



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL

## BLS Budget Breaks Bank

By **Ross Wilson (III)**  
& **Abrielle Huang (VI)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

The School Site Council voted on January 24 to approve the Boston Latin School budget for the fiscal year of 2025. The operating budget will be less than 20 million dollars, approximately 900 thousand dollars less than the previous fiscal year.

The decrease comes after the elimination of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding and grant money to BLS, which, when added to the reduction by Boston Public Schools, totals a deficit of over a million dollars. ESSER funding was the emergency pandemic funds provided by the federal government to support the recovery from COVID-19. This funding went mostly to one-time investments, like buying new materials, but also provided some funding to hire new staff.

In addition to the loss of ESSER funding, the state eliminated all grant money given to BLS, including Title I funding, because the school did not meet the required threshold for the funds. To be provided the grants, a school must have a student body that is at least 35 percent "low-income," and BLS only has 31 percent of students that fit such a description.

Head of School Jason Gallagher explains, "Having that [ESSER], plus Title I, plus the reduction that BPS made, add up into the same year, that's what makes it really challenging this year."

All other funds have seen little to no change from the prior year, with the base

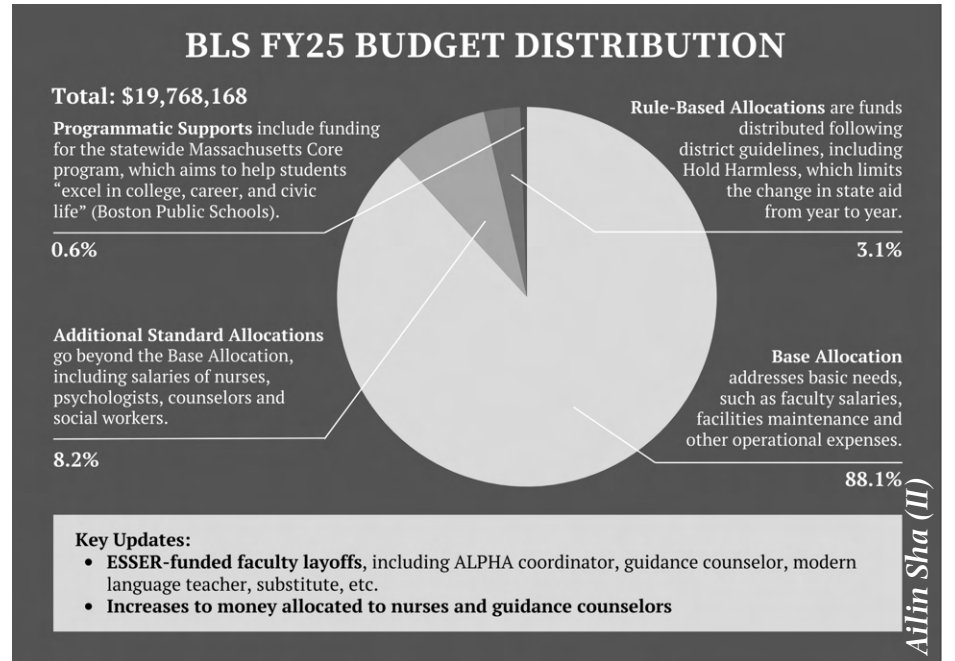
allocation rolling over from the 2024 fiscal year. This is due to the district moving to the reimagined budget process from the weighted student formula. Those funds total to over 17 million dollars and make up the significant majority of the funds that make up the BLS budget.

Additional money is being added to the upcoming year's budget for health related services, including small increases to money allocated to nurses and guidance counselors. BLS is also adding another coordinator to come into the school one day a week.

Due to the budget deficit, the School is required to lay off some staff members whose salaries cannot be covered without the additional ESSER funding. These positions include a seventh-grade math support teacher, a community field coordinator, an ALPHA coordinator, a cluster substitute, a guidance counselor and a modern language teacher. A part-time music teacher position that was funded by ESSER will be removed as well.

These staffing changes are also due to BPS requiring schools to "consolidate classrooms that are under enrolled to reinvest those dollars." In order to meet those requirements the administration highlighted several areas in the school that could be cut down. Even with the changes, no courses will be removed from the school and students will still have every opportunity provided by BLS.

BLS AP Economics teacher and Boston Teachers Union representative Mr. Patrick Boor explains, "The goal is basically to provide the same support to students, but obviously this is not ideal because teachers are what make a school and they play an invaluable role. So I think that's what makes these



decisions very difficult."

The process of approving the budget involved Gallagher forming and presenting the budget to the School Site Council and then attending Probable Organization with the district on January 29. The vote on approving the budget by the School Site Council was not unanimous, however, with two teachers voting to reject the budget.

Co-chair of the School Site Council Magda Hernandez (P'22, '25) shares, "The role of site council is not to reject the budget. We don't have that authority. Where we can make everyone's voices heard is by commenting on the budget and allowing people to voice their concerns."

These cuts come as a result of a proposal by BPS to close up to half of schools

in order to consolidate its classrooms due to overall enrollment steadily declining since 2006. With this decline, BPS has mandated that all schools reduce staffing by at least one full-time staff member, though there is no word on whether BPS central office will reduce staff due to the budget cuts.

Gallagher sums up the situation: "This is not something that we want to do, the staff who we will be losing are dedicated to our school, they've added a lot to us over the last couple of years and they're really valuable people. But when you have a budget and you lose a million dollars, you can't keep everything, and that's the hardest part of the job."

## Mayor Wu Lays Out New Plans for BPS

### UPDATES FOR BLS STUDENTS, FROM THE MAYOR AND THE SCHOOL

- On the first and second Sunday of each month, BPS families get free admission to:
  - Museum of Fine Arts
  - Institute of Contemporary Art
  - Museum of Science
  - Boston Children's Museum
  - New England Aquarium
  - Franklin Park Zoo
- Plans for White Stadium to house BPS sports programs by 2026
- Free NYTimes subscription for BLS students at [bit.ly/BLSstudentNYT](http://bit.ly/BLSstudentNYT)

By **Silas Rosenberger (V)**  
& **Meilin Sha (V)**

Contributing Writers

On January 9, Mayor Michelle Wu introduced new plans in her annual State of the City Address regarding her vision for the Boston Public Schools community.

In her speech, Mayor Wu expressed the importance of academic support for all youth, drawing from her own experiences. "As a mom — and a BPS parent — I know that to truly be the best city for every family, we have to give our young people the world [...] to make [BPS] the first choice for every family in Boston, with world-class spaces for learning and the best education on earth,"

she says.

In order to achieve these goals, BPS has several major projects currently in progress, which aim to solve a variety of issues within the community. New developments for BPS include adding 50 school buses, renovating facilities and expanding on the "learn and earn" program that helps students secure summer jobs.

Lillian Nguyen (IV) remarks, "The plans give more students access to efficient transport that they may not have had before, access to a better education and even set them up for a better future."

The newly renovated White Stadium, for example, will host the National Women's Soccer League in 2026, becoming the first stadium in the nation to also co-house school athletics programs. Such opportunities will benefit students around the city by creating a more welcoming space.

Maya Koreth (II), a member of the Mayor's Youth Council, states, "I believe that it will be a great step forward in not only giving 'quality education' to select schools, but also [...] schools in BPS that have historically gone underfunded. It would be great if, in line with Mayor Wu's plans, more students can be exposed to [...] opportunities which align with their interests."

Furthermore, Mayor Wu plans to bring early college and career learning to high school students by increasing access to relevant coursework and resources. Select high schools are also partnering with colleges and institutions to provide collegiate and career-related learning.

Seren Banner-Goodspeed (V) shares,

"I think it's really important that they're also making the integration between college and high school more seamless because I don't think all schools did that. [...] It's really important to be able to get there."

Partnerships with colleges and institutions help students become better prepared for the future, assisting them in choosing their potential majors and careers. Boston Latin School guidance counselor Ms. Andrea Encarnacao remarks, "I think that it is huge to connect Boston Public Schools with those opportunities for [their future]."

In addition to academic and extra-curricular programs, Mayor Wu also announced plans to establish public housing units, protect families from getting displaced and launch a more accessible childcare program, ensuring that citizens of Boston are supported in their personal lives.

Safe and affordable housing can affect academic success in young students. Remarking on the benefits of support outside school, Banner-Goodspeed explains, "To be able to learn productively and well, you need to have a safe and healthy environment."

With all the new updates, Mayor Wu is striving to make Boston "a true home" for young students. Koreth remarks, "I believe that connecting students with resources outside of the school [...] and other student-led organizations that work for the good of BPS students would be a great way for students to not only address creating a more resourceful space, but also to be an actual part of the process."


### NEWS

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## EDITORS' NOTE



Dear Reader,

We are addressing the feedback, concerns and Letters to the Editor we received about the content, layout and placement of our spread on Israel-Gaza in the *Argo's* November Issue.

We apologize to the Islamic Society Boston Latin and the Jewish Culture Club for conflating the letter of unity with the headline "War and Genocide Break Out in Gaza" and misrepresenting the purpose of the letter. Additionally, the headline should have been written as an editorial and with an accompanying article, not as a part of the News section.

To be clear, this Editors' Note is not to say that the words of the headline lack validity. That is a discussion left up to our readers.

As news journalists, it is our duty to remain objective and present you with the facts. It is our duty to aid in the creation and development of informed citizens. It is then your duty to take what you are presented with and ask questions, research and read as broadly as possible from a variety of literary and media sources. Be aware of the human tendency to only consume information that is fitting with one's existing beliefs. Nurture an open and empathetic mind. Only then can you form your own educated opinions to express, whether through discussion, advocacy or collective action, if you see it as such.

In the wake of this, we reaffirm our newspaper's commitment to fair and objective journalism. We have implemented new processes and policies to ensure that the *Argo* strives to the highest standards of journalistic quality.

So, as you flip through this issue of the *Argo*, remember that the words on these pages are not the end of the conversation, but rather, only the beginning of one.

Joanna Lin and Jenny Chen

## THE ARGO IS DIGITAL!

All articles and content of the *Argo* can be found on the website  
[bbsargo.org](http://bbsargo.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.



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# Israel-Palestine Course Engages Students



Students read survivor accounts and *The Lemon Tree*.

By **Olivia Chen (IV)**  
& **Amanda Ajdini (II)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Starting in late December, several students in Classes I to III have been participating in the W block elective course concerning the history of Israel and Palestine, taught by former Boston Latin School Facing History and Ourselves teacher Ms. Judi Freeman and alumna Ms. Janna Ramadan ('18).

The primary goal of the course is to provide students with more historical and accurate information about the context surrounding the Israel-Gaza War, aside from any information that students have received through various social media platforms. This elective was offered to upperclassmen who were interested in this topic and willing to give up their W blocks for seven weeks until the end of February.

Beginning in October, tensions heightened in the Middle East region due to attacks on Israel by the Palestinian militant group Hamas and continual retaliation by the Israeli Defense Forces. As a result, many students became more aware of the issue and more involved in activism around

it. Many student advocates wanted administrators to address the situation, so the school made efforts to discuss and inform students about the issue.

The initial idea for this course came from a meeting between Ms. Freeman and Head of School Jason Gallagher around Thanksgiving. Ms. Freeman says, "I think [Head of School Gallagher] was looking for advice as to what to do because he pretty quickly realized that the history department did not really teach about Israel-Palestine in a contemporary sense."

While planning and teaching this course, Ms. Freeman is joined by a former student of hers, Ramadan, who currently studies at the University of Cambridge. Ramadan is Palestinian-American herself and has focused heavily on Palestine's history, both academically at Harvard University, and on her own time.

The class structure is less restrictive and largely driven by the students. Ms. Freeman remarks, "[In] the very first class, all we did was get students to do a brain dump of all the questions they had, and we use those questions as the basis of every single class."

