grade and taught completely in English. Teachers only provide native language clarifications if necessary.

Having learned about Kapur's complaint against the current ESL program, many teachers also feel that some parts of the curriculum could be improved. BLS ESL Teacher Dr. Kelly Sample explains, "It's hard to give their future teachers the full picture of how they're going to perform academically or how they're going to be socially [and] emotionally [...] when it comes down to one test score."

Teachers also express their hopes of adding more bilingual programs in schools around BPS, which can enhance students' proficiency not only in English but also in their native language. Other aspects include the desire for flexibility in choosing programs and letting each school within BPS decide which program is best for them.

BLS ESL students also believe the

overall resources for those speaking minority languages need improvements. BLS ESL student Aylin Ozdemir (III) says, "When it comes to minorities, like people like me, there's no one who actually speaks Turkish as a first language [at this school]. I don't think we have enough resources, such as dictionaries and books."

Though both teachers and students believe the program needs improvements, they acknowledge that improvements are difficult to implement. Some challenges include restricted resources from a limited budget and working new programs into schools that are already accustomed to certain programs.

Despite the recent backlash from the lawsuit and the urge for improvement, ESL teachers strive to continue creating a safe environment for students. BLS ESL Teacher Mrs. Caroline Falcone Dolan concludes, "The hope is that the students [...] feel empowered and feel like their language is an asset or a superpower, and they're able to grow in their native language, as well as in English."

EDITORS' NOTE

WIP

Editorial Board

Jenny Chen, I	Editor-in-Chief
Joanna Lin, I	Editor-in-Chief
Kevin Zhong, I	News Editor
Ailin Sha, II	News Editor
Sylvia O'Hearn, I	Asst. News Editor
Mary Deng, III	Asst. News Editor
Jessie Wang, I	Forum Editor
Michelle Wang, II	Forum Editor
Hannah Stoll, II	Asst. Forum Editor
Annie Dai, III	Asst. Forum Editor
Penelope Meisel, I	A&E Editor
Lena Thai, II	A&E Editor
Zoe Colimon, I	Asst. A&E Editor
Alice Li, IV	Asst. A&E Editor
Jessica Li, I	Sports Editor
Vera Jacobson, I	Asst. Sports Editor
Caitlin McDonough, I	Asst. Sports Editor
Rachel Li, III	Asst. Sports Editor
Fiona Yuan, I	Copy Editor
Lindsey Jiang, I	Copy Editor
Haley Do, I	Asst. Copy Editor
Vicky Su, III	Asst. Copy Editor
Lily Huynh, I	Layout Editor
Aidan Tran, I	Layout Editor
Mari Baker, I	Asst. Layout Editor
Sophia Fortuin, IV	Asst. Layout Editor
Andrew Lay, I	Photo Editor
Alicia Moy, I	Photo Editor
Parker Hastings, I	Asst. Photo Editor
Lauren Dong, IV	Asst. Photo Editor

Copy Associates

Jennie Li, I	Vera Pham, IV
Siddharth Motheram, II	Ellie Fung, V
Andrew Zheng, II	Meilin Sha, V

Layout Associates

Kadin Tran, I	Ashley Hur, IV
Hannah Stoll, II	Vincent Liang, IV
Michelle Wang, II	Sam Parsi, IV
Juliet McVay, III	William Yu, IV
Dimitra Minasidis, III	Alan Zhao, IV
Louis Nguyen, III	Constance Fang, V
Kevin Wang, III	David Wang, V
Angelina Wei, III	Ada Jiang, VI
Rachel Li, III	Bella Zhao, VI

Photo Associates

Uyen Nguyen, I	Alice Li, IV
Ben Choi-Harris, II	Vincent Liang, IV
Olivia Huynh, II	Liam Matthews, IV
Christian Le, II	Aurora McLaughlin, IV
Alex Demaio, III	Weian Xue, IV
Alex Le, III	Ada Zhao, IV
Tristan Obsequio, III	Lester Chen, VI
Isabella Endozo, IV	Tao Deng, VI
Addison Gutay, IV	Ryan Liu, VI
Sophia Knobel, IV	

Faculty Advisor

Ms. Moon

Special Thanks to

Ms. Ellis	Ms. Harari
Head of School Gallagher	Mr. Hourigan

THE ARGO IS DIGITAL!

All articles and content of the *Argo* can be found on the website blsargo.org.



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.



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

Spotlight on the Morning Pledge Announcers

By David Wang (V)
& Oanh Nguyen (VI)

Contributing Writers

For years, former Boston Latin School Algebra 1 teacher Mrs. Monica Gribaudo's sixie homeroom did the Pledge of Allegiance. Now that she is retired, the job has fallen to Henry Guscott (V) and Darian Santos (V), along with their supervisor, BLS math teacher Mr. Jeremy Jackson. Each morning, one of these two students goes up to the main office, turns on the intercom, reads the Pledge and then reads a brief snippet of an important historical figure relevant to the month.

For Santos, standing before the microphone each morning is more than just a routine task—it's an opportunity to "be that voice that others can depend on," as he puts it.

"Doing the pledge gives me a chance to be that voice," he explains. Santos further elaborates, saying that, "[it makes] me the school's American spirit."

Santos started doing the pledge in his sixie year when he was in Mrs. Gribaudo's homeroom. The first time he did the pledge, he felt that he had a natural talent for it. Every Tuesday and Thursday morning from then on, he would arrive at the main office three minutes before the homeroom bell, pull out his Chromebook and start saying the pledge.

Despite doing the same routine day after day, Santos is not bored with it. "I enjoy doing the pledge," he says, adding that, "I feel happy doing [it] because it's fun and gets me ready for the day." He plans

to recite the pledge until his senior year.

Santos is involved in many other creative pursuits. His email signatures always end with "Rapper/Pledge Announcer/Writer." He rapped on the intercom on the last day of school last year. Under the moniker "Regret," he uploads his music on *Soundcloud*. Santos has also rapped to others in his grade, trying to persuade them to "do the pledge." Sheldon Bol (V), who has seen him rap before, shares, "[It] was funny, [and] people's reactions were positive. My ELA teacher last year said that Darian [could] become a really good artist down the road."

Guscott also began reciting the pledge in sixie year, though he wasn't in Mrs. Gribaudo's homeroom like Santos. Inspired by the call for more volunteers, Guscott sought out the opportunity.

"I just remember one morning hearing that Mrs. Gribaudo was looking for more people to do [the pledge]," Guscott states, "So, I got in touch with my homeroom teacher, I talked with Mrs. Gribaudo, we made some plans and I did the pledge."

Guscott does the pledge on Monday, Wednesday and Friday for the same reasons that Santos does it. Guscott explains, "I wanted to be another voice in the morning, [and] I really respect our tradition of the pledge."

Santos also shares a friendly rivalry with Guscott. "Henry's a great guy," Santos affirms. "Overall, he does an outstanding job. He gives it his all and he's willing to do what he needs to do. I hope he'll continue to do it with me."

For many years, Mrs. Gribaudo had her homeroom do the pledge. After she



Parker Hastings (I)

Henry Guscott (V) (left) and Darian Santos (V) (right) read the Pledge!

retired, Mr. Jackson took on the role of overseeing the morning announcements.

"[At] first, I wasn't formally assigned the role," Mr. Jackson explains, "But I noticed Darian was always the one doing the pledge, [...] [and] I saw his diligence and care for the daily responsibility and was a bit inspired by it. I set out to find him more permanent support and develop a team in eighth grade. A handful expressed interest, but not everyone continued."

Each morning, these two students also share brief overviews of historical figures related to the month. February was Black History Month, so they spotlighted a

special African American historical figure, like Fredrick Douglas or Bessie Coleman, with help from BLS Black Leaders Aspiring for Change and Knowledge. March was Women's History Month, so Guscott organized a list of women and highlighted one of them in the announcements each day. He shares, "Me and Darian [...] thought that we could acknowledge some influential people who did important things."

Santos concludes, "You [should] do the pledge. It's fun, and it will boost your spirits. You don't have to act like you're on stage. And I can assure you, it'll be a great experience."

Massachusetts Housing Plans Address Migrant Surge



Allan Jung

As part of the office conversion program, the Fallon building in Worcester is vacant.

By Xintong Guo (III)
& Abrielle Huang (VI)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

With a substantial increase in migrant families, Massachusetts and the city of Boston have launched a series of initiatives to address the lack of vacant housing.

The Massachusetts government has started a project to turn unused offices into emergency overflow shelters in areas including Cambridge, Fort Point and Roxbury. Many of these offices, including approximately 20 percent of Boston's, have been left empty due to the interest in working from home following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chief of Housing and Director of the Mayor's Office of Housing Sheila A. Dillion explains, "We really have done our best to get families and individuals out of Logan Airport and into safe shelter. But the needs here are

so great, that it is hard for us to house Boston residents that are in dire need of affordable housing and also try to get housing resources for newly arrived migrants."

With constant new arrivals, all shelters reserved for migrants in Massachusetts are, as of April 2024, at capacity, with the limit being 7,500 families.

In response, the state issued a spending bill of one billion passed in 2023 that gave 250 million to the emergency shelter system and 50 million to the creation of overflow shelters. The state also plans on drawing 900 million dollars from the surplus of the state budget to further help shelter programs.

The state administrations, however, believe these overflow sites will only be a temporary solution. Dillion adds, "But what Boston wants is [for] shelter stays to be very short, and we want to help people get out of shelter as quickly as possible. The city has been putting more resources into shelter than we ever have before." The focus is to move migrants out from these shelters by providing access to work authoriza-

tion, getting health services and enrolling children in schools.

In addition, this sudden surge of migrants and change in the local infrastructure has received mixed reactions among local residents. Some express frustration and concern, and anti-immigrant sentiment has led to the need for greater security at some shelters. Others, however, have reacted with sympathy, and many non-profit organizations and religious alliances have worked to support migrants in shelters and help them establish a new life.

Under President Joe Biden's operation of the humanitarian parole program for migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela, new arrivals have appeared throughout the country. In Texas and 20 other states, lawmakers approved Senate Bill 4, a new immigration law that allows local police to arrest migrants for illegally crossing the border. As of March 19, the Supreme Court of the United States turned down the appeal just hours after it was enforced.

In contrast, Massachusetts is one of the few states in the country that offers a right to shelter for families with children or pregnant women. In 2023, the state welcomed 11,600 new migrants, a drastic increase from 2021's 1,018. Among the state's recent migrants, 72 percent come from Haiti, seeking refuge from surging gang violence in its capital, Port-au-Prince.

In addition to the migrant crisis, Boston remains in a constant housing crisis following the pandemic with little affordable housing available and long wait times for income-restricted homes for local residents.

Currently living in government housing, Michelle Huang (III) expresses, "Boston is already a very expensive place to live. [...] If locals are already struggling to find housing [and] if some are dedicated to [the] homeless, that may be a confusing situation; however, I think there is a way to do this without affecting locals while supporting migrants."

Last summer, Mayor Michelle Wu announced the city's plan to convert underutilized office spaces in Downtown into permanent residential structures through the Downtown Office to Residential Conversion Pilot Program. Through this program, the city aims to meet the needs of Boston's growing population. Along with creating more homes, the city is also offering property tax exemptions to alleviate residents' financial pressure.

Dillion concludes, "I think the use of commercial space and commercial buildings for [migrant] shelter is a temporary response. I do believe what is more permanent, though, is we're going to see more and more office buildings be converted into apartments, and used as residential structures well into the future. I think it's the right response."

Alumni Reunite in NYC



Oscar Baez ('04)

By **Constance Fang (V)**
& **Sarah Jang (V)**

Contributing Writers

On March 20, the Boston Latin School Association held a New York City Alumni Event at the Ploume venue in the

Ivory Peacock bar, featuring the 2023 Outstanding Recent Graduate, Mr. Oscar Baez ('04).

The event opened with an introduction by BLSA president Mr. Peter Kelly ('83) and a short video covering Mr. Baez's accomplishments and journey after graduation. It was followed by a few comments

by Mr. Baez and Head of School Jason Gallagher, with the remaining time used as an opportunity to socialize and meet people of all different backgrounds.

Cinly Mo ('23), the youngest alumna at the event, comments on how she connected with the other alumni, saying, "Oscar Baez's speech resonated with me, as he attributed a large part of his professional success and personal growth to his time at BLS."

Mr. Baez is currently a Foreign Service Officer for the U.S. Department of State, where he prepares briefings for the Secretary of State in support of crisis-response task forces and other State Department operations. Prior to this, he worked on education and foreign policy under the Obama administration.

His career in public service began as a Ward Fellow at BLS in 2003. The Ward Fellowship allows juniors and seniors to work in the office of an elected or appointed public official in state government, municipal government, the judicial system and even the major press. In addition to the Ward Fellowship, he was appointed Sports Editor of the *Argo* his senior year in high school. Mr. Baez has also had his work published in the Boston Herald.

After graduating, Mr. Baez worked in the office of fellow BLS alumnus Edward Hintlian, gaining experience in law by helping migrants gain U.S. citizenship.

Head of School Gallagher describes the event as a great get-together of people who share one common trait: being BLS

alumni. He reflects, "There is a 73-year age difference between the youngest and oldest. How amazing is that?"

He emphasizes how Mr. Baez has applied much of the knowledge he gained from BLS in daily life: he became fluent in three languages by the age of 16 and can now speak over ten languages. Mr. Baez's success profoundly answers the question of why we ought to take both Latin and a modern language.

BLS Program Director of Visual & Performing Arts Ms. Margaret McKenna was in the same graduating class as Mr. Baez. Though she did not attend the event, she believes that this reunion event was a great way to bring people together and connect with former classmates. She remarks, "Oscar was someone that I'd be glad to have a class with because I knew he'd always keep the rest of us on our toes."

He was successful throughout his career at BLS and took advantage of opportunities that piqued his interest. His BLS experiences helped shape him into the person he is today. Ms. McKenna points out how "[His LinkedIn profile states he was trained in] response in complex environments," a skill that he learned in high school.

The upcoming annual Spring Reunions will occur on the weekend of May 3, honoring alumni celebrating their 20th- to 75th-anniversary reunions. It provides yet another opportunity for former classmates to connect with each other through their experiences at BLS.

BLS Clubs Cook Up Success

By **Rachel Starr (II) & Meilin Sha (V)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

BLSJCL



Ms. Elizabeth Moguel

On March 23, Boston Latin School Junior Classical League (JCL) attended the Harvard Certamen Tournament and won multiple accolades.

BLS JCL is a club that participates in events revolving around the classics, and has Certamen teams for the Novice, Intermediate and Advanced levels, which compete on both regional and national levels. Certamen is a trivia-like competition on topics such as Latin, Roman history and mythology.

At this national-level tournament, all BLS teams moved onto the finals: the Novice A and B teams won first and third places, respectively, while the Intermediate and Advanced teams placed third and second place, respectively.

JCL co-consul and Advanced player Joseph Hemr (II) comments, "I feel very happy with the results. [...] This is the last major college tournament before states and nationals, and, given how well we did, it's a good sign."

During practices, the coaches provided study materials such as syllabi and worksheets, so students could build a greater base for their topic of expertise. BLS Latin teacher Ms. Elizabeth Moguel, the Novice coach, loves to see the students grow while bonding over their interests and competitiveness. She says, "I think the friendships and experiences that they get from competing, traveling, even just learning how to be part of a team is probably the biggest [value] for me."

Looking ahead, state convention will take place in late April, where schools from across Massachusetts will compete in many activities, including Certamen, sporting events and art contests. Later on, selected Certamen players will compete at nationals after preparing throughout the summer.

BLS Mock Trial



Ryan Murphy (IV)

In early March, The BLS mock trial Team competed in Moot Court at the San Diego Online Tournament.

Moot Court is an event that simulates argumentation before the Supreme Court, and students present their cases directly to judges. This event is the second half of the mock trial season at BLS. Co-captain Emily Yu (II) shares, "It's much more conversational, and we like it a lot for that because you get to argue much more hands on with the legal principles."

At the tournament, Michelle Chen (II) and Yu won top speaker awards, and the team with Amirah Redwing (I) and Ruth Gelaye (III) were quarterfinalists, with both teams qualifying for nationals. Students prepared by reading over their case packets and briefs which consisted of arguments at the superior and lower courts. Supplemental cases, which are real-life incidents, also helped students gain more knowledge.

Moot Court allows for members to do more individual and partnership work compared to collaborating as a whole team. In addition to bonding within the BLS team, tournaments bring different schools together. Yu says, "Knowing that someone who lives thousands of miles away from you is prepping the same case and passionate about the same subject [...] is super interesting."

The mock trial Team also looks forward to upcoming events like the Yale University Tournament and nationals. Since Yale is the last regional tournament, they hope to train more teams to qualify for nationals. Yu explains, "For future competitions, we're really looking for more understanding [of] the basics of arguments."

BLS DECA



Ruijeng Li

On March 8, 33 BLS students competed in the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) State Competition, where several showcased their business acumen and qualified for the national competition.

DECA is a non-profit organization with 215,000 students around the world. Its mission is to "prepare emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality."

BLS DECA faculty advisor Mr. Jim Levesque remarks, "DECA is important because it is less of a traditional classroom and more of a learning lab. Students have ownership in the topic they choose, [and] they compete in a professional environment in which they look, act and perform like business people. It is a taste of the real world."

Students first selected a business topic of interest. Then, depending on the event they chose, they took exams, submitted papers or gave presentations. In December, students first competed in a regional competition in Westborough. Those who won awards were eligible to move onto the state level, where the competition was even fiercer.

The top state champions of their respective categories are eligible to move on. At BLS, Andrew Lai (II), Steven Miall (II), Roan Wilcox (II), Rahul Bansal (III), Mary Deng (III) and Sophia Fortuin (IV) qualified for the national competition in April in Anaheim, California.

Bansal participated in Business Finance Series, which combines both business ethics and finance. He completed an exam before the state conference and performed two role-plays in-person. Concerning the national competition, he says, "I look forward to competing on a national stage and being in the presence of other national-level [...] competitors."

Prom-ising Plans

By **Weian Xue (IV)**
& **Trinity Ngo (III)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Planning for this year's senior and junior proms is well under way!

The Boston Latin School senior prom will be at the New England Aquarium on June 6, and junior prom will be at the Marriott Long Wharf on June 14.

Senior prom is organized by the senior class officers and advisors. The senior class officers for the Class of 2024 are president Okeoghene Ogege-Abedi (I), vice president Rachel Lantsman (I), treasurer Jed Muzac (I) and secretary Minh Nguyen (I). The senior class advisors are BLS guidance counselor Ms. Andrea Encarnacao and BLS math teacher Ms. Alyssa Sarkis, who have organized proms as senior class advisors for six years.

The junior and senior classes, as well as the senior officers and advisors, have worked together since the beginning of the school year to organize prom, managing logistics and weighing feedback from the student body to create a memorable experience.

A significant part of organizing prom is fundraising, as renting out a venue alone can cost tens of thousands of dollars. As a result, prom ticket prices are often quite expensive, at around 100 dollars each. The senior class officers and advisors work hard to lower the price of prom tickets as much as possible, understanding that the historically

high prices are not affordable for everyone.

Throughout the year, there have been several fundraisers to raise money for prom, including the Faculty Talent Show, the Do Good With Chipotle fundraiser, a *DoorDash* raffle, the Virtual Popcorn Fundraiser and various bake sales. Many of the successful fundraisers this year were new ideas, and the senior officers and advisors express their gratitude for the immense support from the BLS community this year.

In addition to fundraising for senior prom, this is the first year that there is a major fundraising effort for the junior prom. Zinnia Davis (II), who is involved in planning for junior prom, comments that, "The school doesn't provide us with any funds or budget, and so that's why we must resort to fundraising, ticket prices and estimated guest turnout."

As with the senior prom, the fundraising money primarily goes towards the price of the venue, as well as the typical costs associated with prom, including DJ, food and decorations. The junior prom mostly depends on the financial support of the school as well as volunteering from families and friends.

Discussing the high costs of prom tickets, Ms. Sarkis notes, "Prom is an expensive event. It's always been an expensive event. I think that just the nature of doing an event of this size for 400 plus students at a prime location, whether it be a hotel or the aquarium this year, will always have a significant cost."

Another crucial aspect of organizing



Ben Choi-Harris (II)

Members of the junior prom committee make plans for the event.

prom is choosing a venue, which is influenced by senior class officers' opinions as well as the rest of the senior class. Instead of the Copley Marriott or the Marriott Long Wharf as in past years, senior prom's location this year is at the New England Aquarium.

The senior class officers and class advisors decided to host prom at the aquarium not only because it had a similar price as previous venues, but also because they felt that it was a beautiful and unique location. Muzac remarks, "People can still take their pictures without any problem as well, and the

waterside scenery is just gorgeous."

Despite the challenges of organizing prom, the students and faculty members involved have still found it very enjoyable to bond with each other during the planning process. They hope that both the junior and senior proms this year will be memorable experiences for everyone attending.

Muzac concludes, "At the end of the day, this and Prize Night and graduation are our last time as a class together, possibly forever, so it'd be special to see everyone there and just having a great time."

Putin Re-elected: What's Next?

By **Hashi Abdulle (III)**
& **Stephany Zhu (III)**

Contributing Writers

On March 17, Russian president Vladimir Putin secured his fifth presidential term, extending his rule in Russia for another six years.

Despite the Russian Constitution imposing a two-term limit for presidents, Putin has been re-elected multiple times since he was first elected in 1999. If he completes his fifth term, he will become Russia's longest-serving ruler since Catherine the Great in the 18th century.

Putin won 88 percent of the approximately 112 million votes, with none of the three other candidates receiving more than five percent of the vote. In particular, many who supported Putin's deceased political rival, Alexei Navalny, who had been imprisoned for openly crit-

icizing the president's policies, have spoken out against the election.

As the only candidate on the ballot, Putin was widely expected to win. Albert Chen (I), president of Boston Latin School Voices of the Empowered, explains, "[He] changed laws [of] the constitution. Navalny [being] Putin's only rival, is an understatement. Ever since the invasion of Ukraine, Navalny has been imprisoned in Russia for no reason, [...] he knew that he would die in Russia, and without any rivals for Putin, [...] you could only vote for him."

Russian authorities' extensive control over the electoral process left many with little choice but to vote for Putin. BLS AP U.S. and Comparative Government teacher Ms. Meredith Elliott explains, "The two people who could have presented the biggest challenge to Putin in the election died 'accidentally.' Navalny [died] in an Arctic prison [while] Pri-

gozhin [died] in a plane accident."

With his major competitors wiped out from the election, Putin only faced opponents who had an unlikely chance of success. A mixture of fear and fraud leaves many Russians and victims of Russian occupation unable to vote democratically and influence the trajectory of their country's future.

As people are concerned for Russia's future and its people, BLS AP World History teacher Ms. Clara Webb comments, "[We] don't know the outcome of the war, and the government is increasingly very authoritarian [...] people don't have the right to protest [...] consider what will happen to Ukraine, [if Russia wins], they can just absorb Ukraine into Russia. I do think that it's going to be a big impact. He relies on big force and heavy restriction to maintain power which isn't good."

Since the start of the Russo-Ukrainian War, state censorship has

monitored what Russian citizens see on the internet, which may have altered people's perceptions of the elections. Putin's additional six-year term also prolongs the country's military presence in Ukraine. Voting stations supervised by armed Russian soldiers in the Donetsk region of Ukraine made Russia's control over its neighbor even more apparent.

Putin's continued rule also has implications for other countries' elections and politics. U.S. intelligence agencies found extensive evidence of Russian interference efforts in the 2016 presidential election, detailed in a high-profile report by former Special Counsel Robert Mueller. Many worry that similar efforts could be underway for the 2024 election; *NBC News* has reported concern among former U.S. officials about Russian-linked online disinformation campaigns seeking to damage Democrats and their support for Ukraine.

Celebrating Women's History Month

By **Amanda Ajdini (II)** & **Gabrielle Jang (V)**

Contributing Writers

History of Women's History Month and its Significance to BLS

In March, teachers, students and several clubs at Boston Latin School observed Women's History Month with various events and initiatives. Support for establishing this month started in the 1970s to 1980s, but official recognition was not granted until 1980 when President Jimmy Carter established Women's History Week. In 1987, Congress designated the month of March as Women's History Month. This also coincides with international women's day, which is an official holiday in Armenia, China, Cuba, Germany and many other countries. The concept of Women's History Month first arose during second-wave feminism, during

which the Equal Pay Act, Title IX and *Roe v. Wade* were all passed or decided on. This push for the recognition of women and their contributions to history continues to raise awareness outside and within the classroom. In BLS AP United States History teacher Ms. Ashley Balbian's class, she teaches about notable women who are significant to U.S. history but do not get much recognition in the course. She states that teaching about and acknowledging women's history in various classes, including history, English and science, is "really important since women have only been allowed to attend BLS since the '70s."

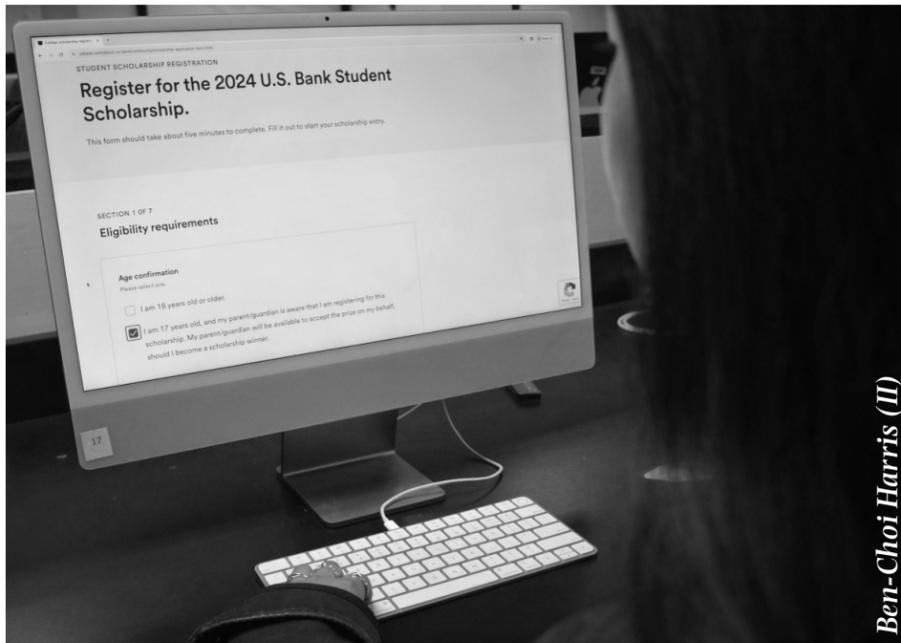
Ladies' Collective

Ladies' Collective held a Spirit Week for Women's History Month on the week of March 4. Students were encouraged to honor their favorite female role models, promote gender inclusivity and spread awareness about domestic violence. From March 7, the club sold teal ribbons for one dollar each, a tradition they have done for a few years now as a fundraiser for the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center. Ladies' Collective president Lillian Butler (I) states, "We definitely wanted to choose a local shelter." In total, the club fundraised about 200 dollars. The club also hopes to continue to hold other fundraisers, the period drive that provides period products to the girls' bathrooms at BLS and raise awareness about women's issues in the school community.

Vietnamese Student Society

On March 18, the BLS Vietnamese Students Society (VSS) presented an after-school event teaching attendees about six notable Vietnamese women. This annual event is held to educate students, especially those of Vietnamese heritage, about different Vietnamese women who have stood up to societal standards. The theme of the presentation was "Beneath the Veil." VSS officer Hien Nguyen (II) explains, "We chose this because women historically are expected to marry a man and serve him, but beneath that is a woman who has a dream that's against societal expectations. Someone willing to advocate for women's ability to express themselves freely." VSS hopes to inspire young women to reject conformity and follow their dreams.

Scholarship Amount: \$0 *tbd for future pdf edit



Ben-Choi Harris (II)

Student fills out scholarship application form.

By **Ariel Mura (II)**

Staff Writer

Although the college admissions process dominates student life in the fall, springtime for high school seniors is supposed to be a rewarding contrast, when students finally see their years of preparation come to fruition. Even amidst the stress of college decisions, students can watch their opportunities start to materialize ahead. A little-recognized practice known as scholarship displacement, however, has been closing off outside financial aid sources. Scholarship displacement, a practice where colleges and universities use the outside scholarships that students receive as excuses to lower the financial aid given to them, is ultimately yet another way for colleges to take advantage

of their students.

After putting in hours of work on scholarship applications and financial aid forms, it is devastating for students to see all of this time go to waste. As scholarship displacement settles in as a common practice, the scholarships that students strive to obtain become nothing more than empty words and resume-padders. Though these honors can still be beneficial, they do not hold the same tangible financial value.

As Uyen Nguyen (I) recalls, “The most stressful part of applying to college was actually applying for financial aid. [...] My mom struggles to understand financial documents like this, so it took an excruciatingly long amount of time to help translate for her and interpret the financial forms ourselves. [...] I spent a lot of time waiting for my financial aid

package in fear that I would not receive enough money to actually attend.”

Scholarship displacement affects not only individual students, but society as a whole. The practice creates an imbalance between the upper and lower classes, as people with lower incomes cannot meaningfully use scholarship money to pay for college, while those with higher incomes have an easier time affording school tuitions, and are thus able to benefit from scholarships as a way to ease the burden. Scholarship displacement thus works against measures set in place to aid the working class and instead increases the wealth gap. This is especially true considering the ways in which higher education allows people to obtain better jobs and socioeconomic standings in the future.

On the other hand, some people have little sympathy for the struggles of students seeking to pay for college. They argue that it is a college’s right to give as little or as much aid as they want, with aid being merely a privilege, and they point to how, even with scholarship displacement, financial aid has become more easily available over the years. Efforts to facilitate the process have included decreasing the length of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) questionnaires and providing schools with funding to hire college counselors.

According to Nguyen, however, “Companies like the College Board really need to pull it together and make this process simpler for students. The College Scholarship Service (CSS) profile got confusing at some parts and was just so, so long. [...] Additionally, they need to make sure to find a way to prevent delays during college season.”

Even though college counselors and shortened FAFSA forms may have benefited students somewhat, they are not nearly enough, as many students are still extremely overwhelmed and drained by the process.

Boston Latin School college counselor Ms. Chloe Sigillito adds, “While the FAFSA underwent a simplification process this past year, it can still take time to complete the form, alongside the CSS Profile to be considered for need-based aid.”

On top of that, scholarship displacement is rarely discussed. If this were truly a moral, fair practice, then why would it be covered up so effectively? Not only is this a clear way to scam students and their families out of the money they need to attend school, but the lack of transparency when it comes to the reality of financial aid also tarnishes an institution’s image, as they seem to be blindsiding their students and taking advantage of their efforts to obtain financial aid elsewhere.

Ultimately, if scholarship displacement is not outright banned, then it should at least be discussed as much as possible so that students and their families are prepared. While it does not seem like colleges will stop practicing scholarship displacement anytime soon, it is still important that students are well-informed on this topic so that they can properly research ahead of time.

Students, however, are not all doomed when it comes to applying and paying for college. Nguyen advises students to start applying for scholarships as early as their junior year. It is incredibly important to be well-informed, prepared for what is to come and ready to learn from those around you.

Take a Byte of the Apple

By **Angelina Wei (III)**

Staff Writer

In a rapidly evolving world of technology, the new Apple Vision Pro has to be the next major leap forward in technological advancement, igniting both widespread fears of a dystopian society dominated by technology and hopes of a digitally-assisted world. For decades, Apple has dominated the global smartphone market and been highly praised for their technological innovations. The company, however, was also recently involved in a lawsuit for purposefully making older iPhones slower to encourage the purchase of newer models. As technology companies like Apple release more products with negligible upgrades, they promote an unhealthy consumerist lifestyle and diminish innovation.

Apple has always been at the forefront of technological improvement. Apple products’ reputation as luxurious and trendy drives users to upgrade their devices to the latest models. Additionally, Apple advertises their latest products as revolutionary, even if there are no substantial improvements from the previous version.

Boston Latin School history teacher Mr. Patrick Boor, an active Apple consumer, agrees with this sentiment, asserting, “The invention of the iPhone in 2007 was certainly a major technological advancement [...] but the new iPhones haven’t seemed to make major advancements.”

Apple’s minimal-upgrade strategy instead emphasizes its accumulation of wealth over genuinely impactful modifications to its technology. Apple’s loy-

alty to their strict schedule of at least one new version of a previous product per year has hindered their capability of making truly advanced technologies.

Instead of concentrating on improving one product, however, Apple has diversified their line of products, expanding into areas such as smart home speakers with their Apple HomePod. Although this allows the company to build their customer base and brand, critiques about its creativity and uniqueness arise.

Many smaller companies that have already dedicated their attention and resources to a specific product are overshadowed by Apple’s mere presence in the field. This presence encourages customers to buy only within the Apple ecosystem. With the loyalty of customers to Apple’s minimally-upgraded products, the company prioritizes profit, fostering a cycle of consumption.

Once someone purchases an Apple product, it is nearly impossible to switch to other companies. Apple’s ecosystem makes it especially difficult to export data to outside devices, effectively locking all the user’s information within Apple’s systems. This inconvenience discourages the customer from investing in alternative brands.

The Apple Vision Pro is indeed a milestone in technology. Rather than appealing exclusively to gamers, it is marketed primarily for productivity. An Apple employee adds, “With the amount of money Apple has invested in this [...] they’re not going to let it fail unless it is not profitable.” However, the Vision Pro is extremely expensive, costing 3,500 dollars, and is still relatively new compared to competitors like Meta



Tristan Obsequio (III)

Rain Parcell (III) tries the Apple Vision Pro in the Apple Store.

or Oculus, which are more affordable and established choices with extremely developed digital platforms. The Apple employee agrees, “[There is a] big barrier of entry [...] 3,500 [dollars] is a much bigger price point with uncertainty with what you are going to do with it.”

Similar to their other products, Apple portrays the Vision Pro as essential, life-changing technology undermining the innovations of other companies who aided in pioneering and advancing the virtual reality space. Violet Huang (III), a student who has tried the Vision Pro, highlights, “I found the Vision Pro to be an impressive piece of technology, but not quite revolutionary as Apple markets it to be. While its features provide a unique way to be productive, it’s hard to justify the price point. Why not just buy a computer? It is much cheap-

er, and honestly more productive than the Vision Pro.” The Apple Vision Pro is more of a luxury item and it is not a necessity for the average consumer.