The elective provides students with a safe space to open up and ask

questions to deepen their understanding. Along with the class period they have during W block, Ms. Freeman offers office hours during lunch periods each Wednesday, which gives students more time to talk about concepts they are confused about.

Students taking this course believe that it has deepened their understanding of not only modern aspects of the conflict but also older history prior to the 21st century. Students also appreciate the way the course presents facts through a humanitarian lens. Zoe Fulton (I) states, "The class has done a good job of portraying the complexities of the conflict and bringing it back to people who are actually experiencing everything."

Many students have found that their participation in this course has helped them make better-informed decisions when it comes to advocacy and their involvement in activism related to this issue. It has also led them to seek out more information about the conflict and think about possible solutions and diplomacy efforts in the future.

Ms. Freeman and her students have faced various challenges. While planning the course, teachers and administrators had difficulty finding a room to host classes, eventually landing on the Schwabel Center.

In class, another challenge was finding sources with the least bias. Similarly, some students found it challenging to put aside personal prejudices or beliefs while examining the conflict from a factual and historical perspective.

In February, the whole class will engage in a day-long event with several speakers, films and long discussions. The planning is still in progress, and there will be a meeting soon to discuss specifics.

Looking to the future, students currently participating in this elective wish to open up the opportunity to all students, not just those in Classes I to III. Rama Bah (I) remarks, "I think it's never too early to start learning about history and ongoing conflicts because we're all living through it."

The Argo Asks:  
Boston Youth Poet Laureate  
**Parker-Vincent Alva (III)**



By **Ross Wilson (III)**

Staff Writer

**Q: What is the job of the Youth Poet Laureate?**

A: The Youth Poet Laureate as it is described to me is a ceremonial position within the City of Boston's government to elevate the status of poetry in the city and just in the state of Massachusetts as a whole. I'll be able to publish a book and that will get read in all the library systems. I'll work a lot with younger kids and teenagers as well as doing writing workshops and other things around schools. I'll be the keynote speaker at some events with the mayor. It's really just about raising the status of poetry and about literature in the public and the government as a whole.

**Q: Why did you want this position?**

A: It was just something that was very interesting to me and just felt like a natural progression of what I wanted. The idea that I could publish a book was obviously very appealing to me as I want to be published in the future and I want to do this for my job. But it was also about connecting more with teenagers and kids and adults who also were writers or wanted to be writers and had a similar passion to me. And it was a position I found particularly interesting because I was someone who didn't like poetry or writing at all until eighth grade. I really enjoy the idea of making poetry and literature more exciting for kids that were my age so they didn't have to hate it at first like I did.

**Q: How do you plan to connect with the youth of Boston through this position?**

A: I have a lot of ideas. I'm pretty sure I'm going to overhaul the curriculum that we teach creative writing in now in elementary schools and maybe middle schools. I'm going to organize a lot of workshops or library programming, where people can go to free writing workshops. There could also be a spotlight on certain poetry books or other creative writing books and materials. I would want to get out there and go to different neighborhoods and connect with those kids. Go to elementary schools and talk with kids who are younger than me and know what people want and are excited about for how they want to learn about creative writing themselves.

**Q: What got you interested in poetry and applying it in this way?**

A: I was never really interested in poetry at all until seventh or eighth grade, but it started because my friend was a songwriter. Oftentimes, she would send me her songs and I would read them. We would talk about them, so I started writing songs as well. They started evolving out of songs and more into poetry and I started realizing that it could be interesting or exciting to write something besides fiction or songs. Poetry is such an interesting medium and genre that you can do anything with, so as I started exploring more of what I could write, I moved very far into poetry and away from everything else. Once you get so deeply into it, it's just exciting to see what else you can do with your words. And there are so many opportunities to open up when you are very passionate about one thing.

*This interview was edited for length and clarity.*

BUDGET, CONT.

# Special Education Expands at BLS

By **Gabrielle Jang (V)**

Contributing Writer

Boston Latin School's special education department is currently expanding with many goals in mind, ultimately hoping to better serve the many middle and high school students who use its programs.

The department consists of 13 categories, including the learning center, physical therapy, inclusion system and reading and writing support. The three biggest departments are health, specific learning disabilities and autism.

There are different ways special education works at BLS. BLS special education teacher Mr. Phi Tran explains, "Teachers may pull students out of the classrooms of specials such as a study, gym, theater or music to give extra guidance around executive functioning, which is like organizing planning." After spending some time in the program, students and their parents attend a meeting with the teachers to talk about their progress.

The greatest differences between the middle and high school departments

relate to the learning center, where students in the program work on and receive help with their schoolwork. Since all students in the special education department are in different grade levels and take different classes, what each student learns will differ. Another difference between the middle school and high school departments is the cluster system, which is exclusive to seventh and eighth grade. High school, meanwhile, entails many electives and varied class schedules that may make it more difficult for the department to coordinate with students.

After the pandemic, the special education department expanded because of the increased need for mental and behavioral health services. BLS special education coordinator Ms. Daila Gonzalez shares, "We also had a number of students who also started getting counseling [and] short-term counseling which would be anywhere between two to three months."

The number of special education faculty members has increased accordingly. There was previously only one, but, currently, 12 faculty members make up this department.

Special education teachers recognize and appreciate the benefits that the department's expansion brought to students. Mr. Tran remarks, "[Special education helps students] not be so stressed out at school and get their academics up, but also have an emotionally healthy and happy time at BLS. So that's how it would help the school and it's really important to realize it's not just about students with disabilities but it's about the students who require extra support."

Following the pandemic, however, and due to budget cuts, special education teacher Ms. Gina Sedita notes that the further expansion of the department will face challenges.

Regarding the new BLS budget for the upcoming fiscal year of 2025, Ms. Gonzalez concludes, "The formula change will not impact the budget for next school year and as of right now, the impact is not at the loss of special education staff. The budget cuts, however, will impact the department in that we may have an increase in students going through the evaluation process if the cuts impact the interventions and supports students are able to access outside of special education."

# FAFSA Delays Frustrate Students



Students struggle to meet FAFSA deadlines because of the delay.

**By Hashi Abdulle (III)  
& David Wang (V)**

*Contributing Writers*

The new simplified Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form was released late for the 2024-2025 academic year, causing difficulties for seniors and other graduates applying for financial aid for college.

The FAFSA is a government-run appli-

cation for need-based federal aid in the form of grants, loans and work-study jobs to help students cover costs of college or higher education.

In the past several years, applications opened on October 1 and typically took around an hour or more to fill out. For this year's students, however, the form opened on December 31 due to a streamlined redesign. Christina Nguyen (I) states that the new ver-

sion "definitely takes a lot less time."

The new system also calculates aid differently. Boston Latin School College and Career Advisor Ms. Melissa Kanakry explains, "With this simplification, 78 percent of students will have a lowered Student Aid Index (SAI). Having a lower SAI means there is more potential for more money to be awarded to the student. So around 80 percent of students will get awarded more money."

These new changes, however, require major upheavals to the backend technology of the online form, resulting in constant maintenance and major bugs. Constant site crashes make this issue even more problematic for students working on the application.

These technical difficulties are due to legal issues. BLS Schawbel College Resource Center Director Ms. Chloe Sigillito explains, "Releasing it on New Year's Eve, even if it wasn't fully ready yet, was the last legally allowed date. [It] was rolled out before all bugs could be fixed."

When the FAFSA was finally released, the U.S. Department of Education implemented a "soft launch" system. The site periodically switches between available and unavailable to allow for more maintenance and updates. Some people also have to wait in an online waiting room before accessing the application in order to control the volume of site visitors and prevent malfunctions.

There have been worries surrounding

the delay because it may impact the number of students completing the FAFSA form, affecting students' financial aid eligibility and dissuading students from attending college due to the cost. According to *Forbes*, "Advocates have also been pushing states and colleges to extend their financial aid priority deadlines to ensure that students are not unfairly penalized by the FAFSA opening delay."

For some seniors, the delay was a source of worry. Jialin Chen (I) shares, "The uncertainty of not knowing the release date made it feel like a waiting game, [which] added unnecessary stress. That was my [biggest] issue with it — that you're waiting and waiting and waiting."

Despite the initial technical difficulties, the simplified FAFSA has the potential to make the financial aid process easier for prospective students. With fewer questions and the option to link tax information from the IRS directly, the time it takes to fill out the forms and potential for errors is minimized. Ms. Kanakry concludes, "All future [seniors] will benefit from this better FAFSA year over year. The long-term benefits are going to be worth it."

Students are welcome to meet with Ms. Sigillito and Ms. Kanakry in the Schawbel Center to guide them through any challenges. The Junior Forum and Financial Aid Night events also provide juniors with information regarding financial aid, applications and scholarships.

# #BlackAtBLS, Then and Now

**By Alex Chan (III)  
& Sarah Jang (V)**

*Contributing Writers*

During Black History Month, Boston Latin School Black Leaders Aspiring for Change and Knowledge (B.L.A.C.K.) will be running schoolwide teach-ins designed to display and educate students about the culture and history of Black people around the world.

Saeed Saeed (III), a member of BLS B.L.A.C.K., explains the importance of the teach-ins, saying, "We don't learn much about Black culture other than slavery and the abolitionist movements, but it's more than that. Black culture also doesn't just mean history, there are arts like poetry, music, dance and paintings."

These teach-ins began in 2016 after students felt that they needed to take ownership of what was not being taught about Black history and culture. Instead of waiting for the adults to teach them, BLS B.L.A.C.K. started to give educational presentations which would become precursors to the teach-ins held in the upcoming weeks.

AP African American Studies teacher and BLS B.L.A.C.K. club advisor Ms. Cheralyn Pinchem adds that a presentation that stood

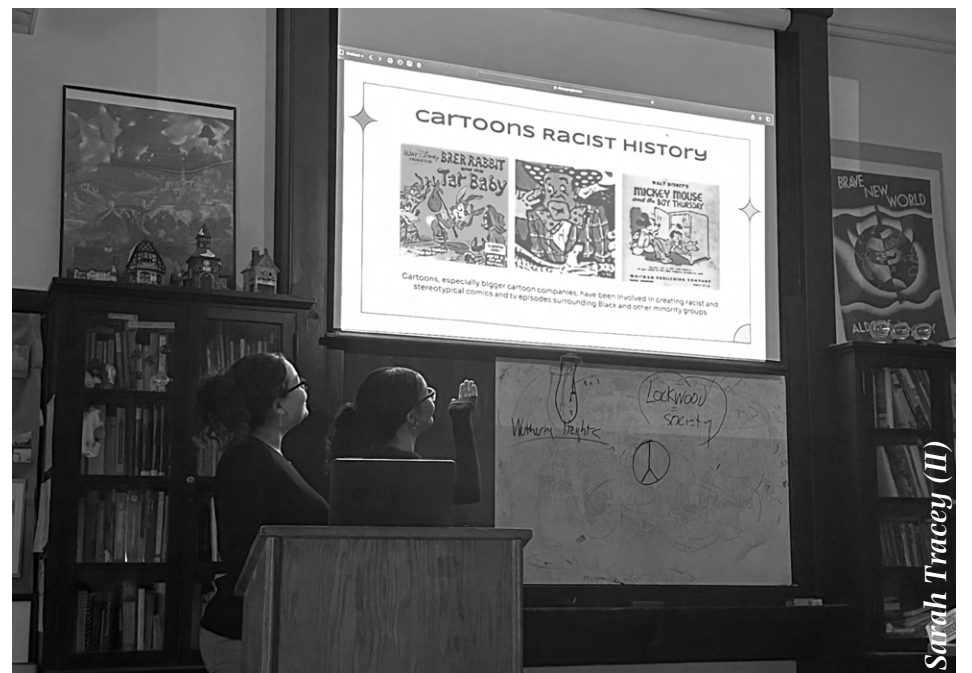
out to her was one about the hashtag #BlackatBLS: "They wanted people to know what that meant because what it became outside of the school was not what they intended it to be. [...] #BlackatBLS is like, we want you to see us. It's exactly what says Black at BLS. This is what it feels like to be a Black person at BLS."

Black affinity clubs at BLS have a long and rich history dating back to the formation of the first Black cultural club, the Afro-Asian Club, in the 1960s. At first, the club included both Black and Asian students; however, by the next year, a separate Afro Club was established which would become BLS B.L.A.C.K. While the name has changed, the club's mission and goal have stayed the same.

Donnell Davis (IV), secretary of BLS B.L.A.C.K., describes, "Our mission goal is to find racial equality within the school. That way, [...] Black and brown students [...] feel at home and feel safe, even when it's with a mix of other kids."

Since the 1960s, BLS B.L.A.C.K. has also gone through immense growth. Ms. Pinchem explains how the club has grown thanks to student involvement and advocacy such as the #BlackatBLS movement in 2016.

Ms. Pinchem adds that the club has developed from a small student organization



BLS B.L.A.C.K. leads a teach-in regarding racism featured in cartoons.

into one that hosts new and exciting events every month. She explains, "From September, the EC Fair to October, they're kind of getting to know each other and doing mixtures with [BLS] TAG in November. They have Friendsgiving in December. They do Kwanzaa in Jan-

uary. They do MLK [...]. We got the teach-ins and the showcase."

Through these showcases and events, BLS B.L.A.C.K. strives to teach students around the School about what Black excellence looks like.

# Simmons's Next-Door Demolishment

**By Constance Fang (V)**

*Contributing Writer*

In spring of 2019, Boston Latin School's neighboring Simmons University announced their three-phase project to merge their two campuses to enhance their students' learning experience. For now, the Park Science Building next to BLS has been demolished and progress on Simmons residential areas will begin this winter.

Developed by a women-led team, the One Simmons Project oversees updates to academic buildings and general living areas. This large project at Simmons will involve the construction of a new Living and Learning Center, as well as new science facilities to meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

There have been renovations to include several common kitchens for students

to allow for greater flexibility with allergens and time constraints. The new facilities will ensure the comfort of students and faculty within the residence halls.

Phases one and two, which included modernizing facilities for more efficient use of space, have been completed. The final phase, which includes the enhancement of outdoor spaces and seating areas, is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2026.

The Student Affairs team at Simmons hope to use the new spaces for student community events, as well as other experiences to increase connections among the school community. Such areas include a green roof deck as a quiet contemplation space — something that would otherwise be a challenge for students to access on the bustling university campus.

Many of the changes also took a toll on the surrounding area. BLS students

have commented on the harsh construction noises and visible shaking caused by the demolition of the Park Science Building. "[There has been] an increase in students paying more attention to the process of the demolition during classes," notes Jocelyn Green (V).

These distractions may temporarily impact BLS students' ability to concentrate on their studies and exams. This is especially true in the music wing, where several other students reported shaking as the neighboring building was collapsing.

Alongside several noise complaints, Assistant Head of School and Transportation Lead Jaffrie Perrotti notes another impact, namely "the increased traffic and congestion on the Avenue before and after school." Both yellow school buses and supplemental buses provided by the MBTA have shown higher rates of delay since con-

struction for the project initially began. As a result, students may face longer transportation itineraries, both to and from school.

Simmons has placed scaffolding along the sidewalk to allow pedestrians through, though this has forced buses and cars to double-park along the Avenue. Traffic conditions will likely not improve until construction company Skanska has finished its work on the Park Science Building.

Laura Brink Pisinski, Vice President of University Real Estate Development and Facilities Management, is the leader of the project. When asked about the concerns surrounding One Simmons, she comments, "Through the permitting process, we responded to various comments related to shadows, wind and architectural suitability in the neighborhood. We responded to all of these concerns and were tremendously thoughtful and careful in our design."



# The Argo Asks: Celina Qi ('15)

By Ross Wilson (III)  
Staff Writer

Celina Qi ('15) is a co-founder of Juniper Behavioral Health, a company aiming to make mental healthcare more affordable by providing administrative work. She was recently featured in the Class of 2024 *Forbes* "30 Under 30" and is currently based in New York City.

**Q: Can you describe your current company?**

A: We automate operations for behavioral health clinics. What that means is basically there's a lot of overhead that goes into running a clinic. You have to keep the lights on, maintain the paperwork and keep operational administration. Our goal is to automate those pieces so that clinics can focus on what they do best, which is serving their patients.

**Q: What goes into creating and sustaining a company like this?**

A: I think the first and most obvious is building a product or service that people need and that creates value. Of course there are tons and tons of companies out there, but the most important thing in any company is making sure that what your building has value in the world and is helpful to people. I think the second is building a strong team and culture that you believe in and that people who you work with also believe in. Culture looks different at every company you work at, but I think that the most valuable thing that a company can have is a strong team of people who believe in what they're doing.

There's lots and lots of other things, of course. There's operational work and financial sustainability, but I think the two most

important things are building something that's valuable and building a team that believes in what you're doing.

**Q: In what ways does being a leader in this company help you grow as a person?**

A: I think leadership is so personal because leadership looks different for everyone. In order to be an effective leader, you have to be authentic to yourself, and that requires knowing yourself, working on yourself and growing yourself. It's hard, right? First of all, everybody at our company goes to a lot of therapy. *(laughs)*

Even if you think about the leaders we know, the most powerful ones are those who believe in what they say and where the way that they act feels true to them. So I think that for me there was a lot of work that I had to do on myself to understand me and figure out what my authentic brand of management was and to see what parts of me resonated with people.

**Q: How did your BLS experience prepare you for this career opportunity?**

A: The great thing about BLS is that you surround yourself with really smart people who know how to work hard and who are really ambitious and how to do great things in the world. I think being surrounded by that energy and environment was the most powerful thing for me. What's great about BLS is they create that type of culture and environment from the onset, right from where they start at seventh grade.

**Q: What was your favorite class at BLS and why?**

A: I loved APUSH with Mr. Rinaldi, and I



Celina Qi ('15) (second from left) smiles with her co-founders.

loved AP Modern European History because you learned stories about the people who came before you.

**Q: Did you do any extracurriculars at BLS and if so, what?**

A: I started cheerleading in ninth grade, and continued for all four years and then I kept that in college.

**Q: What is one piece of advice you have for BLS students?**

A: Be okay with failing and making mistakes. One thing that is hard to learn in school, high school and college, is how to take risks and how to be okay when they don't pan out well enough. What I've learned is if you live your life too afraid to take those risks and

too afraid to fail then you just always play it safe. For me, the startup was something that I thought a lot about because I was so afraid of what would go wrong and what would happen if I didn't do well. I'm so glad I took that risk, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

**Q: Do you have any goals that you would like to accomplish in the future?**

A: One of my goals is to live more in the moment. I think what I've learned is there's so much value in having perspective and from thinking about what gives your life meaning. I'm just trying to be better at smelling the roses.

*This interview has been edited for length and clarity.*

# BPS Approves Change in Exam School Bonus Points



Boston Latin Academy stands as one of Boston's three exam schools.

By Weian Xue (IV)  
& Brian Xu (V)  
Contributing Writers

Earlier this year, Boston Public Schools altered the bonus points system for the exam school admissions process because the previous policy made it mathematically impossible for some applicants with perfect grade point averages to be admitted to their first-

choice school.

Before the policy change, students attending high-poverty schools were awarded ten bonus points regardless of location for a composite score out of 100 points that determined their admission to one of Boston's three exam schools. The district found, however, that some students living in wealthier areas, who did not receive bonus points, would need over 100 points to be accepted into their first-choice school. This made ad-

mission impossible, even with perfect grades.

The change in policy, which was enacted on January 10, now awards students bonus points depending on where they live in the city, with amounts ranging from two to ten points. The clause in the admissions policy that awards 15 bonus points to students experiencing homelessness or under the care of the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families is unaffected by this policy change.

The socioeconomic tier system used was created by BPS prior to this bonus points policy change. In this system, Boston's neighborhoods are categorized into eight tiers, with each tier containing neighborhoods of similar socioeconomic makeup.

This is part of BPS's plan to promote racial and socioeconomic diversity at the exam schools. Boston Latin School Assistant Head of School Steven Chen comments, "I think giving students an opportunity who historically have not had much access to this school [...] is a really important goal to focus on."

The new policy, however, has also brought criticism. Alford Shi (VI) says, "If you look at how the point system is right now, there are diverse areas such as Mission Park where bonus points won't change anything. I don't think that the change in bonus points is worth such a decrease in ranking."

His opinion echoes other critics such as Gabriela Coletta, the City Councilor for

District One. In a letter to BPS Superintendent Mary Skipper last June, Councilor Coletta wrote, "While I commend the intention of the updated exam school policy to increase access and diversify our exam school student population, as with any new policy, there can be unintended consequences that leave out the very students we hope to serve."

Exam schools have long faced controversy for their admissions processes because they have often disadvantaged minority groups. Until 2020, admission to Boston's exam schools was determined by the Independent School Entrance Examination (ISEE) and grades in elementary and middle school. This process has been widely debated and litigated legally, as many minority students are less likely to have the resources to prepare well for the ISEE.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, BPS has made significant admissions changes to increase socioeconomic diversity. Now, students' composite scores are based on a combination of past grades, socioeconomic status, scores from Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests and any bonus points.

Since BLS itself does not have any input in the admissions process, the effect of these policy changes on future classes remains to be seen. Because the change aims to increase the socioeconomic diversity of exam schools, BLS administrators are considering the support that future classes will need, whether it be social, emotional or academic.

## The Argo's

# Valentine's Day Carnation Sale

Buy from any Argo editor from February 6 to 13  
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# The Spirit of MLK: More than a Dream

*Actively Building the Beloved Community at Boston Latin School and Beyond*



Dick DeMarsico, Library of Congress

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speaks at a press conference in 1964.

**By Mark Snekvik (II)**

*Contributing Writer*

***“A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” - MLK, “Beyond Vietnam,” 1967***

A few weeks ago, Boston Latin School students attended the annual schoolwide Martin Luther King Jr. celebration. Amidst inspiring performances and speeches, students heard this year’s theme over and over again: “Building the Beloved Community — It Starts with Me.” This theme, selected from the King Center, was MLK’s ultimate vision for the world: a place where the “triple evils” in society — poverty, racism and militarism — had been defeated, and equality and love formed the basis of society.

This vision, however, has been whitewashed by American society, resulting in the message becoming a vague call for “equality” and “brotherhood,” without explaining how to get there. Dr. King is often reduced to the ideals of nonviolence and peace, stripped of the context he used them for, which was the struggle against racism, capitalism and militarism.

Oriana Dunker (II) describes this phenomenon, saying, “Nowadays, in schools, rather than his message being for civil rights, for Black liberation and celebration, it’s become ‘he is peace’ [...] like how Gandhi is thought of as ‘nonviolence’ and not everything he did in India.” Dr. King must be remembered for all of his goals — for peace, but also for the breaking down of oppressive systems that blocked such peace.

***“Loose and easy language about equality, resonant resolutions about brotherhood fall pleasantly on the ear, but for the Negro there is a credibility gap he cannot overlook. He remembers that with each modest advance the white population promptly raises the argument that the Negro has come far enough.” - MLK, Where Do We Go From Here, 1967***

Dr. King’s name is often invoked by politicians who are deploring various protests or equity movements, claiming they “contradict MLK’s values” in an attempt to suppress them. For example, Biden told Black Lives Matter protestors who looted stores that it “was not what MLK wanted” and therefore they should stop.

Although MLK believed peaceful protest was much more effective than looting, he sympathized with looters. In “The Role of the Behavioral Scientist in the Civil Rights Movement,” he says that “[looters,] most of all, [feel] alienated from society and knowing that this society cherishes property above people, he is shocking it by abusing property rights. [...] Let us say boldly that if the violations of law by the white man in the slums over the years were calculated and compared with the law-breaking of a few days of riots, the hardened criminal would be the white man.”