While Apple is a prominent example of promoting unhealthy consumerism, it is not the only company to adopt similar strategies. Technological advancements in modern-day capitalist societies may offer more opportunities but also push for constant materialism. As consumers, it is essential to assess the true value and impact of the latest technologies.

An additional camera on a smartphone may be alluring, but alternatives like a high-quality Canon camera might offer better functionality without indulging in the consumerist cycle. Individuals must discern if a new product is an authentic innovation and if it is really worth the price.

Should *TikTok* Be Banned?

Yes, TikTok Should Be Banned

By Orson Giblin (IV)

Contributing Writer

A few weeks ago, the House of Representatives passed a bill 352-65 to ban *TikTok*. Many supporters of the bill raised concerns surrounding user privacy and the potential connection to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Though none of these allegations have been proven factually correct, these fears justify the need to move forward with preventative measures. As often said, it is better to be safe than sorry.

It is the executive responsibility of the American government to protect its people. According to Statista, the United States has the largest *TikTok* audience, with almost 150 million users in 2024. Keeping such a popular platform that could threaten the privacy of its users places the American people in a vulnerable position. Is *TikTok* really worth the risk?

This House bill is not the first legal order to ban the app, as the Trump administration threatened to shut down *TikTok*'s U.S. operations if its parent company ByteDance did not divest ownership back in 2020. *TikTok*'s international engagements incite heightened suspicion, more so than American-based platforms like *Instagram* and *X*.

Even though these various other apps have short-form sections that are similar to *TikTok*, there is less discourse and concern surrounding them. This could be due to the fact that they are all U.S. owned. Jonah Roy (II) says, "I would rather *TikTok* be owned by the U.S. rather than another country. If anyone is going to have access to my data, I would rather it be my own country."

TikTok has grown to become a comforting space for many, where users can interact with and entertain themselves with content that pertains to their niche interests. Though it is an entertaining app overflowing with relatable and humorous content, *TikTok*'s overwhelming popularity has made it the perfect political puppet while simultaneously disrupting development in adolescence.

As many are aware, *TikTok* purposefully implements incredibly personalized algorithms. Every video users watch is utilized as information to tailor to their feeds, which will then feature videos of similar content. In addition to making the platform more addictive, this constant customization encourages confirmation bias, which restricts the range of perspectives one is exposed to.

Additionally, videos that showcase extreme opinions tend to garner more attention from viewers, resulting in some creators purposefully posting provoking content to increase their profit and engagement.

Users who engage with videos expressing certain opinions are recommended more and more videos of that sort, gradually leading them down a winding rabbit hole of extremism. Since most users are relatively young, they are especially susceptible to heavy influence from various propaganda.

Authorities can take advantage of this and advertise different messages throughout the platform that are specifically designed to target impressionable youth. By banning *TikTok* as a whole, the government will be removing a major source of misinformation.

Furthermore, most of the content on *TikTok* is short-form, meaning it is designed for users to endlessly scroll through short videos. This makes the experience dangerously addictive and also damages people's attention spans.

Daryl Nguyen (I) believes that "[*TikTok*] usage should be limited because, frankly, it's an addiction, and people don't realize it. I think in our modern society, we use all of our available time to watch short videos, [so] our attention span decreases. I think we're in a generation that's narrowing its focus."

Due to short bursts of entertainment, teenage brains become more accustomed to the constant, "easy," short-term dopamine; consequently, when people have to do something that requires more concentration, it becomes near impossible to focus. With new updates, *TikTok* users now even have the option to play the already brief videos at twice the speed. Despite being initially designed to suit short attention spans, the app had to modify its own features to cater to the decline in focus and maintain user engagement.

Additionally, other social media apps with similar features, like *Instagram Reels*, *Snapchat Spotlights* and *YouTube Shorts*, that mimic *TikTok*'s format and functions, are rising in popularity. Andy Tran (III) says, "If *TikTok* is banned, there will just be more people on other apps like *Instagram Reels*, so it won't be the end of the world. A lot of social media apps are similar now, so it won't be that different."

It is important that people are able to decrease their dependency on *TikTok*. Just after the boom in usership during the pandemic, the app has consumed society as a whole. Many youth refer to content as "brain rot" or useless, but still incorporate hourly scrolls into their nighttime routines. By proceeding with the ban of *TikTok*, America can not only protect the privacy, but also the minds of all users.

No, TikTok Should Not Be Banned

By Roan Wilcox (II)

Staff Writer

The debate over banning *TikTok* is not about the inordinate amount of time wasted online, the latest dance trend or the role of social media in everyday life. It is a question of free speech and government overreach taken to the extreme. It is vital to recognize the facts: *TikTok* has not been proven to be a "Chinese puppet;" using *TikTok* is a personal choice and the success of a ban, which has already passed in the House of Representatives, would set a dangerous precedent for the future.

From a first principles perspective, it makes little sense to preemptively "convict" *TikTok* of being a pawn of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), when it has not been proven in a court of law. A basic value many Americans hold is "innocent until proven guilty;" fear does not excuse

injustice.

The United States' own national security apparatus admitted in Congressional hearings that the threat of *TikTok* is hypothetical, and they do not have conclusive evidence to suggest it is currently being abused by the CCP. Yes, there exists the possibility that any company based in China can be influenced by the government, but it is unclear what uniquely enables China to oversee *TikTok*'s data and influence its algorithms. Indeed, the same logic could be used to justify the banning of any number of Chinese-owned businesses. From *League of Legends* to *Alibaba* to *Motorola*, any could be deemed a threat, should it become politically expedient.

Moreover, an often-ignored aspect of the *TikTok* controversy is the fact that using the platform is a choice. The beauty of America is that decisions are made from the bottom-up, not the top-down. Thus, the role of the government in this capacity is to warn and explain, not order. This is especially relevant in the realm of free speech, since more than one hundred million Americans use *TikTok* to communicate with friends, share opinions and vent. It is troubling that a collection of politicians in Washington can unilaterally strip away such a platform.

There is also a more threatening undertone. Politicians, conservative ones in particular, have made little secret of their view of *TikTok* as "woke" and "corrupting." This is non-unique to *TikTok*, however, as virtually all social media companies deliver the content their viewers want to see. In all likelihood, *TikTok*'s leftward bend is due to the fact that *TikTok*'s users are younger people, who skew liberal. Attempting to frame this as an agenda promulgated by one Chinese social media company is misleading and merely serves as a stalking horse to stifle discourse.

Other apologists for the ban argue that this is a question of mental health. That would be a fair point if *TikTok* were the only social media company in America, but it is not. With the rollout of imitators like *Instagram Reels*, *YouTube Shorts* and *Snapchat Spotlight*, a ban on *TikTok* would only disperse the user base to other apps. More importantly, the mental health of its former users would not change.

What's more, the bill that recently passed in the House is not just about *TikTok*. It allows the government to mandate the divestment, or closure, of any app doing business in the U.S. which is headquartered in a "foreign adversary country" or "subject to the direction or control of a foreign person or entity." That is particularly frightening in its implications.

How do you definitively prove that a company is or is not influenced by foreign adversaries? You probably can't. This means that the ban that just passed in the House grants sweeping powers over the most popular means of communication: apps — all in the name of "national security." It is eerily reminiscent of the "shoot first, ask questions later" mentality that dominated America during the Cold War and War on Terror — both of which undermined civil liberties and expanded the reach of the federal government.

But what about reciprocity, you may ask? Even if *TikTok* isn't a piece of spyware, then aren't we still justified in banning it because China outlaws our social media companies? No, for the simple reason that America is not an authoritarian state built on fear and repression. We do not fear open communication among our citizens and we should not let fear supersede rationality, even when the boogeyman of "national security" is raised.

Questions concerning spyware, mental health and safety are all serious, but allegations are no basis for divestment or a ban. The path away from our founding values is a slippery one, and should not be followed on the pretext of "protection" from a hypothetical threat that users are already aware of. A ban has implications not just for the students here at Boston Latin School who enjoy using *TikTok*, but for free speech, due process and government encroachment.



Lauren Dong (IV)

tbd, for senior shoutouts

Get Your Head in the Voting Game



Voters drop mail-in-ballots into ballot boxes.

By **Louis Nguyen (III)**
& **Jialiang Zhu (III)**

Contributing Writers

In American democracy, voting is not just a right: it is a foundational act of citizenship. As young Americans reach voting age, however, many step into the poll booth with uncertainty, largely due to a gap in their education concerning the government and lack of knowledge about the political system. This shortfall undermines not only their confidence, but also their ability to meaningfully participate in democratic government.

It has become a common belief that school doesn't teach youth usable life skills. While many graduate having memorized

historical dates and how to solve challenging algebraic equations, they frequently lack the practical skills that are essential for adulthood, one of which is voting.

Boston Latin School math teacher Mx. Grace Foulis gives insight as to why this may not be a top priority for schools: "Take for example [advanced geometry]; are we going to do a highly mathematical quiz in the future? Highly likely not, but you're learning logical reasoning." This order of importance demonstrates a belief in the fundamental value of developing critical thinking skills, regardless of their direct relevance to future tasks that students may face outside of academia.

It is apparent, however, from the dwindling number of young voters, that this philosophy is failing to be applied to politics.

Despite the critical role that government and politics play in everyday life, educational curricula often barely even skim the surface, providing students with a history of political events without looking into government operations or critical analyses of political ideologies and policies. With such an intricate governmental system, this inherent obligation to vote in America presents significant problems, exposing young voters to an overwhelming amount of unfamiliarized or even deceiving information, leaving them puzzled about their own country.

Kenny Mak (I) says, "The gap in our education system could cause our entire generation to abstain from the electoral process. Kids may feel their participation isn't important if they aren't taught so. I expect voting for a lot of people to be a mix of last minute research and putting together in their mind the best possible choice."

The real danger of inadequate civic education is the ease with which political candidates can manipulate young voters. Without a solid understanding of how our political system works and the importance of civic engagement, youth are left vulnerable, easily swayed by persuasive speeches that may not be in their best interests or for the greater good of our society.

The rise of social media has transformed how people interact with politics, but it has also contributed to political polarization and simplified complex situations: common media like memes oversimplify complex political issues. While entertaining, they often prioritize shareability over depth, possibly influencing biases and may be misleading at times. It is essential to engage critically with political content beyond common media.

Most traditional high school curricula

lack a comprehensive teaching of political education and civic engagement. The effects of this gap are more apparent than a singular student's uncertainty in the booth. Democracy thrives on its citizens — but feeling underprepared to make a decision, many young potential voters opt out of the electoral process altogether, reducing democratic participation.

A reimagined curriculum is essential to prevent this. On the surface level, educators could foster a more politically aware and active student body by incorporating current political issues into classes outside of civics. One such subject is science, where teachers can touch on topics such as climate change, public health and technology policies, or math, where students can be introduced to the use of statistical analysis in interpreting election results, polling data and budget allocations.

In some cases, the curriculum implemented by educators doesn't have to exclusively revolve around modern politics. For instance, BLS AP U.S. History teacher Ms. Ashley Balbian provides an illustration: "Studying [civics] engages students in the historical context of many constitutional rights they enjoy and why." Studying American politics in a solely historical context, however, creates a barrier between connecting it to current situations.

The political education gap among young Americans is a critical issue with far-reaching consequences for democracy. The lack of guidance for young potential voters has damaged voter engagement and the voices of youth are not being heard at the polls. It is the duty of all of society to engage and learn in order to support an active democracy that forms the basis of this country.

Zooming In: Civics Education at BLS

By **Ellie Fung (V)**

Contributing Writer

Across the country, students learn about government, the constitution and the rights and responsibilities of a citizen. For Boston Latin School students, civic education will likely spark memories of their eighth grade course, the only class where students are specifically exposed to civic topics. One class, however, cannot sufficiently cover the foundations of civics nor touch on the true importance of civic engagement, ultimately discouraging interest.

Civic education trains students in skills that they can use throughout their adult lives, such as problem solving, communication, critical thinking and collaboration. It helps students understand the intricate and complex American government, as well as their own roles in a functioning democracy.

BridgeBLS president Fei Li (III) states, "I

think civic education is highly valuable to a student's educational journey. It really marks a person's journey from adolescence to adulthood [because] once you start taking part in civic education and even action, it really fuels you to seek out more."

Civics teaches students how to take action about issues they care about. The eighth grade course culminates in a civics action project, where students select an issue they are passionate about and then learn how to take tangible actions in their communities.

Civic engagement is an overwhelming part of maintaining a democracy. BLS History Department Head Mr. Kennelly elaborates, "[I]f individuals don't have a strong foundation in civic education, then they're probably less likely to get involved and it's more likely that others will be making decisions [...] that could have a direct impact on their lives. [...] In a democracy, the majority is supposed to [...] make decisions. [...] And if

the majority is not engaged, a small minority could end up making the decisions because of a lack of engagement involvement from a majority."

Students can continue to learn about civics by taking AP government classes, but these courses have a limited number of spots and are only available to juniors and seniors. While they are helpful, only one or two more courses cannot compensate for the lack of civic instruction. There is also a wide gap in time between the eighth grade introduction and the end of high school when students can eventually choose to take these advanced courses.

Lacking civic education makes students more susceptible to misinformation, which can spread easily on social media. If they are not informed and do not have critical thinking skills, they may believe rumors or propaganda they see online. Civics teaches students how to look at multiple sources and

different arguments in order to form their own informed opinions and conclusions.

BLS civics teacher Ms. Catherine Arnold explains: "[Students might] think that something that they hear is correct [and] don't bother to explore or question where that's coming from. [...] You have to do your homework in terms of knowing [...] who's behind this? Who's to benefit from putting this out there? Should I believe it?"

Civic education is often neglected due to the fact that it is not tested as much as core subjects like math or reading, but that doesn't make it less important. Ms. Arnold says, "I would love for the school to be leading the way on teaching students how to think in terms of the big ideas of sustainability [and] how things are connected. For things to really be sustainable, we need to address racism. [...] It's not just saving the planet, in terms of environmental issues, it's saving the planet, in terms of justice and social justice."

Test Your Civics Knowledge!

By **Michelle Wang (II)**
& **Hannah Stoll (II)**

Editor and Assistant Editor

Are you ready to fulfill your duties as an American citizen? Try these modified questions from the United States Citizenship Test to see how you do!

What is the supreme law of the land?

- The Constitution
- The Declaration of Independence
- The President's executive orders

Who is one of Massachusetts's senators?

- Elizabeth Warren
- Ed Markey
- Ayanna Pressley
- Bernie Sanders

Which of the following is NOT a right or freedom of the First Amendment?

- Freedom of Speech
- Freedom of the Press
- The Right to Vote
- The Right to Petition

Who is able to veto a bill?

- The President
- The Senate
- The House of Representatives
- The Supreme Court

How many justices are there on the Supreme Court?

- 5
- 11
- 7
- 9

Which of the following is NOT a position in the president's cabinet?

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Energy
- Department of Defense
- Department of Waste Management

Investigating IEPs and 504s at BLS

By **Angelina Tang (III) & Mark Snekvik (II)**

Contributing Writer and Staff Writer

During an assessment, you may have heard your teacher mention that some students may have extra time to complete it; but why is that so? Extra time is one of the most common accommodations that come with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan. Students with conditions that may impact their ability to learn in a general educational setting are able to apply for these documents to gain more specialized support throughout their education.

Currently, almost 300 students at Boston Latin School have either an IEP or 504. Discussion about special education, however, has been left in the dark, and many know little to nothing about it — let alone the intricacies of its problems.

What is the difference between an IEP and 504 plan?

With an IEP, a student will have access to a written plan that entails free special education services and support, including specialized instruction by a special education teacher and/or a related service provider (counselor, speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist), as well as accommodations that general education classroom teachers have to abide by.

These accommodations and services are meant to help the student strive towards the goals and objectives set out in the IEP, which generally aim for higher academic performance and participation, with meetings every year to update the IEP and every three years to document the student's progress.

IEPs are under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is a federal law that concerns all matters relating to special education, ensuring that proper services are available to all students who may need them. Essentially, an IEP is a legally binding document with the purpose of supporting and improving a child's education, considering their specific needs.

The process and requirements for getting an IEP, however, are not only rigorous, but also rather niche. Since IEPs are under IDEA, the child in question must have at least one from 13 educational disabilities it lists.

Students who are unable to get an IEP may consider looking into eligibility for 504 plans, which provide accommodations for students who need these for equal access but do not require specialized instruction. Though they are more vague in instruction and creation, their benefit is the broadness of who can qualify for them.

504 plans are under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Though IDEA and Section 504 are both related to aiding students with disabilities, they are not synonymous. IDEA is a general federal law that concerns everything relating to special education and ensuring proper services for students who match its criteria. Section 504, meanwhile, is a civil rights statute that requires that schools do not discriminate against students who need assistance to equally access the curriculum. IDEA guarantees that a child will receive accommodations, paid for by the government, while Section 504 mandates what free support the student needs, but does not provide it directly.

What are students' current issues with how IEPs and 504s are carried out?

Despite the fact that IEPs and 504 plans are legally binding, BLS students have cited cases where teachers do not follow the accommodations.