Fox Business anchor David Asman says, “Now it sounds to me like you took a page out of Dr. King’s book about judging by the content of character rather than skin color,” in response to Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt banning Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs. Politicians who invoke Dr. King’s name in this way are misrepresenting his views, and just using his name to justify their policies as progressive. By teaching a more holistic view of MLK, BLS can work past this single ideology that Dr. King is too often tied to.

***“The evils of capitalism are as real as the evils of militarism and racism. The problems of racial injustice and economic injustice cannot be solved without a radical redistribution of political and economic power.” - MLK to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1967***

On MLK Day, most BLS students are not learning enough about Dr. King’s more complex ideas. Students can handle more than the “I Have a Dream” speech, and deserve more than that, especially at a time when the question of how to protest more effectively is at the forefront of many minds.

Ms. Cheralyn Pinchem, BLS history teacher and Black Leaders Aspiring for Change and Knowledge (BLS B.L.A.C.K.) faculty advisor says, “As educators, if we’re going to continue to do school wide celebrations and acknowledge this day, we need to do more than the ‘I Have a Dream’ speech. More than just Dr. King looking out upon the crowd with his hand up in the air in an idealistic way. [...] If you take ‘I Have a Dream,’ plus what he said to the sanitation workers, plus his letter from a Birmingham Jail, plus his speaking out against Vietnam, then you get the whole arc of who he is.” It’s not about telling kids what to think, but instead giving them access to the whole truth and letting them form their own opinions.

Education like this requires more than one two-hour block, and to do this MLK day at BLS should become a fully mandated day split into three rotating parts: celebration, service and education.

The assembly would remain a showcase of BLS talent, highlighting African American, Afro-Cuban and African cultures in particular. Excerpts from MLK’s speeches like “Letter From a Birmingham Jail” could be added, but overall it should remain similar to the current programming.

Then, in the second third, students would participate in community service activities, perhaps building care packages for organizations such as *Rosie’s Place*, or writing letters to representatives after hearing an American Civil Liberties Union presentation.

The middle third of the day would be a time of learning and reflection. The school could invite speakers, teachers and students to give presentations about MLK’s life or beliefs. Then, students could engage in tough conversations about topics like race, class, military and government in hopes of finding common ground, gaining understanding and growing closer to one another.

***“Whites, it must frankly be said, are not putting in a similar mass effort to reeducate themselves out of their racial ignorance. It is an aspect of their sense of superiority that the white people of America believe they have so little to learn.” - MLK, Where Do We Go From Here, 1967***

All of these additions would take a huge amount of effort and investment, and would require participation from more BLS teachers. Ms. Pinchem says, “Having more teachers at the table to decide what that day looks like rather than just a handful of teachers is something I’d like to see changed. I’m exhausted, because we were doing things all over, but then I’m walking past classrooms that are not doing anything. And I’m like, ‘why is that?’ Some people are very content and comfortable with wearing a pin, taking their kids to the auditorium and saying, ‘I celebrated Dr. King’ [...] if everyone felt it was their responsibility, we’d start to see that beloved community.”

As Ms. Pinchem explains, certain teachers at the school do not feel that educating students on Dr. King is important. Whether out of a fear of being “politically incorrect” or a perceived loss of class time, they fail to recognize the educational value that a whole day dedicated to him would have on our community. Students would be forced out of their isolated social groups and made to think critically about the important issues facing our world. This would make many students feel like what they learn in school is more applicable to their daily life.

Most teachers already do not assign work on this day, since it would leave some of their other classes behind. Finally, most students at BLS do not encounter Black history outside of discussions of slavery as they do not take classes such as African American Studies. It’s crucial to learn about the wide scope of Black history to truly understand our country and progress forward.

***“If peace means a willingness to be exploited economically, dominated politically, humiliated and segregated, I don’t want peace. In a passive non-violent manner we must revolt against this peace.” - MLK, “When Peace Becomes Obnoxious,” 1956***

Outside of MLK day, there’s much more work to do to further liberation efforts. It starts by listening and educating ourselves. Instead of shying away from tough conversations about race, fearing we might “make a mistake,” we should engage with these issues and risk embarrassing ourselves.

Ita Berg (II), a white member of BLS B.L.A.C.K., shares her advice for allies to Black liberation movements. She says, “Don’t worry about sounding weird; you probably will. [But] you have to listen. I think a lot of times people who really do mean well kind of take over movements that are really for Black liberation and social justice. [...] If something is not affecting your life, it’s not hurting you everyday, then you have to participate in the movement from a background perspective.”

Educating, listening and taking a background role are all important for allies to make everyone in the BLS community feel heard. It is a privilege to be able to opt in and out of learning about the struggles of another group, because for others, it’s their lived reality.

Dunker reflects on this, sharing, “If we’re talking MLK, civil rights, segregation — those are my grandparents. If we’re looking at Black Lives Matter protests and rioters on the screen of our zoom, and talking about the start of the Metco program? Well, you write a paragraph about that, submit it, and it’s done. I do that, and then I go home and that’s my life.” Allies must try to listen and learn, so that the responsibility of educating and reforming doesn’t all fall on those facing oppression by the system.

One great way to do this is by attending the Topol Fellows’ Black Film Club movie screenings that are happening every Friday in February. These films highlight a range of topics related to uplifting Black voices.

Take action. Listen. Read. Make mistakes. Work to make the Beloved Community a reality.

***“The end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the Beloved Community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opponents into friends. It is this type of understanding goodwill that will transform the deep gloom of the old age into the exuberant gladness of the new age. It is this love which will bring about miracles in the hearts of men.” - MLK, “Facing the Challenge of a***



# Is NHS Worth It?

*Yes, NHS is Worth It.*

**By Juns Ye (III)**

*Contributing Writer*

Every year, Boston Latin School juniors and seniors who are actively involved in their communities and have a strong academic record are invited to apply to the National Honor Society (NHS). Students in NHS wear a gold cord at graduation and get to add the organization to their résumé. Many, however, do not realize the other, more important benefits of membership.

NHS membership offers students an indispensable skill — learning how to balance the numerous tasks and expectations placed upon them. This skill is crucial for adult life, both in higher education and the workforce. Students who are members can adapt easily to these environments, and may be seen as better fits by college admission officers.

Although students see their membership as simply a prestigious inclusion on a résumé, many fail to recognize the importance of the broader organizational stature of NHS. NHS operates in all 50 U.S. states, as well as globally, and its name is highly recognizable. Furthermore, placing NHS membership on a résumé allows a student to combine academic accomplishments such as their GPA, ultimately reserving more space for more accomplishments or experiences.

Students are often discouraged from joining the NHS due to the numerous prerequisites, including the organization's strict attendance policy. These requirements, however, only aim to help NHS recruit students who adhere to their four core pillars: good academics, strong leadership skills, participation in community service and a quality character.

Furthermore, students in previous years have expressed that NHS is relatively low-commitment, and members receive access to grants and scholarships that can help reduce the immense cost of college.

In addition, NHS provides motivation for students who may be struggling to stay on track. Students can use the goal of being a member of NHS as a source of motivation to improve their attendance, academics and commitment to the school community.

Those who have been neglecting their grades or attendance are also able to demonstrate improvement and reapply at a later date. Overall, every eligible student should apply to NHS, especially if committed to maintaining good academics, being a role model, participating in community service and contributing to the BLS school environment. Plus, did we mention that you get to wear a fun graduation cord?



*No, NHS is Not Worth It.*

**By Angelina Tang (III)**

*Contributing Writer*

Anually, upperclassmen at Boston Latin School vie for the coveted status that comes with being a member of the National Honor Society (NHS), and rightfully so. Who could pass up the amazing college résumé filler, and more importantly, the beautiful cord at graduation? But really, the benefits that the National Honor Society boasts aren't all that, especially when considering the greater scope of Latin School student achievements.

The greatest motivation for students to get into NHS is their résumés. But how much of a difference does it make to have NHS on a college application? Not much;

even if you aren't a member of NHS, that doesn't mean that you haven't done anything noteworthy. Kento Lind (I) argues that "When colleges look at everything you do, being in honors society is really just one thing." It shouldn't be membership to NHS that defines a student, but their achievements; a student will not go unnoticed by colleges simply because of a lack of NHS status.

NHS isn't the only way students can earn recognition for their achievements. BLS provides its students with countless clubs, tutoring and service opportunities, relating to both academics and creative endeavors. Isaac Zou (I) comments, "Most BLS students are amazing people and have done a lot." Because of how many people are in NHS, however, the value of the achievement has decreased. It is no longer an honor to be a member of NHS because so many students have achieved that, and more.

Besides, an application doesn't say everything about someone. A short résumé is not enough to judge someone's true nature. "It's kind of like people [...] with fame," Lind explains. "They might be famous, but they may not actually be a good person on the inside." If even morality, one of NHS' greatest selling points, is called into question, then its presence on a résumé means less, as there is nothing holding its members accountable.

It isn't just character that NHS judges; attendance is put on the hot seat as well. One too many tardies can ruin your chances of admission, but often, students can't help it if their bus gets caught in the rain, or if the train arrives later than it was supposed to. Sure, NHS is meant to have high standards, but this requirement alone bars many students who would otherwise be completely eligible for admission.

Truthfully, NHS is just for show. It is a reiteration of the things that one has done rather than an actual triumph. There are so many factors that go into college applications, and BLS has a great support system to help their students as much as possible. From summer internships to performances, there are so many opportunities that students can explore. So if you feel like NHS isn't for you, don't stress — you'll do just fine without it.

## Smile for the Bill: Senior Portraits Are Expensive



Sophia Maldonado Werk (I) poses for her senior portrait.

**By Lauren Dong (IV)  
& Orson Giblin (IV)**

*Contributing Writers*

Senior portraits and yearbooks are of utmost importance to members of the senior class, as they are some of the best ways to wrap up one's six years at Boston Latin School into a single, neat package. Getting pictures taken and displayed in the yearbook along with familiar friends and clubs of the graduating grade is undoubtedly one of the most memorable parts of the high school experience. There is a problem, though: these iconic snapshots come at a great cost.

Currently, if one wants to get a por-

trait for the yearbook, they must have the photo taken by Chestnut Hill Studios. Seniors cannot select alternative organizations with more suitable financial or scheduling conditions.

Yearbook Advisor Ms. Myriam Stiven explains, "We have a contract with [Chestnut Hill Studios] that is nonnegotiable nor subject to change. They are a reliable company that always provides quality photos and allow us to have a streamlined method of collecting photos from over 300 seniors. Having multiple companies involved would be difficult to manage and navigate."

Many seniors have also raised concerns regarding the photo-taking process. The primary issue is the arguably high

price of the portrait: a senior can expect to pay a 45 dollar sitting fee for their portrait, and must pay additional fees if they want touch-ups or the yearbook itself, which costs 100 dollars alone.

Furthermore, clubs must pay 60 dollars to be included in the yearbook. Larger clubs with sufficient funding may not struggle with the cost; however, smaller clubs may have a harder time collecting the funds to be a part of the yearbook. Some seniors and clubs therefore decide that the hefty price is not worth being in the yearbook, or purchasing the physical memento of their time at BLS.

Some students have also commented on the lackluster quality of the photos. For this reason, many choose to not pay the extra fee to download their portrait or will find another photographer to take the photos that will be given to teachers and friends. Some even go as far as to Photoshop the watermark out of the photos, deciding that the quality of the product is not reflective of the price.

"Everyone in the first round complained how expensive it is for mediocre pictures that they could have gotten done by themselves or by another photographer," says Senior Class Secretary Minh Nguyen (I).

But not having any picture in the yearbook can cause members of the senior class to feel left out on a crucial part of their high school career. These photos nevertheless capture long-lasting moments from one's valuable teenage years, promote school pride and allow seniors to leave messages for those who supported

them through high school.