According to interviewed students, the most frequent of these scenarios is when the teacher simply didn't read their student's IEP or 504 plan thoroughly enough. Even months into a school year, teachers would not be aware of a student's needs; "I could maybe excuse it if it was still September," Zinnia Davis (II) explains, recounting an experience she had with her teacher. "But [it was] November."

This means that it is the student who must initiate the conversation. Sophia Maldonado Werk (I) notes, "Usually, I end up having to tell teachers myself." The responsibility of ensuring that students receive their legally mandated support should not rest with them; nevertheless, it is normalized for teachers — who are meant to support students — to be the ones being educated instead.

Even after reading a student's IEP or 504 plan, some teachers continue to ignore its contents.

Although students with accommodations are no less hardworking than their peers, there is still implicit bias that these supports are coddling them. "I think lots of teachers undermine students with accommodations on the notion that it seems like we're 'lazy,'" Ginger Suh (III) observes.

To some, the greater quality of life and education that come with accommodations are seen as an almost unfair advantage given to only a select few students. What they fail to realize, however, is that these accommodations are not bonuses to them, but necessities so that they can perform alongside their peers in a traditional classroom environment.

This notion is especially applicable to teachers, who must alter their class environment or assignments for the students. Molly McDermott (I) comments, "I think some teachers interpret accommodations as ways to get out of doing work, which is extremely harmful not only for students' grades but that creates a sense of guilt in students that they 'should' be able to do certain things that should be accommodated by the teacher."

The stigma around special education is not only the source of its problems, but also what actively prevents the solution; why would a student try to correct teachers when they slip up if they will just think less of them, and when the rigorous academic culture at BLS tells them that they are the ones who need to do better?

The silence, however, won't help the student either. "The more we hide the fact that [what] should be happening isn't happening, the more stigmatized the kids feel," BLS Special Education Coordinator

Ms. Daila Davila-Gonzalez presses. "Who are we protecting, the students or the teachers?"

The whole purpose of IEPs and 504 plans is to support a student's unique needs; often, however, the students themselves are left out of the discussion of what goes into them. "Recently, when I have meetings to update it, they'll either not include me or not include my mom in the meetings or just emails about it," Werk remarks. "Sometimes my mom will be like, 'We have a 504 plan meeting tomorrow' and I wouldn't have heard about it."

Without the student there to voice their needs and desires, the result can be an IEP or 504 plan that does not adequately address the student's needs — or even worse, does not make sense. "Sometimes the IEPs are not written as clearly as they could be, and that can be a source of friction," BLS Latin teacher Ms. Margaret Burns elaborates. "Because we're not sure what you want and it seems like it's contradictory [...] how can I do both of these things when one involves not doing the other?"

What are the sources of these issues and how can we fix them?

The prestigious culture at BLS has made it difficult for students to talk about their IEPs and 504s; for a long time, students with special education plans were viewed as below the BLS standard. This belief went largely unchallenged because until very recently, there were extremely few students with IEPs and 504s at BLS. This is because the Independent School Entrance Exam that used to admit students to BLS did not allow for accommodations, making it nearly impossible for students that needed them to get in. Now, with a more holistic admissions program, the number of students with IEPs has increased well over tenfold, and though there has been progression past old beliefs, it is struggling to keep up.

“For our school, the hard part has also been the shift in culture.” Ms. Davila-Gonzalez explains. “You have a [wide diversity of] teachers, but [...] there are still a certain amount of folks in this building that feel like, ‘this is Latin School, this is not what was done before.’”

The exponential growth of students with IEPs and 504 plans can be jarring for teachers who have grown accustomed to one way of teaching. “They’re considered experts in their field — that’s why they teach here,” Ms. Davila-Gonzalez continues. “And sometimes, when you’re introduced to something you don’t really know what to do with and you no longer feel like the expert, people react differently.”

Although the transition may be difficult, teachers must realize that all these changes are for the benefit of the students. “If it makes a difference to how a kid feels taking the test, [or] makes them calmer, it’s totally worth it if it’s going to be a better outcome,” Ms. Burns emphasizes. As teachers, their highest priority should be their students’ success — and it is not as though these students are any less able than their peers. Ms. Davila-Gonzalez explains, “Very skilled, very intelligent individuals sometimes have either medical issues or other [disabilities] where they are completely capable and able to access the kind of instructions that you get here [at BLS] in terms of content, but maybe just need other scaffolds or supports in place.”

It is impossible to begin the path to normalization of special education without there first being open discussion about it. While breaking down the taboo surrounding those who have accommodations would definitely be helpful, there is still one more factor that limits what teachers can and will say about their struggles: the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

The FERPA is what ensures the privacy of all students’ “educational records” under their school — and this includes matters surrounding their IEPs and 504 plans. If teachers were ever to talk about how they were unable to comply with a student’s accommodations and happened to mention them by name, they would have to face legal repercussions for breaking the law. No matter how difficult or nuanced the situation, disclosing any information about specific students without the consent of their legal guardians means that they would not be abiding by FERPA. This is why so many teachers are tight-lipped about their own and their colleagues’ difficulties with accommodations; they could get sued.

Teachers don’t need to talk about each student whose IEP or 504 plan they’ve struggled with, nor list out every specific situation they have been through in order to receive guidance from others. Learning how to navigate IEPs and 504s alone can be daunting; by communicating openly with each other, however, teachers can share and learn their most effective

methods for accommodation.

Without looking through the lens of fear, teachers will realize that IEPs or 504s are not a challenge to their teaching style — in fact, most accommodations don’t call for anything drastic. “It’s very, very rare that there’s any change to the curriculum,” Ms. Burns clarifies. “They need some extra things [...] but we don’t have to rewrite how we teach Latin 4 so that a kid with an IEP can do better.”

What can students learn from this?

Despite increasing efforts around accessibility, we always have room to grow. When these students graduate, they are thrust into a world that is not guaranteed to be as accommodating. That doesn’t mean that they no longer have protection under the law — plenty of federal civil rights laws like Section 504 will still apply. They will, however, no longer have the same support system guiding them, says Ms. Davila-Gonzalez. “After you leave this building, the one thing about those laws and getting that kind of support is that nobody can initiate that conversation for you.”

This doesn’t mean students who graduate will be alone in their efforts seeking accessibility; the entire BLS community must work together to create an environment, both in and out of school, where students with learning disabilities feel comfortable speaking about their experiences. “In my time being here, the students have been a big part in helping to [destigmatize] that,” Ms. Davila-Gonzalez acknowledges.

As modern progressivism emphasizes inclusivity and acceptance, the younger generation of students at school serves as an exemplar. By normalizing accommodations and treating students with learning disabilities as the equals they are, special education will no longer be a topic that is only relevant to those who are in it. Those with accommodations won’t need to fear ostracization or retaliation for calling out teachers when they make mistakes, and will be unabashed to approach the staff who are there to support them. When BLS finally engages in open dialogue between faculty and students, then the entire school community can thrive.

What are the sources of these issues and how can we fix them?

The prestigious culture at BLS has not made it easy for students to talk about their IEPs and 504s; for a long time, students with special education plans were viewed as below the BLS standard. This belief went largely unchallenged because until very recently, there were extremely few students with IEPs and 504s at BLS. This is because the Independent School Entrance Exam that used to admit students to BLS did not allow for accommodations, making it nearly impossible for students that needed them to get in. Now, with a more holistic admissions program, the number of students with IEPs has increased well over tenfold, and though there has been progression past old beliefs, it is struggling to keep up.

“For our school, the hard part has also been the shift in culture.” Ms. Davila-Gonzalez explains. “You have a [wide diversity of] teachers, but [...] there are still a certain amount of folks in this building that feel like, ‘this is Latin School, this is not what was done before.’”

The exponential growth of students with IEPs and 504 plans can be jarring for teachers who have grown accustomed to one way of teaching. “They’re considered experts in their field — that’s why they teach here,” Ms. Davila-Gonzalez continues. “And sometimes, when you’re introduced to something you don’t really know what to do with and you no longer feel like the expert, people react differently.”

Although the transition may be difficult, teachers must realize that all these changes are for the benefit of the students. “If it makes a difference to how a kid feels taking the test, [or] makes them calmer, it’s totally worth it if it’s going to be a better outcome,” Ms. Burns emphasizes. As teachers, their highest priority should be their students’ success — and it is not as though these students are any less able than their peers. Ms. Davila-Gonzalez explains, “Very skilled, very intelligent individuals sometimes have either medical issues or other [disabilities] where they are completely capable and able to access the kind of instructions that you get here [at BLS] in terms of content, but maybe just need other scaffolds or supports in place.”

It is impossible to begin the path to normalization of special education without there first being open discussion about it. While breaking down the taboo surrounding those who have accommodations would definitely be helpful, there is still one more factor that limits what teachers can and will say about their struggles: the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

The FERPA is what ensures the privacy of all students’ “educational records” under their school — and this includes matters surrounding their IEPs and 504 plans. If teachers were ever to talk about how they were unable to comply with a student’s accommodations and happened to mention them by name, they would have to face legal repercussions for breaking the law. No matter how difficult or nuanced the situation, disclosing any information about specific students without the consent of their legal guardians means that they would not be abiding by FERPA. This is why so many teachers are tight-lipped about their own and their colleagues’ difficulties with accommodations; they

could get sued.

Teachers don’t need to talk about each student whose IEP or 504 plan they’ve struggled with, nor list out every specific situation they have been through in order to receive guidance from others. Learning how to navigate IEPs and 504s alone can be daunting; by communicating openly with each other, however, teachers can share and learn their most effective methods for accommodation.

Without looking through the lens of fear, teachers will realize that IEPs or 504s are not a challenge to their teaching style — in fact, most accommodations don’t call for anything drastic. “It’s very, very rare that there’s any change to the curriculum,” Ms. Burns clarifies. “They need some extra things [...] but we don’t have to rewrite how we teach Latin 4 so that a kid with an IEP can do better.”

Hot Girls (Serve This) Summer!

By **Avani Shah (II)**

Contributing Writer

How does a seemingly low-stakes job such as working in an ice cream shop or at a summer camp live up to the seemingly exceptional internships offered at Boston Children's Hospital or the Massachusetts State House? While internships undoubtedly offer substantial learning opportunities, the benefits of summer jobs for high school students far surpass them.

Summer jobs provide a platform for students to cultivate essential life skills, foster financial independence and gain diverse work experiences that exceed those of a specialized internship. With a focus on practical skill-building, real-world responsibilities and broad exposure to various industries, summer jobs forge a stronger path for high schoolers seeking holistic growth and readiness for the challenges of adulthood.

Participating in a summer job as a high schooler offers a multitude of intangible benefits that extend far beyond financial compensation. Beyond the paycheck, a summer job is an opportunity for essential skill development and practical experience that prepares teenagers for the realities of both the workforce and adult life.

Through jobs like working at a restaurant, as a camp counselor or as a lifeguard, students learn soft skills like communication, teamwork, time management and problem-solving, all of which are crucial for success in any future career path. Echo Kirke-Sofer (II), who works as a restaurant hostess, explains: "I have learned a ton about people skills and working in a high-stress environment that revolves around serving others. It has helped me come out of my comfort zone and I have gotten a lot better at communicating with people."

Being able to adapt in this way prepares students for integrating into any future career, and allows them to develop crucial skills essential not only in the work-



Contrary to popular belief, service jobs provide teens with valuable experiences.

force, but in day-to-day life as well. Service jobs play a pivotal role in shaping the experiences and futures of teenagers. They serve as a stepping stone for career exploration, helping teenagers discover their strengths and weaknesses.

A major dilemma students face in deciding between internships and service-industry jobs is the potential impacts on their resume and college applications. Even for students who know exactly what career path they want to follow, service jobs allow room to develop as a well-rounded person, beyond academic and corporate personas.

Both Boston Public Schools and Boston Latin School offer many different internship opportunities through the Private Industry Council, Successlink, Deitch, Ward and Seevak fellowships. Because of these opportunities, many students at BLS

expect to engage in at least one of them. Hannah Yu (II) adds, "This is an incredible opportunity available only to Boston Latin School students."

From sophomore year, students are encouraged to take advantage of these by guidance counselors, administration and other students. However, service-industry work opportunities are less likely to be encouraged in the same way. Students are often drawn to internships at big name companies, neighboring hospitals and central government offices.

While internships at prestigious institutions undoubtedly offer valuable experiences, the significance of summer jobs for high schoolers should not be underestimated. They expose students to various industries, paving a broader path for comprehensive growth and development.

Ultimately, the value of summer jobs lies in their capacity to prepare high school students for the multifaceted demands of adult jobs and life, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in any future endeavors.

BLS Deitch Leadership Institute Director Mr. Jim Levesque recommends, "My advice to students is to speak with their parents, explore their interests, determine their availability, assess their need for financial compensation, and most importantly, determine how they want to invest in their growth and development over the summer."

So, if you are seeking something to do this summer, look no further than your local YMCA, boba store or bookshop, because the opportunities and learning experiences they provide will be like no other.

Climate Consciousness: Mitigation or Adaptation



Boston, a coastal city, is a potential flood zone for rising sea levels.

By **Zoe Colimon (I)**
& **Brandon Flores (III)**

Assistant A&E Editor and Staff Writer

For centuries, humans have been fascinated by the battle between mankind and nature. Modern technology provides society with an unprecedented ability to handle natural disasters, but nature still seems to win the conflict.

Alarmingly severe droughts have troubled regions across the globe, leaving a devastating impact on economic affairs and daily life. 2022 brought a flood crisis to Pakistan that cost billions of dollars and over 1,700 lives. Locally, this past winter of

2023 to 2024 has been the warmest winter on record, as states like Massachusetts face minimal snow and an abundance of rain in the usual icy months.

These concerning weather conditions cause citizens to question the best way to manage current circumstances: mitigation or adaptation methods.

Climate mitigation aims to address climate change by reducing emissions. On the contrary, adaptation involves changing current lifestyles and processes to handle climate anomalies. Although adaptation does have its benefits, mitigation is more effective, necessary and equitable in the fight against climate change.

Mitigation is often considered too

substantial of a financial investment, but only a small number of countries are needed to support these expenses. According to Climate Action Tracker, an independent research group, the two main drivers of global carbon emissions are China and the United States, far ahead of other nations.

Instead of expecting nations to upgrade infrastructure constantly, especially those without the funds to do so, mitigation allows nations to focus on long term development instead of the short term prevention of hardship. According to Boston Latin School Youth Climate Action Network officer Caleb Thompson (II), "Building a new road or a sea wall only helps that area whereas mitigation helps everything."

Mitigation is more considerate of other organisms because they will not be affected by the constant upgrading of infrastructure. Adaptation relies on the constant need for new construction, which can be a large source for carbon emissions. Furthermore, water, soil and noise pollution are substantial drawbacks to construction that decrease the quality of life for others.

Not only is mitigation proactive for developing countries, but it also directly combats climate change, whereas adaptation withstands it. Through changing processes that facilitate carbon-friendly production and minimal pollution, all variants of life experience a cleaner, more stable planet. Scientists predict that the state of our climate will only decline as people continue with their current life-

styles.

Mitigation is also attainable; through renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and hydroelectric, countries are able to decrease overconsumption. Mitigation advocates other changes in lifestyle such as electric vehicles and retrofitting old infrastructure. Efforts from organizations such as The Solutions Project work to break down how to install renewable energy resources.

Although mitigation is favorable, the majority of climate change is also driven by large corporations who are often unwilling to pursue the financial efforts necessary to pursue it. AP Environmental Science student Eduard Objio (I) believes that mitigation would be better for the environment, but acknowledges the legal struggle: "With the way environmental laws fare in politics, it's incredibly difficult to change how fossil fuel companies operate and what they emit on a large scale."

Mitigation efforts, moreover, require substantial investments and time. Many argue that the time to address climate change is now, and that adaptation is the only way to increase current livability. According to the World Wildlife Fund, "Mitigation actions will take decades to affect rising temperatures, so we must adapt now to the change that is already upon us — and will continue to affect us in the foreseeable future."

Despite the time and effort that mitigation requires, it is essential in securing the future of the human race with the ability to combat climate change and sustain

Everything I Know About Love by Dolly Alderton

By **Alexandra Lee (II)**

Contributing Writer

Dolly Alderton's *Everything I Know About Love* is the book for the girls (and also the guys trying to impress those girls). Packed with comical anecdotes, strange recipes and satirical email exchanges, Alderton bundles the funny, embarrassing and heartbreaking aspects of growing up as a girl into 358 pages.

Born in 1988, Dolly Alderton is a British journalist, author and podcast host. Her 2018 debut novel *Everything I Know About Love* was shortlisted in the British Book Awards and earned a National Book Award. Despite the references to various places in England, her story resonates with teenagers around the world.

With quips about almost getting married to a stranger or accidentally getting drunk at ten years old, she recounts navigating her anxious teenage years, chaotic 20s and eventually finding peace in her 30s. Alderton describes the univer-

sal experiences for today's women: growing up with the internet, her struggles with alcohol and food, feeling left behind in life, trying to find romantic love and above all, navigating female friendships.

Reading Dolly Alderton's memoir is like being guided through life by an older sister. Her voice manages to be comforting, even when she describes her most chaotic experiences of chasing parties and 200 dollar taxi rides. You laugh at her exploits and cry for her losses. You recognize yourself in her actions, like when she says, "I wrote a sad soliloquy about it on my iPhone notes on the night bus home" or when she overthinks her relationship, turning it into a Spice Girls metaphor.