Because the yearbook is such a sentimental part of graduating, it is important to make them financially accessible for everyone. Nguyen offers a solution, explaining, "I definitely think we should have the option to get it done by a company a school has gotten, but I think they should also give the option for us to submit our own pictures."

Another way to make yearbooks more financially feasible is to digitize them. Currently, editions of the *Liber Actorum* from 1933 to 2013 are available online. Updating this archive would allow recent alumni who didn't purchase the yearbook to reminisce about their time at BLS for free.

But the most effective solution would ultimately be to subsidize the cost, as several seniors expected to pay less. A cheaper price would encourage more to take and purchase senior portraits.

Deborah Desir (I) agrees, saying, "I think 30 to 35 dollars would be the ideal price for portraits."

Senior portraits have posed an obstacle to members of the senior class for years. Making a change to this expensive system will certainly take much effort, but in the meantime, students and teachers can work together to take small steps in the right direction.

Ms. Stiven shares that students experiencing financial difficulties are always welcome to reach out, and feedback regarding pricing will be taken into consideration when the senior portrait contract is up once more for negotiations.

## POLITICS

# Analysis: 2024 Presidential Election

By Roan Wilcox (II)

Staff Writer

Well, it's the result no one wanted, but the one we will likely receive: Joe Biden vs. Donald Trump in another head-to-head match-up for the presidency. Despite both Biden and Trump sporting national approval ratings in the low 40-percent range, there seems to be enough momentum to support billion-dollar presidential campaigns for the duo in 2024. Yet, the Biden-Trump rematch is more than just a political battle; it is demonstrative of a system that ranks factional flattery above electability. The culprit? Our primary system. The solution? Ranked choice voting.

Beginning in mid-January with Iowa and New Hampshire, Democrats and Republicans vote, state-by-state, for the presidential candidate who they think will best serve them in the White House. In theory, the system makes sense, but in practice, it often means that two presidential hopefuls are scrounging together a slight majority of their party's most ardent supporters — a factional dynamic exacerbated by voter turnout as low as 20 percent. Come Elec-

tion Day in November, Americans are left choosing between two politicians with a small, but vocal, base of support and a tepid reception from the rest of the country.

Luc Vulliez (II) comments on the problems with our current system: "I definitely think a lot of the blame lies in the two-party system, which limits voters' choices to two candidates without either option really representing the majority of voters."

Much of the fault results from the fact that the American primary system is designed as a ballast against change. Status quo powers in the Democratic (DNC) and Republican National Committees (RNC) work to box out new, driven candidates who speak to issues that resonate with the younger generations — including us. For example, the DNC has been hostile to any Democratic challengers to the incumbent president in 2024. Despite his age and less-than-glowing economic record, the DNC is already behind him with millions of dollars in fundraising lined up. All this political entrenchment creates extreme barriers to entry, even if a politician does have a message that voters can get behind.

While it is true that some of the blame does lie with voters, and particularly young people who don't turn out for primaries en masse, the DNC and RNC's atmospheres of hostility and reproach for newcomers with bold ideas does nothing to motivate voters, who feel as though the system is stacked against them.

Aleksa Angjeliu (I) echoes this sentiment, saying, "I don't think that most voters particularly want a rematch, especially since both [Trump and Biden are] some of the most unpopular presidents. [...] I think people outside the die-hard supporters are tired of the match-up at this point."

Though the outlook is not favorable, students at BLS are either at, or near, the legal voting age, and soon will be the ones in the ballot box, able to amend America's political system. A crucial reform that would go a long way toward improving the status quo is ranked choice voting, where voters, as the name implies, rank candidates in an order of preference.

Unlike today, however, voters wouldn't need to worry about "wasting" a vote on a long-shot candidate, because after the first round of ballots are tallied,

and assuming no candidate earned a majority of the vote, the last-place candidate is dropped, and the second-choice picks of that politician's voters are distributed.

In essence, this would create more latitude for voters to go with the candidate of their choice and improve voter turnout, as more candidates who people feel passionate about would be on the ballot.

*Time Magazine* highlighted in 2019 that ranked choice voting could fundamentally reshape elections and better reflect the true will of the people, furthering that if it have been instituted, Al Gore likely would have won the presidency in 2000, and the 2016 race between Clinton and Trump may have had a different outcome, as the influence of "spoiler" third-party candidates was diminished.

Only time will tell if the primary system continues in its current form, or if the American people will continue to see factional candidates with limited appeal. Effective governance and faith in this grand American experiment of ours rests in the balance. Yet, for 2024, it looks as though Republicans are fully behind Trump and Democrats will be settling for Biden.

## What are primaries?

Primaries serve as elections for selecting a candidate for a particular party for the general election, or presidential election. Most states hold their primary elections using a secret ballot, just as in a general election. Some states, however, base their votes on a caucus, which is a meeting where voters gather and discuss candidates. To indicate their votes, voters gather in groups corresponding to each candidate. There are several types of primaries. In all these different types,

each voter can only vote once. In an open primary, anyone can vote in any party primary, whether one is registered as a Democrat or Republican. In a closed primary, one can only vote in the party they are registered in. In a semi-closed primary, voters who are registered as Democrats or Republicans are required to vote in only that part. If one is registered as an Independent voter, who does not align themselves with any of the two parties, one can vote in either primary.

— Olivia Chen (IV), News Staff Writer

## Recent Primaries and Caucuses

*N.B. Listed are the top-performing candidates from each primary or caucus. Percentages are results of votes reported by each state.*

### January 15, Iowa Caucus (R)

40 delegates available

Donald Trump: 51% (20 delegates)  
Ron DeSantis: 21.2% (9 delegates)  
Nikki Haley: 19.1% (8 delegates)  
Vivek Ramaswamy: 7.7% (3 delegates)

### January 23, New Hampshire Primary (R)

22 delegates available

Trump: 54.3% (12 delegates)  
Haley: 43.2% (9 delegates)

### January 23, New Hampshire Primary (D)

10 delegates available

*Number of delegates have not been updated.*  
Joe Biden (write-in): 63.9%  
Dean Phillips: 19.6%  
Marianne Williamson: 4%

### February 3, South Carolina Primary (D)

55 delegates available

Biden: 96.2% (55 delegates)  
Williamson: 2.1% (0 delegates)  
Phillips: 1.7% (0 delegates)

*All numbers are from 270toWin.com. This was last updated on February 5, 2024.*

# GRWM for Consumerism

By Zoe Colimon (I)

& Angelina Wei (III)

A&E Assistant Editor and Contributing Writer

With the development of major brands that can ship products out within days, humans have created an environment that normalizes and encourages purchases based on aesthetic appeal. Although a globalized network is convenient, it is harmful as young kids quickly adopt a consumer mentality, even when they have yet to understand how the economy functions.

Even though many industries have rapidly evolved to alarming levels of growth, the skincare industry has become infamous for gaining profit from younger audiences. Anti-aging campaigns have taken over skincare companies as they produce serums and creams that are said to be essential to one's health. But what happens when these "essentials" begin to harm a consumer's overall mental and physical wellbeing?

Social media apps like *Instagram* and *TikTok* have created algorithms where users are shown countless advertisements with every scroll and click. Not only are these advertisements released through their companies, but influencers also promote them through product placement. To make matters worse, users are met with more products that appeal specifically to them through personalized ads.

Because the age group on social media has decreased significantly, advertisers have begun to hop onto trends to make their products more appealing to youths. This combination is detrimental to younger audiences as they struggle to decide whether or not they should engage in the next big

fad. Grace Kinan (II) states that young kids should not indulge in skincare "unless it is an actual need and not just use it because it's a trend."

The biggest contributor to the rise of new trends is fast fashion, encouraging frequent purchases of inexpensive items. This perpetuates a culture of materialism and encourages children to form false ideas about the true costs of goods when they are produced unethically. Many buy products which they only use once, then disregard when the trend declines. Young teens are pressured to purchase the latest trend to conform to society's unrealistic expectations.

One such expectation is the fear of adopting signs of aging, which many of today's teens express. This causes skewed perceptions of what natural aging looks like. The beauty standards for young adults have increased when it comes to eradicating acne and preventing wrinkles. Although the fear of aging has always been prominent, it now takes on a dangerous form as children use products that cause harm to their delicate complexions. Dr. Brooke Jeffy, a dermatologist, details how one of her tween patients developed a rash around her eyes from retinol "all for trying to use an anti-aging product that she [didn't] need."

Along with skewed perceptions of development, consumer culture links happiness with unrealistic beauty standards by promoting certain body types as ideal through media. Constant exposure to these images creates cultures rife with envy and comparison. Youth begin to judge themselves against unrealistic criteria, leading to the development of low self-esteem. Their body images also become distorted as they are forced to perceive the ideal standard at



Children have become infatuated with skincare like Drunk Elephant.

an even younger age.

Hollis Cole (I) adds, "It's especially upsetting that these messages are being sent to adolescents [...] at a crucial point of development. [...] Internalizing these messages can lead to difficulties with loving and accepting oneself that can last their entire life."

The use of abrasive products is also harmful because children can quickly become hyper-focused on preventing signs of aging while simultaneously aging themselves as they engage in this mature form of self-care.

Although it is easy to blame youth, it is important to acknowledge that the majority of the issue stems from the manipulation of young children and the vast, unobstructed access they have to the internet. Alicia Mo (III) mentions, "These children

don't know what's right or wrong for them, and it's the job of their parents to teach them."

Skincare is very empowering for many older users. The technological developments of products can aid young adults in feeling more confident about their complexions. Nevertheless, as consumerism is ingrained into the minds of teens, driving them to mature prematurely, it will inevitably reshape society's values, attitudes and behaviors, impacting future generations.

Children deserve the opportunity to enjoy their childhood without fixating on the consumption of products beyond their developmental needs. Ten-year-olds should spend their time in nature, engaging in enriching activities and spending time within educational environments — not at Sephora.



# New Year, Same Old You

By **Ariel Mura (II)**  
& **Harry Dinh (V)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

New Year's resolutions. We've all heard of them. We've all made them. But are they actually helpful? They have existed as practice for thousands of years, and people continue to make them as a way to greet the new year. Yet as they have grown in popularity, they have become less of a moment for self-reflection and more of a way to brag to others about all that one has accomplished. What was once an introspective practice has now become a superficial boast. Rather than maintaining such a futile and stressful custom, New Year's resolutions should be adapted to reflect one's drive for personal improvement and truly help them grow.

For one, as resolutions have shifted from a personal moment of reflection to a performative contest, they have become less and less genuine. Most people are concerned with what others think of them, wanting to fit into society's standards and impress those around them, and the process of writing New Year's resolutions is not exempt from such anxieties. Many people now write resolutions that are not meant to help them grow as people, but are set only to fulfill others' expectations and demands. People are then inevitably uninterested in these goals, as they do not genuinely wish to accomplish them.

With many New Year's resolutions, furthermore, straying away from self-improvement, they have become more unoriginal, and the same few can be heard time and time again. This

lack of variety defeats the purpose of self-reflection and further deteriorates the state of this tradition. Boston Latin School science teacher Mr. Alexander Njoku notes, "[A New Year's resolution should be] something about yourself. You look at yourself and say, 'This is what I wanted,' and that is the most important [part] in terms of ambition."

New Year's resolutions have ultimately become futile, as many people disregard them after only a few weeks. Because so many New Year's resolutions are often hastily made, many skip over the step of self-reflection. BLS Guidance Director Ms. Megan Clougherty adds, "Oftentimes when we can't reach our goals, it's because we haven't really done the work of self-reflection to figure out why we want that for ourselves and what we're willing to do to get it."

It is important to establish New Year's resolutions that clearly outline goals that are important and authentic to you. As Anna Hsu (II) notes, "Setting goals does not have to be restricted to one day of the year." Rather than making a single long-term and extravagant goal for the entire year, setting adaptable, short-term goals is much more beneficial. Hsu adds, "To remain motivated and productive in achieving one's goals, one should accept that as you grow and change over the course of a year, your goals should too."