Alderton's 2018 memoir was released to glowing praise from critics and amateurs alike. Author Lisa Taddeo called it a "one-sitting, break-up recovery book," while author Elizabeth Day referred to Alderton as the "Nora Ephron for the millennial generation." Elizabeth Gilbert, who wrote *Eat, Pray, Love*, encapsulates the book in two sentences: "what makes this memoir more than mere entertainment is the mature and

sophisticated evolution that Alderton describes in these pages. It's a beautifully told journey and a thoughtful, important book." With a four-star rating out of almost 300,000 reviews on *Goodreads*, it is a must read for anyone struggling with the trials and tribulations of girlhood.

Before Alderton had even begun to write, the TV rights had been acquired by Working Title Films, whose movies include *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Love Actually*. But unlike these classic early 2000s films, *Everything I Know About Love* portrays a more modern and realistic love story of female friendship. It is available to stream on *Peacock* with a promising *Rotten Tomatoes* rating of 94 percent.

This is the book to read when you dread your 16th birthday or keep a gripping countdown to graduation. For fans of Alderton, check out her most recent novel *Good Material*, her work as a columnist for *The Sunday Times* or her current affairs podcast *The High Low*. For fans of *Everything I Know About Love*, check out the TV series about the story, her podcast *Love Stories* or Florence Kleiner's blog (I cried).

Spotlight on Saffron Lam (I)



Sophia Knobel (IV)

By **Sophia Fortuin (IV)**

& **Sophia Knobel (IV)**

Contributing Writers

Saffron Lam (I) had their first taste of visual art in elementary school. In eighth grade at Boston Latin School, they were inspired by their peers to start taking art more seriously. Now as a senior, they continue their creative journey in AP Art.

Since Lam was young, art has been

an integral part of their life. For them, art is a way to articulate their emotions. Lam explains, "Visual art lets me express those wordless feelings in a way that can still communicate a lot to people."

In their art, Lam goes for a semi-realistic art style, taking inspiration from social media apps such as *Pinterest* and *Instagram*, with some of their favorite aesthetics being "weird-core" and liminal space.

As an AP Studio Art student, they are creating a personal art portfolio, with a theme on the hypocrisy of religion. Having grown up Catholic, Lam frequently questions why some people are so blindly devoted to their religion to the point that they "use religion [...] as an excuse to oppress people." This thinking is displayed in their art, as one of the pieces in their portfolio depicts a nun and a woman. While seemingly straightforward, in context, Lam was inspired by, in older nunneries, women became nuns to escape marriage and how many nuns were in sapphic relationships.

Sometimes, Lam has complex concepts they would like to execute, but feels

their skills are inadequate to portray their ideas. To combat this, they have two sketchbooks: one for complete projects, and one "purely for learning" and expressing their creativity, including doodling and figure sketching.

BLS AP Studio Art teacher Mr. Stephen Harris adds, "When you look at a student's sketchbook, you can actually see how their mind is [...] working on a concept. Saffron's sketchbooks are filled with pages and pages of concept art before they even start something new."

Lam's art process is not always smooth sailing, however. They often struggle with having a "perfectionist" mindset, leading to added stress from setting such high expectations for themselves. As a result, they can find it hard to even start creating a piece. Lam's perseverance has led to amazing results despite these challenges.

In addition to visual arts, Lam has enjoyed declamation since sixth year. After the pandemic, they gave public declamation a try. "Public dec[lamation] really does help you in the real world." Lam explains

this experience has helped them learn to speak up and build confidence. Last April, they secured first place in the competition.

Lam has also been heavily involved in BLS's Theatre Department since sophomore year. This year they played a main character in BLS Theatre's hit production of *PLEASE LEAVE (a message)*.

Despite all its wins, Lam feels that "the most important part of theatre for me is the people who are in it. It is a very tight-knit community."

Lam reflects on the profound impact that BLS has had for them over the last six years, from AP Studio Art to public declamation and theatre: "I'm just really grateful for knowing the people I know now."

No matter what their future may hold, Lam's passion for arts during their time at BLS will continue into their future, as they plan to pursue a double major in psychology and art. "I hope that Saffron keeps the creative part of their life [...] it seems like the creative outlet is something that is just who they are," concludes Mr. Harris.

Defending the Canvas

By **Ruth Gelaye (III)**

& **Arianna Sun (III)**

Contributing Writers

You have undoubtedly seen graffiti while strolling around the city of Boston — the painted words with effortless precision that seem to stamp the city walls. Or, you've also thought of graffiti as vandalizing the city's antique nature.

Graffiti emerged as underground inscriptions on primordial architecture and in the darkness of caves throughout the ancient cities of Rome, Greece and Egypt. The graffiti movement in the United States was set in motion in the late 1900s, most notably in the New York City subway. Although graffiti is viewed by some as a blight on urban landscapes, it can serve as a powerful tool of expression in typically impoverished and minority communities. While graffiti is often pushed into the shadows of the public arena, it is evident that it allows marginalized communities to expose their voices in public spaces where their names will be at least seen, if not heard.

The controversy regarding graffiti requires us to look towards its constitutionality. Many state legislations deem graffiti as vandalism, making it illegal to create. As demonstrated in the few cases that made it to the courtroom, however, graffiti has been protected and the artists' rights were upheld on appeal stands.

There has also been growing advocacy for graffiti artists' work to be protected under the 1990 Visual Artists Rights Act (VARA). Although VARA is too vague to withstand a

strict scrutiny evaluation, this act at its face value protects visual artists rights' by prohibiting the destruction of "visual art," such as paintings, photographs and sculptures.

Also, some lawyers argue that rather than imposing blanket bans on graffiti, content-based restrictions could offer a middle ground that prohibits certain content, preventing the criminalizing of all conduct regarding the production of graffiti. This way, speech such as true threats and heinous language won't plague the walls of our communities, but artists' tags and constitutionally expressive speech can maintain their place.

On the contrary, some argue that if graffiti were to earn a legalized title, it would exploit the historical architecture and architectural beauty existent in cities such as Boston. Madelyn Buksbaum (III) provides her insight: "In some communities, graffiti is seen as an art form whose presence contributes to the cultural vibrance of a neighborhood. [...] In other [neighborhoods], this abstract art form compromises the integrity of public and private properties."

When examining where graffiti is predominantly found, there are distinct patterns that have emerged in different cities. For instance, Boston's concentration of graffiti lies significantly in historically redlined and impoverished sanctuaries of neighborhoods such as Dorchester and Roxbury. These patterns underline a significant factor that plays into the creation of graffiti, and lends us to ask the question, why is graffiti made?

Contrary to widespread misconceptions about graffiti, it is distinguishable from street art. Street art and graffiti are



David Nguyen (IV)

Cambridge creates a space for graffiti artists in its Graffiti Alley.

both modes of public artistic expression; however street art is more audience-focused, while graffiti is aimed at putting the artist's name out into the world. Graffiti is more letter-based, and most aerosol artists come up with a personal tag or even use their paint to display political messages, etc.

Sofia Hennessy (III) believes, "There should be places where graffiti is allowed because it's a form of self-expression and if there are designated places those places can build a sense of community." There are, in fact, establishments that provide spaces for graffiti artists to produce their

work, such as "The Krog Street Tunnel" in Atlanta, Georgia, a tunnel covered with vibrant design, and "The Arts District" in Los Angeles, where building owners encourage graffiti artists to cover their exterior walls. This approach of embracing graffiti has been adopted internationally, as present in Mannheim, Germany, where the government leases a space for graffiti artists to freely create, re-painting the walls periodically.

Next time you see graffiti, ask yourself, are we witnessing vandalism or the vibrant efforts of a community to make a mark on the canvas of urban life?

Smaller Artists, Activism and Expectations

By **Mindy Luong (I)**
& **Mia White (I)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Every fall and spring, artists are honored for their contributions at various events and award shows. The GLAAD Awards ceremony is one of many that feature acclaimed artists, actors and producers. Annually, the awards spotlight a variety of media productions for their contribution to an inclusive and accurate representation of the LGBTQ+ community.

The 2023 nominations were announced on January 17, with the official 35th Annual Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) Media Awards ceremony taking place on March 14. Actress and beloved Broadway star René Rapp was a highlight of the ceremony, having recently gained traction as an emerging singer-songwriter following the release of her debut album *Snow Angel*.

During her acceptance speech, Rapp took the opportunity to “show support and call for an immediate cease-fire and permanent cease-fire in Gaza” (Vanity Fair). This statement comes in wake of the ongoing conflict in Gaza, which many artists have hesitated to take a stance on despite global conversations erupting on social media.

Many have called into question the obligation Rapp and similar artists have in voicing their political views. As a fan of Rapp, Boston Latin School English teacher Ms. Sophia Campot believes that it is necessary for those who “[...] have a platform [...] to amplify the voices of those who are needing to be heard.”

Rapp’s call to action was met with firm applause from the audience. Yet, artists who express similar political views have received

hostile reactions from the internet. Some argue that artists like Rapp attempt to push an agenda, but many might not have the same concern regarding those with a larger following in the entertainment industry.

Often, social pressure can be a barrier in communicating one’s political opinions. Ms. Campot brings up an interesting point by questioning whether “the audience would’ve reacted the same way if it were a different awards ceremony.”

In his recent Oscars acceptance speech, *The Zone of Interest* director Jonathan Glazer openly denounced Israel’s military bombardment of Gaza but faced intense backlash from Hollywood executives and producers. The mention elicited quieter applause from an audience who wanted to avoid taking a stance on such a polarizing issue.

Evan Casali (I) speculates, the GLAAD Awards “is very different from [...] a mainstream media event like the Oscars where you would expect there to be more censorship.” It comes as no surprise that award ceremonies like the Oscars and Grammys glorify certain narratives in the media, skewing public attention away from important world issues.

Typically, celebrities with broader influence are hesitant to express their views in an attempt to placate a diverse fanbase, often coming at the cost of their moral integrity. Others who do, no matter how controversial, receive more grace or pardon because of their influence in the industry. In comparison to their more established counterparts, smaller artists face more potential criticism for both their silence and activism, a disadvantage of their limited network and influence.

Yet, this begs the question: how important should an artist’s political views be in the perception of their music?

What commonly draws fans to an art-



The Hollywood Reporter

René Rapp calls for a ceasefire in Gaza at the GLAAD Media Awards.

ist is not only the style and expression of their work, but their personal values as well. It’s a lot easier to feel connected to music produced by someone who is “on the same wavelength morally,” expresses Casali, “[but I’m not] somebody who would not listen to an artist because they don’t specifically align with [his] views.”

But how does one determine that line between artist and art, and objectively, for that matter? This becomes a more complex question, especially when considering supporting an artist who openly voices sentiments opposite to one’s own.

Ms. Campot emphasizes the formalist method when analyzing media, stating that “all artists need to be completely divorced from their work” and “that [...] whenever you consume art you should consume it indepen-

dent of the person.”

In certain mediums, it’s easier to separate the art from the artist than in others. Casali explains that “with [music] artists, I feel like I can relate to their music without relating to them and their views.” Music is made to be consumed in a way that’s applicable to the listener’s interpretation, whereas an author’s biases are much more difficult to overlook when ingrained in a piece of literature.

Although it may present a moral dilemma, separating the art from the artist is an important part of consumer responsibility. Choosing which artists to support is a personal choice, and at the end of the day, media is made to be consumed, meaning it is up to users to decide how and where they find that balance.

Big Band’s Gold-Paved Road

By **Catherine Cox (II)**
& **Kenneth Cacho-Bermudez (III)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On March 16, the Boston Latin School Big Band traveled to Norwood to compete in the final round of the Massachusetts Association for Jazz Education (MAJE) competition, playing classic jazz charts by legends like Charles Mingus and Duke Ellington. For the 14th consecutive year, they dominated the MAJE festival, earning a gold medal from the organization in this year’s State Finals.

The MAJE State Finals takes the best scholastic jazz bands around Massachusetts, culminating in a fierce competition for best in the state. According to MAJE’s website, the organization aims to “provide festivals for school groups that are educationally oriented.” Awards are given to groups based

on their achievements and improvisation skills.

The road to gold is not an easy one, and preparation is key to success. Big Band meets twice a week, with full band and sectional rehearsals led by BLS music faculty Mr. Dennison Blackett, Mr. Sean Lee and Mr. Paul Pitts.

John Harvey (III), a first year percussionist, provides insight into the ongoing work rooted in a strong structure of consistent rehearsals. He explains, “Meeting twice a week as both a full band and in individual sections, alongside playing songs or parts of songs until they sound just right, contributes greatly to successful performances.”

Big Band begins their preparation for the MAJE competitions from the beginning of the year, balancing their weekly practices with their various live performances. Tenor saxophonist Catherine Jestin (III) joined Big Band this year, and quickly learned that in-

tensive work and effort were necessary to perform and compete as part of a team.

Jestin reflects on the journey to finals, describing it as “very nerve-racking. Any small mistake can affect [whether] we get gold or not. [It’s] nice to just play it out [...] We work hard on every song and so it’s deserved.”

While performances are judged upon the group’s performance as a whole, individual musicians are also awarded for outstanding talent. This year, Justin Gao (II) was recognized with the Outstanding Musicianship Award for his excellence in trombone playing.

Feedback that allows musicians to grow in their skill and musicianship is a significant part of Big Band’s success, whether it be from internal individuals who help with performances, or adjudicators at jazz competitions and clinics. Members of Big Band embrace a commitment to continu-

ous improvement and a desire to learn from and improve with each performance.

Soprano and alto saxophonist Cynthia Francis (III) expresses her appreciation for the commentary recordings from adjudicators, acknowledging that it helps her grow as a performer: “I think the biggest thing is being open to criticism. The ability to appreciate the hard work you’ve put in and how awesome the band may sound is just as important as asking judges what we did that wasn’t great or requires improvement.”

Although Big Band is currently celebrating such a great achievement, their work is far from over. On May 5, Big Band will hit the big stage, performing alongside a lineup of Massachusetts gold-winning high school jazz bands at Boston’s Hatch Shell on the Charles River Esplanade. The entire BLS community, friends and family are all encouraged to cheer on the group and celebrate another year of gold!

Recap of the 2024 Oscars

By **Anneliese Yu (V)**
& **Lara Glaum (III)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On March 10, the 96th Academy Awards ceremony took place at the Dolby Theater in Hollywood, Los Angeles. The annual Oscars ceremony, presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, recognizes and presents films with various awards. Hosted by late-night comedian Jimmy Kimmel, this year’s Oscars celebrated several incredible winners.

Since its eagerly anticipated release in July of 2023 and the popularity that ensued shortly after, many were expecting *Oppenheimer* to receive numerous awards. It did not disappoint, taking home seven awards

out of 13 nominations, including Best Actor for Cillian Murphy and Best Director for Christopher Nolan.

Many other incredible films were celebrated throughout the award show, such as *American Fiction*, which won Best Adapted Screenplay and was also nominated for Best Picture, with Cord Jefferson as the only Black director nominated for the award.

In a press speech after the Oscars, Jefferson notes, “It was important to me to reflect the diversity of the Black experience [in the film],” which was set in Massachusetts. “Showing that side of Boston that isn’t normally shown [is also significant]. I think it’s important to show diversity within diversity.”

Fans also enjoyed watching *Oppenheimer* actor Robert Downey Jr. and *The*

Wonderful Life of Henry Sugar filmmaker Wes Anderson receive their first Oscar awards in their respective categories.

The night held several other memorable moments — one in particular stood out from the rest. “Ryan Gosling’s performance was my favorite moment,” says Audrey Day (V). Gosling’s performance of the song “I’m Just Ken” from *Barbie* was one of the main highlights of the night. The star, dressed in a glamorous pink suit, sang to the Oscar nominated song by Mark Ronson and Andrew Wyatt, capturing the attention of many fans.

Throughout the evening, many stars such as singer Billie Eilish and actor Mark Ruffalo were seen wearing red pins, in support of *Artists4Ceasefire*, an organization that advocates for a ceasefire in the

Israel-Hamas war. A letter published on the group’s website states, “Beyond our pain and mourning for all the people there and their loved ones around the world we are motivated by an unbending will to stand for our common humanity. We stand for freedom, justice, dignity and peace for all people — and a deep desire to stop more bloodshed.”

The 96th Academy Awards was filled with captivating performances, a number of important first time awards for both established and new artists and efforts to raise awareness for ongoing conflicts around the world. This year’s Oscars ceremony was a fitting tribute to a year marked by important milestones and accomplishments in filmmaking history and anticipates that 2024 will bring many exciting new performances that are sure to captivate lovers of cinema.



Join A+ Summer Program: Ace Your High School Subjects and Reach Top Universities!

Serving 3,000+ Students grades 9-12 in MA



High School Writing and Public Speaking Course

Write to Impress

"The pen is mightier than the sword."

Enhance your writing and public speaking abilities to craft compelling essays and presentations. Stand out academically and in your college applications, setting the stage for success.

- ✓ Boost GPA
- ✓ Be a confident writer

High School Math (Algebra 1, 2, Trigonometry, Geometry, Precalculus)

Math Skills That Count

"Mathematics is not about numbers, equations, computations, or algorithms: it is about understanding."

Enhance your understanding and mastery of high school math, laying a solid foundation for a stellar GPA.