These goals, additionally, should be measurable and realistic. An easy way to fail in accomplishing a goal is to select one that is too overwhelming or abstract. A goal that is overcomplicated or extensive becomes stressful, contributing only to lower self-esteem and feel-



Ben Choi-Harris (II)

Students write New Year's resolutions to welcome 2024.

ings of failure. A goal that is too abstract could also become hurtful, as its vagueness makes it difficult to hold yourself accountable to complete it since there's no step-by-step method or outline to keep you on track and motivated. Mr. Njoku advises, "Set up a resolution that is kind of looking into yourself and know your abilities and disabilities. [...] That will help you to set up a good resolution that you can follow."

It is also important to remember, when setting New Year's resolutions, that these goals do not define you. The core goal of these resolutions is self-growth. Hsu adds, "There is a lot of guilt, envy and unhealthy habits of comparing oneself to others tied up in any comparison of progress — especially New Year's resolutions. Those I know

who make resolutions have ended up focusing on the negative, feeling ashamed of a goal they did not reach, but in reality, that goal was an infinitesimal part of their year."

Whatever the outcome of this resolution was, you still learned something in the process. Ms. Clougherty concludes, "Most importantly, even more important than goal-setting and even more important than setting New Year's resolutions is being curious about ourselves. So be curious about yourself, be curious instead of guilty or shameful about why you didn't reach those goals and try to judge yourself the way you would someone else. Would you judge a friend who fell off on their New Year's resolution? Of course, you wouldn't. You would say they're human."

## Grammarly Can('t) Help!



ChatGPT, Quizlet, Grammarly

Students have easy access to *ChatGPT*, *Grammarly* and *Quizlet*.

By **Brandon Flores (III)**  
& **Zihang Zhou (III)**

Contributing Writers

Technology has never advanced so quickly in human history before. With the introduction of grammar and writing assistance powered by artificial intelligence (AI), most notably *Grammarly*, the way the world approaches writing has wholly transformed. These programs are useful to many, helping to save valuable time in a click of a button. But when does the damage start to outweigh the benefits? Once the side effects are taken into account, it becomes clear that tools such as *Grammarly* have a negative impact on their users and should be approached with caution.

American culture emphasizes effi-

ciency and productivity, and with high pressure on people to churn out both fast and high-quality products, it is tempting to resort to auxiliary programs like *Grammarly* without considering their adverse effects. Boston Latin School history teacher Ms. Sandra Stuppard notes, "[American culture surrounds the mentality of] 'if it's efficient, it's good.'" With the increasing demands on students to build an extensive portfolio, tools like *Grammarly* seem like an obvious solution.

But is convenience really worth the expense of one's ability to express ideas creatively? Many of these applications give suggestions based on existing information within their AI software and databases. *Grammarly* claims these suggestions "[Offer] a stronger synonym, or a clearer sentence structure,"

which largely suppresses one's complex style in favor of a computer's standardized simplicity. Although this simplicity may provide more clarity to the reader, writing with such a robotic form hinders the expression of individual ideas.

The importance of a unique voice is emphasized in literary classics such as J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, where Salinger's writing style conveys the protagonist's internal thoughts and feelings through a first-person lens. Readers are able to grasp the protagonist's emotions just by the order and frequency of the punctuation and periods placed. Although *Grammarly* is able to provide simplicity, it is unable to provide true human character.

Additionally, standardized tests such as the SAT, which examine students' mastery of grammar and syntax, make it imperative that students comprehend English grammar and mechanics. It is equally important to communicate with others naturally and effectively through mastery of language. Former *Grammarly* user Austin Zhu (III) argues that "students should be able to think for themselves" and *Grammarly* should be treated as only a "short-term solution" to correcting grammar and spelling.

*Grammarly* has dedicated its entire industry to monopolizing society's growing demand for a more efficient writing process. *Grammarly's* advertisements heavily feature people who are frustrated and vulnerable without writing assistance, emphasizing that productivity and prosperity comes to those who use assistive technology.

As society begins to incorporate systems like *Grammarly* into everyday life, however, the standard of writing changes. Ms. Stuppard expresses this

concern, explaining, "If *Grammarly* correction is the standard for written work, then the person could be adversely affected if they don't use the tool." Social pressure then makes *Grammarly* more of a necessity than a commodity.

Writers should be confident enough in their writing skills that *Grammarly* is not the "final arbiter of what's good," as BLS English teacher Mr. Robert Oakes says. Leaning on a crutch makes people less confident in their own abilities, which discourages them from practicing. When someone constantly feels unsatisfied with their ability to perform a certain task, they will begin to avoid that task whenever possible.

Programs like *Grammarly* are helpful when managed correctly. The issue arises, however, when people are not aware and deliberate enough about how they use them. Mr. Oakes adds, "[These programs are] useful tools as part of your toolkit, [but there is] no reason why students can't learn to do those same operations themselves."

Automated writing programs should be used with caution. The ideal solution to avoid overdependency is to disable writing assistance and enable it only for relevant situations, such as during school hours, when one's original writing may be more impactful and indicative of their academic performance.

With advertisements constantly perpetuating the benefits of assistive technology, it becomes harder for students to ignore the appeal and efficiency they provide. A more realistic approach is for students to understand the adverse effects of using programs like *Grammarly*, and to learn to adapt to life without their help, one word at a time.

# Spotlight on Zebra Therapy



Zebra Therapy performs at BLS A.S.I.A.'s 2023 Holiday Sing-Off!

**By Mindy Luong (I)**  
Staff Writer

Zebra Therapy, a pair of seemingly unrelated words, could not be a more fitting title for the soothing indie-pop-rock cover band whose origins sprang from spontaneity. Presented with two prompts by Boston Latin School music teacher Mr. Dennison Blackett, Catherine Cox (II) produced the official name that would champion a beloved medley of BLS student musicians.

With the idea for “Zebra Therapy” and her alto saxophone skills in tow, Cox recruited fellow musicians whom she participated in jam sessions with. Eventually, what began as a few casual get-togethers morphed into a full-fledged band. Alongside Cox are Frank Ferraro (II) and John Harvey (III) on drums, Kyle Vo (II) and Olivia Huynh (II) on guitar, Carina Szocik (II) on keys, and Mark Snekvik (II) and Jonah Roy (II) on tenor saxophone. Each member takes on varying roles, dabbling in vocals in addition to their principal instrument.

Despite their similar passions, carving out rehearsal time is especially difficult with their busy BLS schedules. The band dedicates many of their W blocks to band practice, a welcome respite from the hectic rush of morning classes.

Performances, however, pose an even greater challenge. Due to scheduling conflicts, official band appearances will often feature different member lineups. “We’re like a collective,” Vo quips.

As the school’s resident indie band, Zebra Therapy can often be found performing at events such as Asian Night or Tet Festival. Recently, they delivered a beautifully mellow rendition of The 1975’s “About You” at BLS Asian Students in Action (A.S.I.A.)’s Holiday Sing-Off.

A fan since their debut, Ava Vu (II) shares, “They’re very versatile, too, because you want to get up and dance even if it’s [...] a sad song. That’s how I feel when I listen to them.”

Whether bonding over shared performance anxiety, last-minute auditions or balancing musical roles, Zebra Therapy has certainly found a reliable group dynamic in navigating the unfamiliarity of ensemble playing. Finding a middle ground is especially vital for a group that encompasses such a wide range of volume capacity. With the reverberating electric guitar against their quieter keyboard, each member must create their own space while accommodating others.

For Szocik, making the adjustment from jazzy Big Band tunes to the slower melodies of indie pop and rock was challenging at first. She remarks, “I remember very specifically [...] our first rehearsal when we played because before that, I played jazz in the BLS Dues Band, and [so] that was my first time playing in an indie-rock band.”

Even so, the band members have adjusted well to one another since their formation. Their resilience shines in their ability to adapt different songs to each member’s instrument. As Vo explains, “There are songs where we have to create parts since it may not feature our specific instruments. We want to incorporate everyone.”

This endeavor includes transcribing individual parts and transposing songs into different keys or improvising solo parts, allowing the band to incorporate their own musical touches.

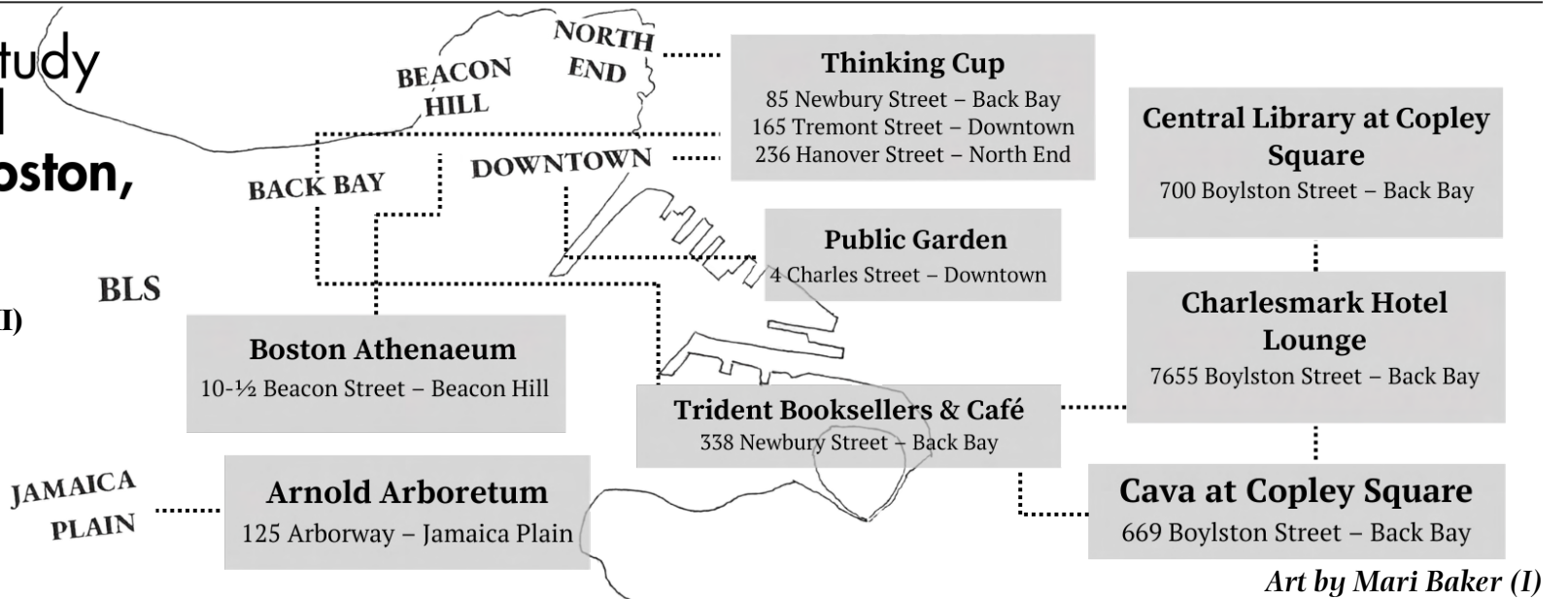
Looking to expand outside of BLS, the band is eager to perform at citywide music events such as the Jamaica Plain Porchfest and possibly even record some of their own originals. But for the time being, we have them all to ourselves.

Zebra Therapy’s nostalgic feel sounds like the perfect post-exam remedy to kick off the new term. Be sure to look out for their next appearance at the upcoming Tet Festival on February 16 hosted by BLS Vietnamese Students Society!

**LOCATIONS**

## A Guide to Study Spots Around Downtown Boston, and Beyond

**By Thomas Germain (II)**  
Contributing Writer



Art by Mari Baker (I)

# Page to Screen: *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*

**By John Clougherty (V)**  
& **Anneliese Yu (V)**  
Contributing Writers

Many have come to acknowledge Rick Riordan’s *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* as one of the most iconic young-adult literary series of the past two decades. Accordingly, the release of the long-anticipated Disney+ series adaptation had gargantuan boots to fill.