SAT Test Prep SAT Scores That Open Doors

Target a 1500+ score on your SAT with our focused prep.

"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."

- ✓ Up-to-date test prep strategy+diagnostic exams
- ✓ Professionally trained teachers

College Application Bootcamp

Your Ticket to Top Universities

Stand out in the competitive college admissions process. Our bootcamp guides you through every step, from standout applications to impactful interviews.

- ✓ Trainer from Ivy league Schools
- ✓ Craft your personal essay to stand out

Volunteer Leadership Program

Amplify Your Application

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth."

Gain Leadership skills and volunteer hours as a TA, group leader, or tutor. Enhance your college application and vie for the President's Volunteer Service Award.

- ✓ Community service hour certificate



JULY 1 > JULY 19
JULY 29 > AUG 14

1106 COMMONWEALTH AVE.
BOSTON, MA 02215
65 HARRISON AVE, 6TH FLOOR
BOSTON, MA 02111

ENROLL TODAY!

CALL 617-730-3705
617-338-5288

Target high GPA, 1500+ SAT scores, acceptance into prestigious universities, and an impactful application. We've guided countless students to their educational goals.

info@aplusprogram.com
AplusProgram.com

Issue V Crossword

By Lily Huynh (I), Joanna Lin (I)
& Andy Tran (I)
Head Cruciverbalists

Across

1. New England chowder morsel
5. What Aphrodite sprang from
8. Louisiana-style seasoning seen on Popeyes fries
13. Hindu festival of colors celebrated in spring
14. Errr...
15. Leader of the pack
16. Official language of Pakistan
17. What the green line travels on
19. Popular mobile rhythm game consisting of simple shapes
22. Home of OSU
23. Art museum located in Seaport
24. Astonishment
25. Streaming service on which 28-Down plays
26. Alcohol-induced boldness
32. Shiba ___ of Dogecoin
33. SZA hit "___ Days"
34. Oxide used in picture tubes
36. Donates protons, according to Bronsted Lowry
38. Bedroom pop artist ___ badoobee
40. ___ Arbor, University of Michigan's city

41. Classical orator
44. Newton has three of them
47. Swear words?
49. Takes it easy
52. Org. responsible for urban design
54. What Tom from *Tom and Jerry* may exclaim
55. Cenat of "fanum tax"
56. Author of "The Old Man and The Sea" and "A Farewell to Arms"
63. English rock band known for hit "Wonderwall"; or, respite from a dry spell?
64. What scratching can satisfy
65. 2024 sequel that contains religious fanaticism and galactic wars
66. Adverb used when asking for someone's location
67. The name of the dog from Nickelodeon's *The Loud House*
68. Indonesia skewered national dish
69. German automobile manufacturer known for its beetle
70. Some may call Cristiano Ronaldo this

grid pending

Down

1. *Take me to your Xbox to play Fortnite today*
You can take me to Moisty Mire, but not Loot Lake
I really love to ___ Jug with you
We can be pro Fortnite gamers
2. Gen Z slang for someone's backstory
3. Chain shoe store
4. Italian luxury brand founded by Miuccia Prada
5. 2000s artist Nelly known for "Promiscuous" and "Maneater"
6. Mexican-American R&B artist ___ Apollo
7. European river that inspired Smetana
8. With "headrest," Seattle-based indie rock band led by Will Toledo
9. Horford, Capone, Pacino
10. .png alternative
11. Stutter or filler word in text, synonymous

- with 14-Across
12. Whose cheese is it?
18. In phonetics, the sequence used to describe the long e sound such as in "easy" or "dream"
20. Abbrev., alternative to smoking tobacco
21. Adjective describing a situation that has gone amiss
22. BLS, BLA, ___
25. A rare injury that may occur when lifting heavy
26. Their pants are on fire!
27. A foot is comprised of 12 of them
28. Miniseris exposé of Nickelodeon and Dan Schneider
29. What you can eat corn off of
30. O of NFL wide receiver OBJ
31. Car heist video game, with sixth installment coming in 2025
35. Where the White House lives

37. T stop that connects the red and orange lines, abbreviated as ___X
39. One of the ways to prove triangle congruency
42. Famous epic written by Homer, or Bloons Tower Defense 6 game mode
43. Valorant developer; or, Earl Sweatshirt song
45. Online site giving illustrated tutorials on both mundane and complex things
46. One may call a super fan this
48. Alright
50. Compound word used to describe a duration of time
51. Failed Boston infrastructure project

- that created the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway
52. Requests for Friskies, perhaps
53. Prague, to locals
57. A district in Helsinki, Finland; nearly homophonous with "era"
58. What the number on a GPS, XX:XX, indicates
59. Year 1155, to Ancient Romans
60. ___-Tang Clan who says "Cash Rules Everything Around Me"; or, Mayor Michelle
61. Article before a word beginning with a vowel
62. Sheisty-clad rapper also known as "Luh Geeky"

Rock On!

By Alice Li (IV)
& Lauren Dong (IV)

Assistant Editor and Contributing Writer

Do you ever hear a rock band jamming out when passing by Room 211? What you are hearing is Boston Latin School's very own faculty rock band, which consists of teachers Mr. Dennison Blackett, Mr. Timothy McQuade, Mr. Jeffrey Mikalaitis, Mr. Robert Oakes, Mr. Matt Sebold and Ms. Elaine Sylvester. The band's members come from various departments of the school with a multitude of backgrounds, allowing for rich musical interpretations.

They perform annually at the BLS Faculty Talent Show, a schoolwide fundraising event for the senior class. This year's show was held earlier in March, where they played Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode" and Black Sabbath's "Paranoid."

The band was founded more than two decades ago, sometime before 2006. Many of the current players joined due to a need for members. BLS mathematics teacher Mr. McQuade joined soon after he began teaching at BLS in 2006, becoming the lead singer. English teacher Mr. Oakes joined a few years later, after being persuaded by Mr. Mikalaitis, another English teacher, to play the drums.

Three years ago, BLS history teacher Mr. Sebold entered the group, providing

the band with a bass player. Last year, BLS band teacher Mr. Blackett joined, adding the saxophone to the mix. Later, guidance counselor Ms. Sylvester added the tambourine to the band, broadening their musical spectrum. Throughout the years, various student teachers have also participated.

One of the most important members of the band was the late Mr. Michael "Gio" Giordano, one of the founding members and long-time drummer. Although Mr. Giordano passed away in October 2019, his legacy still lives on through the band.

The band merges different styles of rock, with each member bringing in their own tastes. Mr. Sebold explains, "I think we each have such different musical styles, like [Mr. Oakes] much more straight rock, [Mr. Mikalaitis] is a little more metal. I'm a little 'bluesy-er,' so [...] we gotta decide on what we can all kind of pull off with our own interests." In addition to playing, members enjoy listening to other artists for inspiration, including Pearl Jam, Ozzy Osbourne and U2.

The band continues to create music despite facing barriers such as the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Before the group was scheduled to perform, the unexpected district-wide closure canceled their performance. The pandemic, however, didn't stop them from playing, as they performed through video recording.



The faculty rock band celebrates their amazing performance!

A key reason for the band's success is the fun and lighthearted spirit. Mr. Oakes comments: "I just like practicing and coming together and figuring out the tunes."

The band encourages students to dance and sing along in their performances as if it were an actual concert. In their latest performance, students poured down the aisles of the auditorium to get up close.

Greta Gorman (IV) comments, "It

honestly felt like an actual concert, between the energy and quality of the band."

Mr. Oakes notes that the band would like to incorporate more "student spotlights" in future performances and collaborate with the student body through different musical forms.

The dynamic faculty band continues their long-time reign and expect to make more appearances in school events.

Quiet on Set: Shining the Light on Darkness

By Isabella Connelly Dow (III)
& Katie Hurley (III)

Contributing Writers

If you were born in the 2000s, chances are you watched Nickelodeon shows like *iCarly*, *Sam & Cat* and *Drake & Josh* that hold a place in the hearts of many members of Generation Z.

While we may find them nostalgic, *Max*'s new docuseries *Quiet on Set* reveals the darkness hidden behind the catchy jingles. The ongoing limited series uncovers the exploitation and abuse of child stars, particularly under producer Dan Schneider, who worked on Nickelodeon for over two decades. Since working with Schneider, many former child actors have come out to expose the cruelty they faced on set: coercion into uncomfortable scenes, strenuous working

hours and abuse at the hands of Schneider's employees.

Most notably, Drake Bell from *Drake & Josh* appears in the documentary to disclose the sexual abuse he was subjugated to at the hands of Brian Peck, a dialogue coach hired under Schneider. Peck was convicted of child sexual assault in 2004 and was sentenced to a mere 16 months in prison. Bell also reveals that several adults in the industry wrote letters of support for Peck to defend him during sentencing, leading viewers to question the jail time, or lack thereof, he received. Lily Courtney (III) comments, "I thought it was startling that Brian Peck only got 16 months despite his sexual assault toward a minor. I'm sure all the letters of support must've affected that." Courtney adds, "It was even more disgusting to find out that after the convictions he worked on *Zack &*

Cody, too."

Since its release, *Quiet on Set* has gained popularity on social media platforms, with clips of the show going viral on *TikTok*. As a result, viewers have started raising similar questions and sharing their shifting opinions of the child acting industry itself. Meya Splaine (IV) says, "I was [...] amazed, but not in a good way," expressing her disgust about undetected pedophiles on a child-based set.

Viewers who watched Schneider's shows as children have also started to share their thoughts on many of the explicit "jokes" they featured, which the docuseries brings into focus. Splaine explains her experience watching *Victorious* as a child: "Some of the things were weird, but I was a kid so I was like, 'Oh that's funny.'" Fans reacting have also posed concerns about the produc-

er pressuring child actors into delivering inappropriate jokes, contributing to the toxic and unprofessional work environment.

In an even broader context, *Quiet on Set* has provoked a re-evaluation of the child protection policies in television. Former Nickelodeon actor Kenan Thompson has recently spoken out about the lack of responsibility the network has assumed, encouraging authorities to "Investigate more. [...] It's supposed to be a safe place for kids."

With more Nickelodeon-affiliated people confronting the problems within the industry, the indisputable need for change is rising. While *Quiet on Set* offers a deep dive into the events that unfolded under Schneider's management, Hollywood must continually confront the uncomfortable realities behind child acting and work toward remodeling the industry.

Ariana Grande's *Eternal Sunshine*

By Aurora McLaughlin (IV)
& Julia Morellato (IV)

Contributing Writers

On March 8, Ariana Grande released her eighth studio album, *Eternal Sunshine*.

Grande is a pop icon known for having an extremely impressive vocal range that includes the notoriously difficult whistle notes. Throughout her career, however, she has sparked controversy in the media.

Recently, Grande divorced her husband Dalton Gomez, a real estate broker, and started dating Ethan Slater, an actor, singer and Grande's co-star in the musical *Wicked*. Allegedly, she began seeing Slater while both of them were in committed marriages. Fans believe this album is a response to this controversy.

Eternal Sunshine surprised listeners with this new, vulnerable side of Grande. Levi Liming (V) was intrigued by Grande's new style. When dissecting the album, it is seen as a combination of many different artistic inspirations, ranging from the film that the title stemmed from, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, to classic icons like Madonna.

First off is "intro (end of the world),"

which starts the album off with questions about love and relationships. The next song in the album is "bye," which dives into Grande moving on, learning and standing up for herself regarding relationships.

The fifth song on the album is "eternal sunshine." It includes an audio of her and the late rapper Mac Miller, and discusses how she has learned lessons since their relationship and how she wishes to forget certain memories. This is a concept borrowed from Michel Gondry's 2004 film, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, which inspired the song and album title.

Following that is "the boy is mine," which describes a new love interest who she feels is made just for her. Next come two of her most popular songs from the album, "yes, and?" and "we can't be friends (wait for your love)."

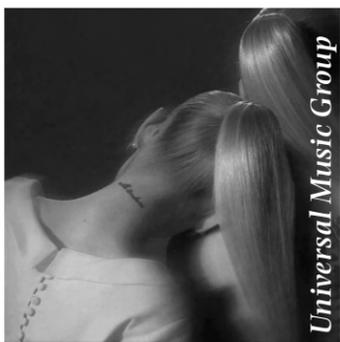
Her song, "yes, and?" was one of her most controversial songs since it addresses the rumors surrounding Grande and how people do not own up to their words. The music video can be seen to be a homage to many artists. Grande's choreographer, Will Loftis, says to *Rolling Stone*, "The overall structure of 'Cold-Hearted Snake' was inspired by [Bob] Fosse. Those were the jumping-off points [...] I spent a lot of time at the

[Metropolitan Museum of Art]. I knew the sculptures were going to be a big part of the video."

Grande's hit "we can't be friends (wait for your love)" was released alongside a memorable music video. This is where the inspiration from *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* shines. In the film, a woman undergoes a memory-erasing procedure after a horrible breakup. The music video depicts Grande experiencing the same procedure and the lyrics detail how heartbroken she is.

To end the album is "ordinary things," which answers the questions about love and relationships that the opening song established. The song ends with a voice memo of Grande's grandmother advising her to stop worrying and appreciate the little things in life.

Overall, her album shows a more mature Grande than we've seen in the previous albums. This unapologetic and raw project mixed with her angelic voice displays the growth in her career. Several of her songs do not just discuss love and heartbreak, but also how social media and rumors impact everyone. The same iconic Grande personality is present, but this time in an older and more evolved sense.



Eternal Sunshine

by Ariana Grande
March 8, 2024

Genre: Pop and R&B

Highlights: "eternal sunshine",
"yes, and?" and "we can't be
friends"

Rating: 8.5/10

Dune: Part Two: The Hype Must Flow



Warner Bros. Pictures

The absence of color enhances Austin Butler's sinister portrayal of Feyd-Rautha Harkonnen.

By **Ailin Sha (II)**

News Editor

Dune: Part Two, which came out on March 1, is the long-anticipated sequel to the successful preceding 2021 film. Filmmaker Denis Villeneuve and the star-studded cast of Timothee Chalamet, Zendaya, Austin Butler and Florence Pugh cement *Dune* in cinema's hall of fame.

In *Part Two*, Paul Atreides, played by Chalamet, is no longer the tentative young nobleman from the beginning of the first movie. Though initially reluctant, he yields to fulfill his destiny as the chosen one and savior of the Fremen, the native people of the precarious desert planet of Arrakis. After effectively defeating the enemy House Harkonnen, he commences a holy war, thus sealing the fate of the entire universe and dooming the lives of billions.

While Chalamet's performance was commanding, to some, it was overshadowed by the more experienced actors on-screen. Boston Latin School science teacher Mr. Conor Fearon notes, "Chalamet and Zendaya are very good actors, but not phenomenal. You see Timothee Chalamet play Paul; you watch Josh Brolin be Gurney [Halleck]. Watching him act, versus watching him be."

As Paul's influence over the Fremen increases, the movie explores the dangers of religious fanaticism and how it can be used to manipulate a population. No longer his friends, the Fremen have become Paul's fanatics, mindlessly following the messianic figure into galactic war and destruction.

Joe Li (II) comments, "The movie emphasizes how a strong and capable leader coupled with the power of faith can accomplish anything and really goes to show why religion was and still is such an important part of the world. The Fremen were all waiting on a savior to lead them to victory, and once that figure appeared they became an unstoppable force."

With the rise of religious extremist groups around the world, and the resulting polarization and violence, the film's message is particularly relevant today. Yet, Piotr Kierner (I) notes, "It also shows how it can also be a good thing, a thing that can be wielded to have people support freedom and justice. [...] It just all depends on what type of ruler or religious leader is behind it."

Dune: Part Two not only explores these heavy themes, but is also visually spectacular. Greig Fraser, who won an Oscar for cinematography for his work in

the first film, moves audiences once again. The majority of the movie takes place on spice-abundant Arrakis, and appropriately displays a dazzling palette of orange, brown and golden sand, at times warm, at times harsh. Fraser balances these expansive landscapes with intimate close-up shots of the face, so the audience feels a personal connection to the characters' emotions.

In particular, the Harkonnens' home planet, Giedi Prime, is in stark contrast to the warm desert landscape we have become accustomed to. Fraser's clever choice to use an infrared camera to capture the sequence adds a translucent and dream-like quality to human skin. This enhances Austin Butler's portrayal of Feyd-Rautha Harkonnen, Paul's antagonist, who is both sinister and captivating.

Mr. Fearon explains, "The use of shadows and camerawork is so clever — it was so saturated and had depth [...] you get this brutality, a good introduction of Feyd-Rautha in his world." Combined with Butler's magnetic performance, the atmosphere of the vast, futuristic amphitheater is truly haunting.

The utter lack of color eliminates all sense of love and joy and plunges the audience into the Harkonnens' harsh, unfeeling

world. It also serves as a reminder that our world is not far from that of *Dune*; we, too, suffer from corruption, greed, authoritarianism and political manipulation.

Also integral to the film was its fantastic score, which blended well with the grand cinematography. In both films, composer Hans Zimmer employed a wide variety of lesser-known instruments, deviating from the classical orchestral arrangements often found in other sci-fi movies' scores. Most notably, the "Gom Jabbar" theme from the first film, with its mesmerizing vocals, makes several appearances. With plenty of booming percussion and reverberating synth melodies, the score keeps the audience on its toes, though it can be too loud at times.