The series follows Percy Jackson (Walker Scobell), Annabeth Chase (Leah Jeffries) and Grover Underwood (Aryan Simhadri) on their urgent quest to return the lightning bolt of Zeus, the Greek god of the sky, while overcoming numerous trials and encounters with mythical creatures.

12-year-old Percy Jackson, the protagonist of the story, finds out he is the son of the Greek god Poseidon after he is attacked by his algebra teacher, who is a disguised Fury, a Greek goddess of vengeance. The show uses plotlines and characters from Greek mythology and incorporates them into a modern setting.

A common issue that arises with film adaptations is their integrity to the novels. Due to Riordan’s involvement with production, the series has mostly stayed true to its source, but fans are still quick to point out any differences.

For example, unlike in the book series,

the show eliminates the scene where Grover sacrifices himself to save Percy’s mom. Ryan Unsworth (V) explains why this change is a missed opportunity, saying, “It gives us a lot about Grover’s character and helps us get more attached to him.”

Despite these changes, many aspects of the original book have remained intact. Drawing comparisons with the 2010 movie *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*, the first adaptation of the books, some feel the show did a much better job at maintaining certain parts of the original storyline. “It has a lot more accuracy,” Luna Aguirre (VI) finds, “It has more of the smaller details from the book.”

Although the audience’s responses have been fairly positive, it’s clear that one of the most prominent flaws of the show is the pacing. Of course, it’s important to note that fitting a nearly 400-page book into just eight episodes, each under 50 minutes, is an enormous task. Still, the show could have incorporated more plot and character development.

Mack Losi (V) comments, “I feel like they are hurrying a lot of [the plot] and not stretching it as much as it should be. It feels as if the characters aren’t as fleshed out as [they are] in the books.”

Some online community discussions of the series have had conversations on the casting for the character Annabeth Chase,



*Percy Jackson* makes waves with a new live-action series on Disney+!

who is an African American in the TV series, but described as a Caucasian in the books. Fans of *Percy Jackson* hold divided opinions on this departure from the books. Some have taken to the internet to express their dislike of the change, sending hate towards the actress. Despite this, many fans have welcomed the casting decision, and admire the actress for her incredible performance in the show.

Boston Latin School Latin teacher Ms. Elizabeth Moguel says, “I think [Leah Jeffries] is great. I think they’ve characterized her re-

ally well and that that actress is doing a great job, [portraying] her intelligence and battle strategy.”

In many ways, the show has proven to be worth the wait. *Percy Jackson*, despite its minor inaccuracies and deviations, is filled with many humorous scenes, references to Greek mythology and interesting special effects. It is an all-around entertaining film and is highly recommended for both dedicated fans and first-time viewers. In our books, this adaptation was a success.



# Say “Cheese!”

By Mia White (I)

Contributing Writer

As trends change, one thing stays the same: everything comes back eventually. From clothing styles rediscovered through thrifting to vinyl's return to popularity, it's obvious people love what's old (but new to them). The comeback of “Y2K,” or the style of the early 2000s, shows what the *New York Times* describes as “the novelty of an old look.”

It's no different for photography, with disposable film having made a comeback over the past few years. Many people quickly jumped to purchase these cameras due to their simple use, making it fun and easy to capture moments. But, the time it takes to fill a film strip and develop it isn't something most people want to wait for and the cost per picture is much lower for digital cameras as it is a one-time payment instead of a per-film roll price. More recently, digital cameras have seen a revival, even though their main competitors, phone cameras, are quicker than ever.

Sofia Farah (I) mentions that she loves “the way it feels detached from my phone because I spend a lot of time looking at my phone and other screens during the day.” Digital cameras are the perfect blend of the two, allowing

a user to capture a moment with the added benefit that they can download it to share at their leisure. This reduces pressure to frame each shot perfectly, while maintaining an aesthetic filter.

This “filtered” type of picture is similar to what you could get on an app, such as *Snapchat* or *Instagram* with a filter, but one key difference is the comparison to real life. The auto-touch and filters available through phone lenses have increasingly begun distorting photos, even if just by a little bit. These automatic adjustments to each photo on a phone take away from the natural feeling of each moment, distorting what people think of it and the subjects of the pictures.

Users also don't have the option to scrutinize every single picture the second it's taken, so using a digital camera takes away some of the insecurity that arises from taking pictures on a phone. One of the largest factors of photography's recent evolution is the rise of social media. The rate at which people share and access photos has increased exponentially, but so has the pressure to present oneself a certain way. People are more and more worried about how they look, so being in pictures has become a source of stress for many people as they take as many pictures as possible to try and get the “perfect” one.



Rebecca Hale

Different cameras made for different occasions and different stories.

Photography is a means of expression, and the art behind it that creates such strong memories is preserved through digital cameras. Because taking pictures on a camera is a one-at-a-time process, it forces users to take their time when capturing moments. Unlike a phone camera where you can take multiple pictures with one click, a digital camera's perspective makes each photo more unique. Boston Latin School AP teacher Mr. Stephen Harris

brings up the point that the sheer volume of photos on one's phone takes away some of their meaning. He asks, “When you're 25, will those pictures still be in the same place, or will you have lost them by then?”

Mr. Harris makes a good argument. Although a photo's meaning changes from phone to camera, both have their benefits. Phones are easy to access and use while cameras make it a bit more fun.

# Mixing and Mastering: The Art of Interpolation



Alicia Moy (I)

Despite its controversies, sampling and interpolation remains a popular *mixer* of music.

By Catherine Cox (II)

& Julia Morellato (IV)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Have you ever felt that feeling of *déjà vu* when you hear a song? Believe it or not, your mind is not playing tricks on you. With the emerging genre of hip-hop in the 1970s, DJs began to cut and splice tracks during their sets, reusing motifs to craft their own art. This practice, according to the popular website *MasterClass*, came to be known as sampling, or more formally, interpolating. Today, interpolation is one of the most utilized elements in modern music, and much of popular music today builds on the work of others who came before it.

Music sampling has been around for quite some time. The Sugarhill Gang, a popular hip-hop group in the late '70s and early '80s, created the hit, “Rapper's Delight,” which is a well-known early example of interpolation that has echoed through the decades.

The single was so groundbreaking that the story of “Rapper's Delight” became the subject of a *history.com* article that chronicled how the track's bassline was sampled from the hit disco tune, “Good Times,” by Chic, which topped the charts in the late 1970s. Since “Rapper's Delight,” sampling has become part of the fabric of modern music, and listeners of current music are often brought back to hits from decades prior.

The use of samples and interpo-

lations has been prevalent throughout hip-hop history, with artists like Frank Ocean and Dr. Dre being noted for their genius repurposing of songs. Music mogul Tyler, the Creator has used samples throughout his discography, but his self-sampling, repurposing his own already-released work, sets him apart from other artists. On his Grammy award winning album, *IGOR* (2019), Tyler showcases complexity in his work through the glittery notes recreated by the synthesizer in the background of the track “GONE, GONE / THANK YOU.” On his sixth studio album, *CALL ME IF YOU GET LOST* (2021), the arpeggio patterns make a return in “SWEET / I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO DANCE,” once again bringing his previous creations into

the main sound of the track.

While some Tyler, the Creator fans may enjoy the blend of new and familiar sounds, some do not. Ricardo Guzman-Volpe (I) critiques self-sampling, reasoning that “the new piece will be very bland relative to older releases and eventually no one will want to listen to more than one song of the artists because they all sound the same.”

In recent music, a multitude of artists are sampling songs that have been brought to the mainstream, through their significance on social media and meme culture. Yung Gravy rose to fame with his song “Betty” in 2022, which uses an interpolation of Rick Astley's renowned song, “Never Gonna Give You Up.” Gravy took the act of “Rick Rolling” to a new level, turning Astley's hit into his own chart topping song.

For some, original creations are the gold standard of the industry. Eleonora Pisani Ricciarini (II) points out, “I find myself disappointed that a lot of older artists are having pieces of their music become popular without getting credit, especially because I personally tend to prefer the original songs whose music has been used for a new sample.”

Others, however, see sampling as a way of paying homage to the original artist and ensuring that their work lives on. As Boston Latin School long-term substitute teacher Mr. Danny DeVelis explains, “Sampling and interpolations have done a lot of good for the preservation of music history. When utilized thoughtfully, they not only add extra layers of instrumentation to a track, but they can also add a spiritual link to a past song.”

As technology becomes more sophisticated and it becomes easier to blend music together, there is no doubt that sampling, and the debate about its merits and flaws, will continue. In the meantime, we at least get to enjoy the nostalgia of our past playlists today.

# P and Z's Corner

(ft. Michelle and Hannah)



**By Zoe Colimon (I),  
Parker Hastings (I),  
Hannah Stoll (II)  
& Michelle Wang (II)**  
*Creative Consultants*

**He calls me his girlfriend but hasn't asked me and doesn't say we're together?**

H: Talk to him about it!!!! Communication is key.

Z: PREACH! If he calls you his girlfriend he either:

1. Wants you sooooo bad.
2. Doesn't understand what that label means.
3. Gay

M: Immature af drop him

P: Does he say girlfriend? Or girlfriend?

Z: Or "gurl frienddddddd"? Sorry.

**How do you stop caring so much/overthinking about everything? (ex. Friendships, what other people think, academics, jobs, etc.)**

P: There are some things you inevitably have to care about, but for the most part, when I can tell I have a really strong emotion for something/someone, I think out my emotions. Why am I having them? Who/what is causing this? If you can answer questions on why you're thinking about what you are, chances are you have a reason to think!

Z: Furthermore, I realize that when I create certain narratives in my head, I look for evidence. For example, if I feel that a friend secretly doesn't like me, I start analyzing their behavior when in reality, they're just having a bad day. What I try to remember (in the most blunt way possible) is that not everything is about me. Of course, be nicer to yourself than I am — overthinking is normal. But when it begins to take you out of the present, you start missing out on the experiences that are super precious!

**how do i make someone like me**

P: Don't force people to like you. Creating your identity solely on what others enjoy or like will destroy any sense of self you have.

H: If something is gonna happen, it will happen naturally, so don't sweat it; forcing things will result in a LOT of hurt feelings.

Z: Agreed. I also always say that you attract what you are. If you give off a confident energy, people will naturally gravitate toward you!

M: Or... write their name on a piece of paper 13 times, fold it three times facing you, spray perfume on it and sleep with it under your pillow.

**where to get a valentines love in t-minus 2 weeks**

P: The freezer section at the grocery store! I'm a big fan of Phish Food from Ben & Jerry's, but if you don't like chunks in your dessert, Talenti has good smooth ice cream.

Or, if you wanna get CRAZY, go to the stuffie section in Target and pick out the fluffiest plush you can find.