The two *Dune* movies are adapted from Frank Herbert's 1965 science fiction novel of the same title. For the most part, Villeneuve remained faithful to the source, but took creative liberty in some areas that would not suit an on-screen adaptation. For those familiar with the book, some adjustments may have been jarring.

Kierner explains, "Reading the book beforehand made it a little bit less enjoyable, not so much because the story was bad, but because [...] having your own artistic things you thought should be or shouldn't be put in."

Within a month of its opening, the film has grossed almost 600 million dollars worldwide, surpassing the first movie's total of 435 million. It has also taken social media platforms like *TikTok* and *Instagram* by storm. The custom American Movie Classics (AMC) popcorn bucket, modeled after a sandworm, has become the subject of many jokes and viral videos. *Saturday Night Live* even performed a popular skit featuring the popcorn bucket, starring our very own Ayo Edebiri!

The success can also be attributed to the release of the first film on streaming platforms such as *Netflix* prior to March. Kierner elaborates, "That gave a lot of people the opportunity to watch the first movie for free, as they didn't get to watch it in the cinemas, and that created a lot of new fans. The timing of that, whether it was planned or not, boosted the amount of people who wanted to see it."

Dune: Part Two is an ambitious, massive and truly epic feat of cinema. If you have not seen it yet, be sure to check it out in theaters or stream it on *Max*!

Boston's Calling!

By **Thomas Germain (II)**
& **Shirlyn Wang (IV)**

Contributing Writers

From May 24 to 26, at Harvard University's Athletic Complex in Allston, various artists of different genres will take the stage at this year's Boston Music Calling Festival. Roughly 40,000 attendees will have the chance to see a wide array of artists live, from established artists such as Reneé Rapp and Megan Thee Stallion to lesser known ones such as Cannons and Francis of Delirium. Tickets for the music festival, which can be found on their website, are still available.

The festival, which has been put on annually since 2013 (with the exception of 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic), originated as a biannual celebration in City Hall Plaza every May and September. Later, Boston Calling became a yearly celebration during Memorial Day weekend and was moved to Allston in 2016. Artists who previously performed at the festival include fun., MARINA, Kendrick Lamar,

Lorde, The 1975, Bon Iver and Eminem.

This year's headliners include Ed Sheeran and Leon Bridges (May 24), Tyler Childers, Trey Anastasio and Classic Tab (May 25) and The Killers and Hozier (May 26). Ed Sheeran is likely what people first notice when they glance at the lineup poster. Headlining day one of the festival, the English singer-songwriter is by far the most established artist at the event, having amassed over 70 million monthly listeners with hits such as "Shape of You," "Perfect" and "Thinking Out Loud."

Also performing on the first night is Renée Rapp. The American actress and musician is known for her role in the *Mean Girls* Broadway musical and 2024 film. She has gained many fans with teen and young adult audiences, with a *Saturday Night Live* performance and collaboration with Megan Thee Stallion, another artist performing at the festival. Ana Maravic (IV) comments, "I really like her confidence, especially in her interviews."

On the second night, the most notable performer is Tyler Childers, an



TimeOut

Fans of their favorite artists gather at the Harvard Athletic Complex.

artist who performs country, bluegrass and folk. For the third night, Hozier is the artist to note; best known for his 2013 hit song "Take Me to Church," he has managed to accumulate a large fan base since then. Also present on the third night is the aforementioned Megan Thee Stallion, who many know from songs such as "Savage" and "Hiss," the latter being her newest single, which debuted at number one on

the Billboard Hot 100 following a feud between her and Nicki Minaj. Another exciting artist performing on the third night is Chappell Roan, who opened for the first leg of Olivia Rodrigo's GUTS World Tour.

With a packed lineup, classic location and long weekend secured by the Boston Calling Music Festival, the only remaining question is: have you bought your tickets yet?

Spotlight on Maeve Murray (I)

By **Juliet McVay (III)**

Staff Writer

At Boston Latin School, we often see many of our teams and players awarded for significant athletic accomplishments. One such athlete is Maeve Murray (I), a captain of the girls' varsity hockey team. She recently won the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association Bruins Sportsmanship Award, which celebrates exemplary leadership and sportsmanship on and off the ice.

As a two-year captain, strong left wing and amazing teammate, Murray is incredibly deserving of this award. It is a huge honor to receive the award as it is often given to players who demonstrate responsible and respectful behavior to their teammates, coaches, referees, staff and anyone else they may encounter as an athlete.

Girls' hockey coach Olivia Collins describes Murray as "everyone's cheerleader," and that "while dealing with her own successes, she also makes sure to uplift everyone around her. Maeve's passion is infectious; she makes everyone around her want to be and do better." Clearly, Murray is not only thought of as a supportive teammate, but also as a player whose hard work inspires others around her.

Although Murray's award was earned for her sportsmanship, her hockey skills also match up. She has played hockey since she was three years old, and amazingly enough, joined the varsity hockey team when she was only in seventh grade. This season, she scored a very impressive 27 points (19 goals, 8 assists), in 24 games.

"Maeve really had a breakout season. She was absolutely exceptional," says Coach Collins. "Maeve has consistently been an asset to the team throughout her six years, but this year her contributions both on and off the ice were a huge part of why we were so successful." The combination of Murray's proficiency on the ice, in addition to the award prove her to be an incredibly well-rounded hockey player.

Murray, reflecting on her growth this season, expresses, "This season, I feel like I really broke out of my shell. I not only learned how to be a better leader but also pushed myself to be a better player and take control of the mini accomplishments on and off the ice to better myself."

Under her leadership, the girls' varsity hockey team was able to crush the competition this year with a 17-5-2 record that eventually led them to States. Although they started the season with a loss, it only fueled the team to become stronger together as their season went on. Murray explains,



"We grew as players and started to build chemistry as a team to the point where I'll never forget the bond we created."

Although Murray is uncertain where she will be next fall, she is determined to join the club hockey team wherever she lands. Regardless of where she is, we are sure that she will continue to make a huge impact on her community, just like she has at BLS.

Murray will play in the second annual A Shot For Life (ASFL) Classic, fundraising for cancer research on May 19th.

Budget Breakdown of BLS Athletics

By **Simon Hay-Sutton (III)**

Contributing Writer

From the U.S. Rowing Youth National Championships in Florida to the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) Division 2 Hockey State Tournament Final at TD Garden, the Boston Latin School athletic community excels under Boston Public Schools and Boston Latin School Association funding with a combined total nearing half a million dollars.

According to their mission statement, the BLSA ensures academic and athletic excellence through "building and maintaining relationships among alumni, families, and friends; raising funds to enhance the school's learning environment as well as Association activities; and, championing the school through thoughtful advocacy in the best interest of its students, alumni, and families." Head of School Jason Gallagher explains the funding system of the athletic programs at BLS: BPS funds the head coach positions and secures permits to Boston-owned facilities and school buses, while everything else falls on BLSA.

One drawback of BPS funding is that sports that are not recognized in the MIAA, like fencing, sailing and crew do not get any funding from BPS, leaving the cost of the head coach's salary to the BLSA. As Athletic Director Jack Owens puts it, "The district covers the funds necessary to operate, the BLSA supplies what is needed to compete in the DCL [Dual County League] and win state championships." Since BPS only subsidizes

one head coach for each sport, the burden of assistant coaches, junior varsity coaches and freshman coaches lies on BLSA and makes up the majority of the BLSA budget.

Following the cost of coaches, Gallagher states that "the next biggest part of it [the BLS athletic budget], believe it or not, is transportation. It's the buses to get to and from all of these events." The Head of School goes on to explain, "if you had tennis on the road somewhere and volleyball on the road somewhere and baseball on the road somewhere and softball on the road somewhere and you get all these buses, you have to pay for each of those buses to get to where you need to be. Boston almost never is able to provide us with the number of buses that we need." The BPS yellow bus deficiency from BPS leads to the costs being covered by BLSA for private buses, which are more costly and add to another large percentage of the holistic athletic budget. Boys' varsity soccer captain Aidan Zaphiris (I) states that the support from the athletic department "comes with field permits for Westie High, getting buses to and from games (not practice), and [practice] jerseys for players at all three levels." As many BLS athletes know, the bus shortage is very difficult for the numerous teams and programs, leading to a lack of buses to practice and irregularities when it comes to yellow school buses versus private, Crystal Transport coach buses. Several teams must travel to practice through public transportation and carpools organized by parents, which adds significant time and energy to the commute.

When asked about the budget distribution between programs, Coach Owens states, "The Athletic budget is designed to be equitable amongst all programs bearing in mind several factors including Title IX, participation numbers and trends, and equipment and infrastructure costs as it pertains to the individual programs." Title IX comes from the Education Amendments of 1972, which seeks to offer equal opportunities to all students regardless of gender by preventing discrimination in education events. As both Coach Owens and Gallagher explain, the distribution of the budget is a balancing game that is largely need-based, which means that while the budget is not split evenly, it is split equally to allow every program to benefit from the support whether that is through free city permits or renting out swimming pools from Simmons College. A common misconception throughout the school is that teams like crew, who receive less recognition, do not receive any financial support from the athletic department. Although these programs do not get any BPS assistance, the BLSA offers financial support in order to allow these teams to compete. In addition to these program necessities, teams also have the ability to request for more funds from Coach Owens in order to purchase equipment, which is then evaluated by the athletic director and presented in the budget proposal voted on by the BLSA board.

Most of the sports programs at BLS compete in the Dual County League (DCL) with the likes of Bedford High School, Con-

cord-Carlisle High School, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, Newton South High School and Westford Academy. Mr. Gallagher comments on the BLS competition, explaining that, "It's incredible what they have, Concord Carlisle has acres of space, acres of space with their own playing fields, with swimming pools, with multiple gyms, and the BLSA allows us to stay competitive with those leagues because the Boston Public Schools, while they value athletics, what we what we get from them is funding for head coaches and then help getting permits for spaces that are public."

Despite the numerous strains on athletic funding, BLS athletes are able to compete year after year with these suburban schools which have their own facilities. This ability is in part due to parents who organize program-wide associations like the Friends of Soccer and the crew team who fundraises through the yearly Ergathon. BLS athletics have had countless success like recent involvement in the MIAA State Tournament of boys' and girls' soccer, boys' basketball and girls' hockey. Additionally, the boys' track Sprint Medley Relay team finished second in their heat at the New Balance High School Indoor Nationals, the crew team placed top 20 in the U17 division of the US Rowing Youth National Championships in Florida, and the boys' hockey team became MIAA Division 2 Champions for the second time in BLS history. As the spring sports season hits off, the athletic department and BLSA will continue to provide support for sports in hopes of keeping up our success.

Boys' Hockey: The Road to Becoming State Champions



BLS boys' hockey team celebrates their state championship.

By **Julia Sax (I)**
& **Michael Tran (II)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

This year, the BLS boys' hockey team far exceeded anyone's expectations. While they got off to a rocky start during their first ten games with a 5-5 record, they rose to the challenge in the latter half of the season. They ended the year red-hot, winning eight of their last ten games.

Senior captain Matt Carrara (I) recalls one of the boys' lowest moments in the season as the team's second game against North Andover, the 11th game of the season. "We were winning 2-1 with three minutes left in the game and we ended up losing 3-2," he describes. In that game, Odhran Mullan (II), a top line forward, also suffered a devastating knee injury, and remained out for the rest of the season. Carrara and the team "knew that [they] could be a better team than what [they] had displayed up to that point in the season, [so they] worked hard to improve little by little every day in practice and it was only up from there."

The team came together at just the right time to prepare them for the tournament ahead. According to Head Coach Frank Woods, the team was extremely young this year with ten new varsity players, and the rookies needed time to get settled in. By February however, the team saw "tremendous leadership from veteran players" as well as "more consistent performances and production from some of our new players," which helped the team become the cohesive unit they proved to be in the state tournament. Starting goalie Oliver Murphy (III) notes the team's overtime win against Concord-Carlisle as a major turning point. Concord-Carlisle was ranked third in their division this year, and after winning this game, the boys won ten out of their next 11 games, giving them the confidence they needed entering the postseason.

Another key factor in this year's success was their offensive production. The number of goals the team scored each game this year allowed them to contest better ranked teams. They also had more goaltending depth, something that was lacking in previous years. Most importantly, however, was

that "this particular group was just tough to play against and would battle hard until the final whistle." There was nothing more important than the "resiliency, mental toughness and determination to win that this team had," says Coach Woods.

While Murphy notes that they are "not the most skilled team, [they] work hard every single day and that's why [they] win games."

Some, such as *Boston Herald* writer Tom Mulhern, are calling this year's team a "Cinderella Wolfpack," but their season was not without its challenges. Murphy saw many of his teammates come and go due to injuries. Some came back for the playoffs, while one was out for the last nine games of the regular season and the entirety of the postseason. He adds that although it "didn't go smoothly at first, Coach Frank Woods did a great job incorporating players into the lineup."

Coach Woods approaches every year with the mindset that it will be a competitive season, and this year was no different. The program expectation is that the boys make it to the tournament every year, and in his past 25 years coaching, they have only missed the tournament a handful of times.

From the beginning of the season, Carrara knew that "a lot of younger guys on the team [...] would have huge roles. It was nice to see all the rookies work hard everyday at practice to get better." Each and every new player played a crucial role in the team's success this season, and they were "playing [their] best hockey going into the playoffs which worked in [their] favor."

The challenges they faced during playoffs led up to the Wolfpack's decisive 4-2 championship victory. Their second-round game against Billerica Memorial High School went into overtime, creating a heartstopping thriller for players and fans alike. When the playoff pairings came out, the coaches thought they would be able to make a deep run and maybe even win it all. This overtime win against Billerica only cemented the belief that they could take home the trophy.

Of course, no season would be complete without the season-ending game, and nothing could be better than the one Latin pulled off. Down 2-0 to Tewksbury, who was ranked first in their division, the boys knew they had to step it up to come out with the win. "Ryan McHugh got [...] a huge goal to cut Tewksbury's lead in half, which gave [the team] a ton of momentum. Going into the third period down a goal, we were confident that we could come back and win," reflects Carrara.

The team did not disappoint. The boys erupted with three goals in the last five minutes of play to earn their 4-2 victory. Carrara scored the last goal of the night, taking "advantage of [the team's] momentum at the end of the game [to] extend the lead."

Murphy had eyes on the whole ice from his spot in the crease. When the final buzzer sounded, he recalls, "I knew it was over, there was nothing more to do, the journey was over. It was an overwhelming feeling of happiness, built up through weeks upon weeks of work. There is no feeling like it."

The season only ended a few weeks ago, but Coach Woods is already looking to the future. The younger players that were such a crucial part of this year's success "will be given the opportunity to step into more prominent roles on the ice, in addition to leadership roles." We are excited to see the younger players continue the Wolfpack's success next year as the team's five seniors say their goodbyes.

Star Studded Hockey All-Star Games

By **Dimitra Minasidis (III)**
Staff Writer

Every year, the senior hockey players with the best stats across every team in the division are chosen by a congregation of coaches to play in one final showdown: The Hockey Senior All-Star Games.

Two games took place on March 24, with captains Aidan Fitzpatrick (I) and Matt Carrara (I) representing the Boston Latin School hockey team in the Massachusetts State Hockey Coaches Association (MSHCA) Hockey Night in Boston (HNIB) Boys Game. Following their game was the Girls Game which saw captains Maeve Murray (I) and Maeve Greeley (I) compete for the Wolfpack. On March 30, another senior boys' captain Bobby Banks (I) played in the CT-MA Border Challenge All-Star Game.

Fitzpatrick ended off the season with 13 goals and 24 assists for a total of 37 points. Carrara had 21 goals and 16 assists, also for a total of 37 points. The two have been friends and teammates for 12 years, playing on the School's team together for four.

Fitzpatrick and Carrara each played for the South team along with students from South Shore teams such as Braintree, Marshfield, Hingham, Catholic Memorial and Xaverian. The opposing North team consisted of players from St. John's Prep,

Tewksbury, Concord-Carlisle, Winchester and others.

Despite having defeated Tewksbury at nationals and Concord-Carlisle in the third round of playoffs, Fitzpatrick notes that there was no hostility in playing against captains from those teams. In fact, he says, "they were congratulatory towards us and there was lots of mutual respect." As the game concluded, the South Team won the game 8-7 with both Fitzpatrick and Carrara individually scoring two points.

It took time to adjust to these new teams. In the Boys Senior HNIB All-Star Hockey Game, the South team ended the first half with a 4-1 deficit. Nevertheless persevering, they outscored them 7-3 the rest of the game. Fitzpatrick used the term "settle in" when describing the change that occurred between the team members that allowed them to come out victorious.

Impressively, Murray and Greeley played for the North Team in Winchester, winning 4-3 against the South Team. Greeley, having played in the HNIB Girls Game, also remarks on the adjustment players made: "It was a little challenging to play with girls I'd never played with before and only played against." Regardless, Greeley believes it gave her a different perspective on the girls she had been playing against all year, seeing them as "familiar faces rather than old enemies."



Aidan Fitzpatrick (I) (center) competes in the Coaches All-Star Game.

Banks' game resulted in an overtime 6-5 win over teams from Connecticut. This MA-CT border challenge instills a sense of pride in players representing their states and is a big motivator for performing well in this game. Banks experienced the same challenge as Fitzpatrick and Greeley, mentioning how it "took a few minutes to get used to [...] but [they] figured it out quickly [as they] were all chosen for [their] talent and how

well [they] work with [their] teams during the season."

The Senior Hockey All-Star Games were a chance for athletes to showcase their skills. Each person chosen displayed hard work throughout the entire season and were able to play without any pressure. Greeley reflects on the experience, saying it was a "perfect opportunity to get recognized by college coaches."

All Risk, No Reward? The Rise of Sports Gambling

By **Trevor Gracombe (III)**

Contributing Writer

This past February, one in six American adults placed bets on the Super Bowl, wagering a whopping total of 23 billion dollars — more than the gross domestic product of countries like Belize and Nicaragua. This number increased 35 percent since last year's Super Bowl, a massive spike in just one year. Believe it or not, this isn't even the biggest gambling day of the year in America. That title goes to the first day of March Madness, the 64-team college basketball tournament.

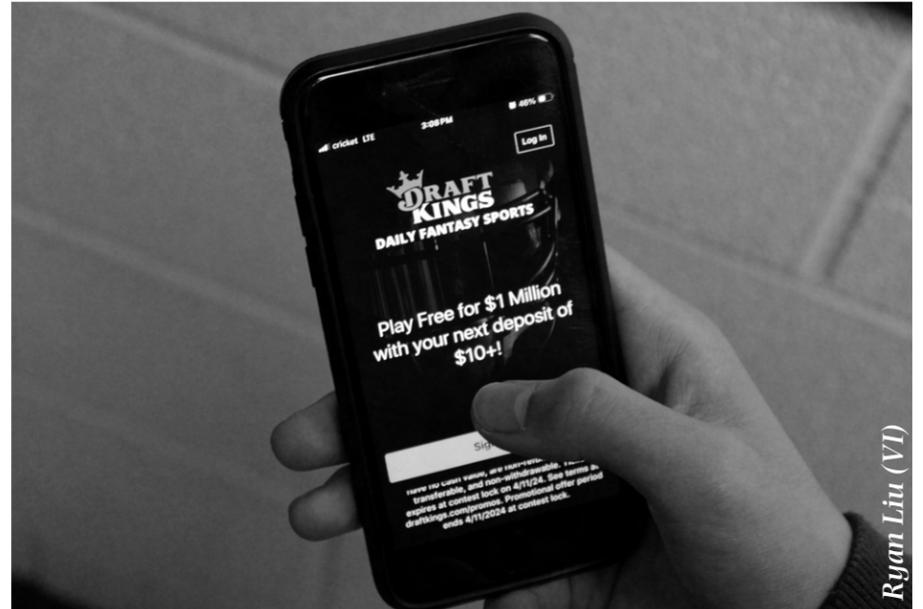
Gambling has been on the rise since 2018, when the Supreme Court struck down the federal ban on sports gambling. Now, it is legal to place bets online in 38 states, including Massachusetts. According to S&P Global, Americans exhausted a huge 120 billion dollars on sports alone last year. This number is up 27.5 percent from 2022. If this trend continues, gambling will soon become a trillion-dollar industry.

Gambling is historically troublesome in the sports scene. One of the most famous examples of sports betting involves the 1919 Chicago White Sox, nicknamed the Chicago Black Sox. The team accepted bribes from bettors who had wagered so much money on the series that bribing the entire team to lose the games would still make them money. The scheme was eventually discovered, and it is remembered as a dark moment in the history of baseball.

Professional players are still found guilty of taking bribes to this day. Professional soccer player Ivan Toney, a Brentford star and a former player of the English national team, recently finished his ten-month suspension. He has 232 charges of illegal bets on both himself and other players in the league. Likewise, Italian midfielder Sandro Tonali is currently serving a ban because of gambling, and other Italian national team members are currently being investigated.

In the National Basketball Association, Jontay Porter of the Toronto Raptors is also currently under investigation for gambling, due to suspicious activity in his games potentially being tied to high value wagers being made. Reggie Hesselbein (III), who follows both professional soccer and basketball, says, “[Gambling] makes [me] question if the players are playing at their fullest [and I] hope that [athletes involved in sports betting] can get professional help and all sports players can stay out of gambling, because it will ruin the game for players and the fans.”

Some argue that the fast growth of gambling is not an issue. Occasional gambling can be fun, and many people don't expect to get hooked. Gambling, however, should be taken with a grain of salt since it is highly addictive. Fun wagers can turn into an addiction very quickly, and many online gambling apps are trying to hook new bettors. About one percent of Americans, or 3.5 million people are affected by gambling addictions, according to Yale Medicine.



Ryan Liu (VI)

High schoolers begin to gamble on sports games.

Max Ngonga (III) remarks, “[I believe people are drawn to sports betting because] they are looking for easy ways to make money. They think they know a lot about sports and resort to sports betting.”

With online gambling growing in popularity, the industry has started to target young people, especially high schoolers. This helps explain rising rates—studies have shown that young men are currently most prone to gambling.

When asked about its rise in popularity among high schoolers, Markelos Papa (II)

says, “I think that kids are influenced very easily by what they are presented with on social media and are also the age group which probably watches the most amount of sports. High schoolers also have this idea of themselves that they can do anything, so when it comes to sports betting, they won't think twice about it.”

Remember that even if you win at first, getting hooked on gambling is often easier than you may expect. If you need help managing a gambling addiction, call 1-800-GAMBLER.

Do Organized Sports Make Athletes Lose Their Passion?



Vincent Liang (IV)

Student dejected after bad performance during practice.

By **Biya Brook (I)**
& **Luke Fredericks (I)**

Contributing Writers

Organized sports can offer a host of benefits: teamwork, discipline, enjoyment and a platform to showcase talent. They can also, however, introduce challenges that often overshadow the initial joy that comes with playing. Once the focus shifts from personal enjoyment to external validation measured in wins, losses or statistics, some athletes find it difficult to maintain the same delight and devotion they once had for their sport.

One of the core issues athletes face is the pressure to perform well. Boston Latin School AP Psychology teacher Mr. Michael Galego shares, “many studies have demon-

strated that an over emphasis on external motives like winning, awards or scholarships may undermine an individual's intrinsic motivation for an activity. Many talented athletes often lose their motivation to excel at a sport even at the professional level.”

With organized sports, the stakes are perceptibly higher. Unlike a friendly backyard game of baseball, at a certain level, an organized game has something riding on it. Whether it is securing a win for the hometown crowd or clinching a spot in the state tournament, these events build pressure. For a lot of athletes, this pressure is a motivator, pushing them to play at their highest level. On the other hand, some view it as a burden, transforming their beloved sport from a source of joy into stress. The thrill of scoring a goal, striking out a batter or serv-

ing an ace becomes entangled with the fear of failure and not living up to expectations.

The culture surrounding this level of sports often emphasizes success as the ultimate goal, sometimes at the expense of physical health. Almost all high school varsity sports have practices everyday, tiring the bodies of student-athletes. Aaron Tran (I), a member of the basketball team, shares, “I remember not wanting to go to practices and being thankful for days off.” With an environment so cultivated on winning, athletes do everything they can to stay on the field.

Katie Martin (I) has also experienced the effects of this culture. As a swimmer, Martin's “goal was to just get in the pool, make the cut,” regardless of the punishment it would have on her body. Martin believes that this mindset has had “long-

term consequences,” including a pulled-back muscle which has impacted her for over two years. These persistent injuries can have potentially harmful psychological effects on an athlete, including “stress, anxiety [and] a lack of motivation for their sport,” according to Joanne Barker, Senior Writer from Boston Children's Hospital. For many, it is these injuries acquired from organized sports that makes them throw in the towel for athletics as a whole.

Another danger in this results-driven environment is when teams don't win. In this situation, losing can feel like a personal failure for each of the players, rather than just a part of the process. This perception can be extremely damaging to young athletes, who begin to equate their “athletic performance to feelings of self-worth,” according to Adrienne Harry, a writer for the University of Toronto Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education.

So, how can organized sports maintain a competitive environment while preserving the passion of these athletes? Creating a culture that values self-improvement and the love for the game just as much as winning is an important factor. Additionally, coaches, parents, organizations and even the athletes themselves must come together to celebrate the effort put in each day in order to participate in this world of athletics.

As for the athletes who have lost some fire, it is crucial for them to rekindle that passion by engaging in their sport outside the competitive environment. Whether it is heading down to the local recreational center, playing a pressureless game of pickup, going to the driving range with friends or playing some volleyball on the beach, these events all make sports worthwhile again. Whatever their sport offers, it is important for athletes to experience the ways they fell love with the game in the first place, without the strain of winning attached.

Ultimately, the goal of organized sports should not be for programs to win at the cost of the athletes losing their love for the game. If a balance between passion and competition is created, athletics are an incredible vehicle for personal development, team bonding and emotional well-being.

Look Good, Feel Good, Play Good



Sha'carri Richardson competes in the 2023 World Championships.

**By Alice Fragasso (III)
& Eliza Knight Bairstow (III)**

Contributing Writers

Gender stereotypes are apparent in schools, industries, workplaces and even on the playing field. Female athletes at Boston Latin School are not immune to feeling as though they need to look a certain way when they are playing sports.

Benny Pierre Louis (II), a star

hurdler and long jumper on the BLS track and field team is a point and case. "One of the most prominent beauty standards I see in track and field is always having a good hair day." She says, "For all women, it's expected that when we run, our hair should be flowing in the wind and we should look at ease, but in reality, we are in a physically taxing situation where our hair is the last thing we are worried about."

Pierre Louis is one of many female athletes who chooses to wear

makeup and get her hair done before competitions. These cosmetics are not to adhere to beauty standards or attract the male gaze, rather, she applies makeup before races to make herself feel powerful.

Despite the many strides of 21st-century feminism, beauty standards in sports — the expectation that women must look beautiful even in the heat of competition — remain as a barrier for female athletes.

What women look like when they're playing their sport routinely overshadows their ability on the field or court. Women feel pressure to be feminine and beautiful while also being athletic and strong. In an *ESPNW* survey of 201 Division I Female Collegiate Athletes, 68 percent reported feeling a pressure to be pretty and 48 percent wear makeup when they compete.

The sports world has several high-profile women who glam up before they compete due to the many standards surrounding women in the sports industry. Athletes such as Sha'Carri Richardson, Angel Reese and Venus Williams all use their appearance as a means of personal expression, however, their efforts to beautify themselves are often criticized and perceived as unnecessary, overshadowing their contributions to their teams.

BLS track coach Emanuel Kalamu, a former track and field collegiate

athlete himself, discusses the domination Sha'Carri Richardson displays on the track. He says, "I believe that through her self-expression, she has gained confidence as a sprinter that pushes her through races and puts her on top." Despite Richardson's success, her exuberant appearance often causes people to view with disdain.

As a coach in a sport that is almost completely individual, Kalamu also believes that "it's important to differentiate yourself from the crowd. The best way to do so is by creating a persona. A way to be identified and stick out. In an individual sport, you are performing for the crowd." This presents contrasting social constructs that confine female athletes.

Sophia Ginsburg (II), a three-sport varsity athlete, highlights the double standard for women in sports by saying, "In the athletic world, I feel like it is usually frowned upon for women and girls to wear too much makeup while they are playing a sport."

Women and girls, even in high school, are held to impossible standards. While competing in sports they are expected to look "pretty" and "interesting." However, they are also expected to prioritize their performance and contribution to the team over their looks. In brief, no matter which choice female athletes make, they will always face some form of criticism.

Spring Sports Updates

**By Rachel Li (III),
Elizabeth Noronha (III)
& Benjamin Ahumada (VI)**

Assistant Editor and Contributing Writers

Baseball

This season, the Boston Latin School baseball team is looking to defend their hard earned championship win from last year. Their focus is extremely simple: to win games. Charlie George (I) says, "Part of the reason we play baseball is to exercise and make friends, but the only real objective we have is to win games and win them by as much as possible. Results matter, and when it comes down to it, I want to say that we won the state championship or did everything possible in an effort to do so." As it turns out, they are pretty darn good at doing just that. Last year, they ranked in the top 100 in Massachusetts and won the DCL Foley Division championship. Despite their early exit last year in the Division 1 State Championship, August Groh (II) states: "We will [make the playoffs] again this year, however we will make a deeper run and hopefully win a Division One state title."

Crew

Crew's first race of the spring season takes place on the weekend of April 14, the crew team has been training hard for this year's New England Interscholastic Rowing Association competition. After sending two boats to the USRowing Youth National Championships last year, the crew team has been focusing on technique this season. They hope to do better than last season and send even more boats to the competition in June. The team acquired new boats this spring and will hold a boat christening ceremony on April 14, before the Salvo Cup race. One of the new boats for the girls' team will be named after former Head of School Rachel Skerritt. Colin Keleher (I) says that a large part of being on the team is "being a leader even though you aren't a captain," since teamwork is key to winning the races. The team looks forward to using the new boats and getting faster this season.

Lacrosse

After the girls' varsity lacrosse team launched their spring season with a 14-7 win against Quincy High School on March 28, they are looking forward to a packed schedule this season. On April 4, they played in their first Dual County League (DCL) game against Concord-Carlisle, and defense starter Shannon Mullaney (II) notes, "So far, our team has shown lots of grit and hard work, and our practices have had a really positive and productive atmosphere." The team hopes to follow last year's postseason run, where they made it to the second rounds of states, with another successful season of enthusiasm and competition.

The boys' lacrosse team hopes to come back stronger than ever this season and wishes to advance to states after qualifying for the first time in program history last year. They are expecting to be very competitive in the DCL this year, especially with their undeniable chemistry and talent. Although down 11 seniors from last year, Maxwell Howard (II) says, "We're focused on getting better every time we step on the field, and with our talent, I am confident it won't be as big a problem as it may seem." They played their first game on April 3 at Weymouth High School, and played Nantucket High School on April 6, their first time playing an "overseas" team.

Boys' Volleyball

After a year of roster changes, the boys' volleyball team is looking to return again to make a run through the DCL. Last year, the volleyball team was held back by unfortunate injuries sustained by key players and the loss of many graduated seniors, but this year, they are not holding back. Alex Yu (I) says, "As a team, our goal is to definitely make a run in the playoffs. We think that we can definitely compete in the DCL as one of the top teams this year." This season, they have already exceeded expectations, going 5-1 in the Quincy Jamboree, despite facing competitive teams such as Boston Latin Academy, North Quincy, Malden and Braintree. Make sure to catch them on April 21 in the Upper Gym where they will face Newton South, a strong contender in the DCL.

Tennis

The girls' tennis team is starting the spring season off with high hopes for their upcoming matches. After a very successful season last year, the tennis team is determined to win this year's Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association's State Tournament (MIAA). Varsity girls' tennis player Halina Nguyen (III) says, "I feel like I've definitely improved from last season." Having been on the team for a number of years, she knows that they work well together. They are prepared to take on other competitive schools and have been practicing regularly for four days each week. Eager to compete again, Nguyen ends with, "I look forward to playing with the team and the experience that comes with playing a school sport."

The boys' tennis team hopes to continue their streak at MIAA States after consistently qualifying the past few years. They currently have two varsity spots open, and are confident that members from the Junior Varsity team can rise to the occasion. Andrew Xue (II), a member of the team, remarks that the team is "looking forward to improving [their] tennis, particularly teamwork, strategy, technique and mental game."

Outdoor Track

The track and field team has been practicing hard two hours a day — separating sprinters and distance runners for different activities— to prepare for a busy season. Sprinters work on technique while distance runners focus on endurance. Hoping to have multiple runners compete in the DCL meets, girls' co-captains Rebecca Hein (I) and Meera Murthy (I) say that "the main goal is to build a solid base of athletes, especially younger athletes." They also hope for more team members to qualify for the various championships this season. The team is currently understaffed, which means that the captains have been really stepping up this season. Thankfully, the team members have maintained a positive attitude despite the recent cold weather. Leaving behind the team as seniors will be sad, but Murthy says she wants to "end the track season on a positive note."

Softball

The softball team is already poised to strike. Coming off of a year where they made it to states and executed a smooth transition with their new coach, they are thriving like never before. They are still considering this year as a transition period, however. Longtime varsity player Christina George (II) explains, "We definitely want to win, but I think this season is a season of growth and I think we need to mold as a team." This year, after having lost almost all of their starting lineup, they are looking towards a big adjustment and the younger players will need to step into the shoes of their graduated seniors. "There's no telling how we will do, but I think we can do very well with a younger team. We are going to adapt to changes on and off the field," says George. Their season started on April 1 against Archbishop Williams at Clemente Field.

Sailing

As the sailing team gets back into their groove, they look forward to another exciting season following last year's success. They have been training hard with the goal of defending their title as Massachusetts Bay Sailing League (MBL) Division B Team Racing Champions, and they also hope to be a powerful competitor in the Interscholastic Sailing Association's Massachusetts State Championship Regatta, where they placed fourth last season in Division A. Varsity captains Caleb Kohn (II) and Dorothy Russell (I) say that, "We have been very efficient and focused during our practices, and we can tell this season will have many successes." They began their season on March 30 with the Courageous Keelboat Kickoff and look forward to many MBL team races as well as a medley of important regattas at the end of May. With the wind at their backs, they set sail into the unknown waters of this season, ready to seize every opportunity and leave a mark on the seascape of competitive sailing.