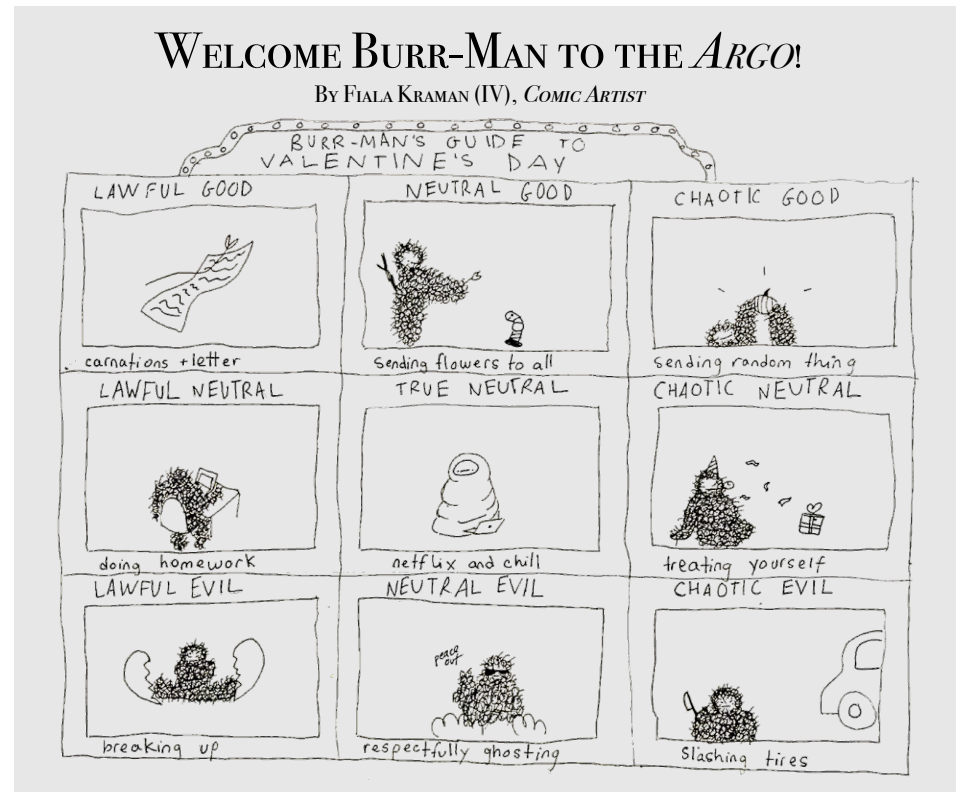
Z: You could also read some feminist literature if you're feeling innovative and wait for someone to approach you and ask you something philosophical. Like a free thinker, dare I say. That's what I do (I'm 6'2). (JK I have a girlfriend)

**how do i secretly drop hints to my crush to ask me out for valentine's day?**

Z: Don't drop a hint, drop the nuke that is your sentiment. Just ask. Worst thing you hear is no and then you forget about it in three weeks. And I know it's not that serious but also playing the mind game is gonna drive you crazyyyyyy.

**Z, P, M and H have more responses to your questions on the Argo's website! Go check them out at:**

**blsargo.org**



# Valentine's Crossword

**By Parker Hastings (I), Lily Huynh (I)  
& Joanna Lin (I)**  
*Head Cruciverbalists*

## Across

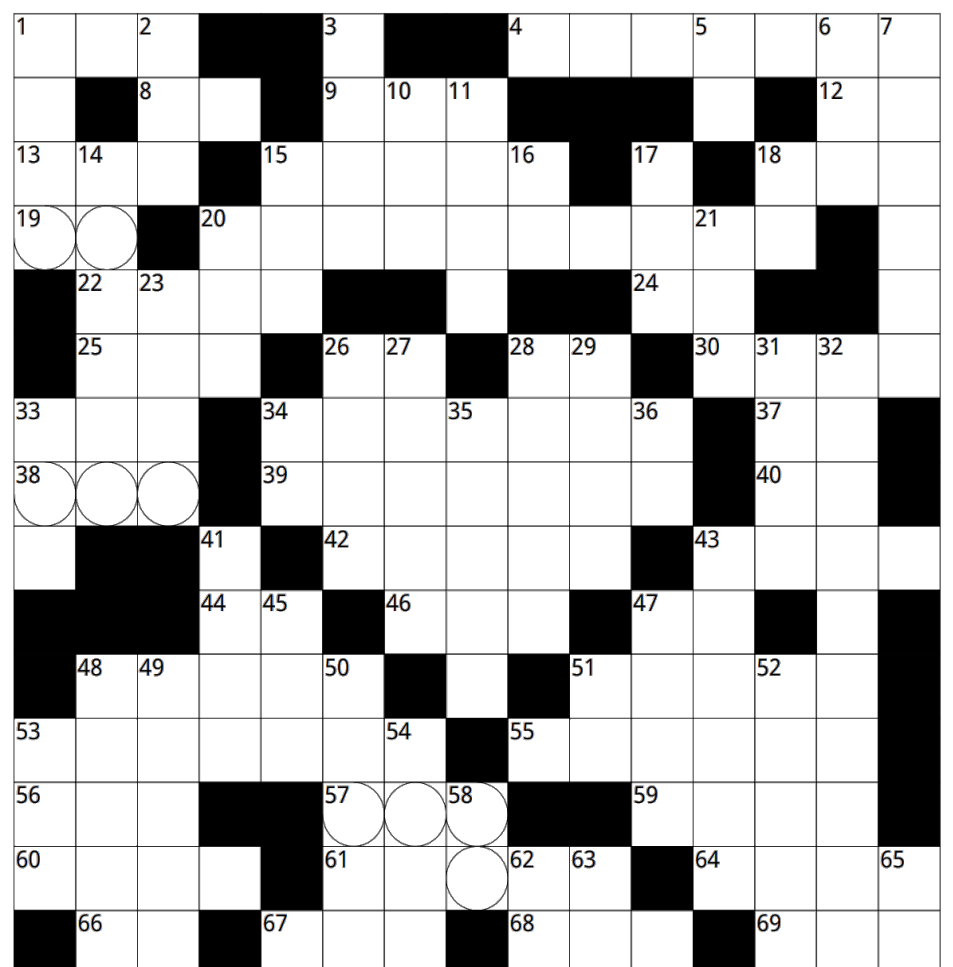
1. *Discord* status that disables notifications; indicated by a red "no entry" symbol, (abbr.)
4. App where users can track bowel movements (Join our league upon solving with the code: yapvoqvub3898)
8. Whose Security Council permanent members include U.S., China, France, etc. (abbr.)
9. Cable television company serving Northeast America
12. State where Kansas City and Jefferson City are located (abbr.)
13. An honor presented by *MTV* (abbr.)
15. March 14 to math lovers
18. Sound elicited by Doja Cat, in Internet-famous song
19. The flag of which is blue and has 12 yellow stars on it (abbr.)
20. 52-week period that school districts use for accounting purposes (mentioned on pg. 1)
22. "Can a gay girl get an 'Amen?'" singer René
24. *Résumé* for academics (abbr.)
25. Conference where a particular party nominates its presidential candidate; held in Chicago this year
26. Repeated affirmation in Tyler, the Creator's "See You Again" feat. Kali Uchis
28. \_\_\_ Studio; common music production software
30. "Behold!" in Latin
33. "Sure" in Gen Z terms
34. How kids grow up, some say
37. Battery type with higher energy capacities
38. Uncommon rock-type block in *Minecraft*

39. Of an ancient Greek city-state known for military emphasis
40. Are you serious? (abbr.)
42. Common Playboi Carti adlib; in his song "Sky," appears after the lyrics: "It's the first of the month!"
43. "You live in my head \_\_\_-free"
44. Musical group that included Tyler, the Creator, Earl Sweatshirt, Frank Ocean and Syd (abbr.)
46. Winehouse; Klobuchar; Schumer
47. One of Obama's pet dogs
48. Fable writer known for his anthropomorphic animal characters
51. Word before "noir" or "grigio"
53. Read article "GRWM for Consumerism" and find the last word (pg. 8)
55. Type of metals on Group 1 of periodic table; examples include Cesium and Potassium
56. With "id"; makes a Freudian pair
57. Portland and Salem's st.
59. enry's and Adele's Cockney way of greeting you
60. Classic poker game requires five
61. \_\_\_ to fall in love, according to the Ponderosa Twins Plus One
64. Mesozoic chicken nugget shape
66. Sound made when you clench your teeth and blow
67. Genetic ancestor of all *Pokémon*; or, method changing jawline shape
68. Tool in *Minecraft* that breaks wood-based blocks
69. Third person singular present indicative form of *esse*

## Down

1. British rapper known for collaborating with Central Cee on song "Sprinter"
2. First name of singer of *Barbie's* "Dance the Night"; or, Dula Peep to Wendy Williams
3. Flower of one's eye?
5. Highest level of performance a gym-goer has achieved in an exercise (abbr.)
6. With *te*, "I love you" in Spanish
7. Popularized term of endearment; in parallel with "snookums"
10. U.S. public health org.
11. Fluffy and warm Indian flatbread
14. Spelled backwards: Title of song in 21 Savage's album *american dream* (pg.13); or,

- a party of crows
15. Protagonist of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*
16. \_a\_e University says, "Boola Boola!"
17. Music school on Huntington Avenue
18. What precedes "Brightside" in song by The Killers
20. FDR-era electric utilities commission replaced by FERC
21. Fifth in NYC, e.g.
23. The "A" in A.M.
26. *Mea culpa!*
27. Grey herbivorous marsupial
28. Acid present in foods high in Omega-3 that forms triglycerides

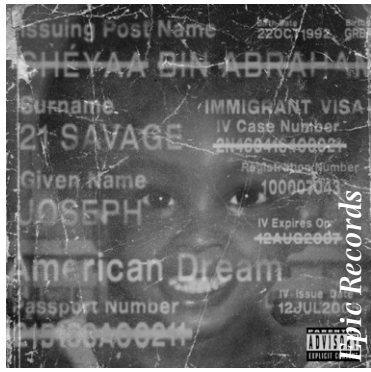


29. Cause of suffering for those aspiring to be accepted into law school
31. Nero; Landwer; Tatte
32. *Argo* commodity (pg. 2)
33. "Bruh"
34. Initials of singer known for albums such as *folklore* and *1989*
35. Something about a painting?
36. Text to reference time for plans that are going to happen that evening (abbr.)
41. Precedes "mark;" popular second-hand shopping app
43. McDonald of McDonald's
45. Fighters of rock
47. Used by Ariana Grande and Nicki Minaj

- in "Side to Side" music video
48. Gorgon-bearing shield representing Athena
49. Current one is the Holocene
50. Unpiloted and unmanned devices sent into space for data collection
51. Weightlifting club at BLS (abbr.)
52. Handless ascension in skateboarding
53. "But" in Latin
54. Get one's ducks in \_\_\_
58. Has 27 member states (abbr.)
62. Sodium's chemical symbol
63. Found under *dy* in calculus
65. What the Celtics go into after 48 minutes of playtime



# Star-Spangled Sonnet: *american dream* by 21 Savage



## *american dream*

By 21 Savage  
January 12, 2024

Genre: Rap, Trap, R&B

Highlights: “redrum,”  
“dangerous,” “née-nah,”  
“should’ve wore a bonnet”

Rating: 8.5/10

By **Kenneth Cacho-Bermudez (III)**  
Contributing Writer

Earlier this year, 21 Savage presented his third studio album to the world, the vulnerable and raw *american dream*. Announced a week before its release and promoted through a parody movie trailer starring Donald Glover and Caleb McLaughlin, *american dream* has attracted overwhelmingly positive reviews, establishing 21 Savage, or “Slaughter Gang CEO,” as an eminent face of modern rap.

Heather Carmilla Joseph, 21 Savage’s mother, starts off the album reciting a spoken word poem on the track “american dream,” reflecting on her struggles and perseverance in hopes of 21 Savage achieving his dreams. The poem ties in to the penultimate track of his 2018 album, *i am > i was*, in which he apologizes to his mother for his teenage mistakes. The song blends together with track two, “all of me” and samples “Wishing on a Star” by Rose Royce, supplementing a classic feel to the gritty lyrics in which Savage recounts events that shaped him as a person.

The title of another notable track, “redrum,” references the iconic scene in Stephen King and Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining*, in which the

word “redrum,” or “murder” spelled backwards, is croaked by the character Danny Torrance as he circles a room clutching a knife. In the song, the phrase “redrum” is repeated multiple times and is accompanied by a sinister beat, invoking a foreboding and uneasy feeling in listeners, excellently living up to the song’s name.

The eighth song, “dangerous,” is produced by 21 Savage’s longtime collaborator Metro Boomin and features Chicago rapper Lil Durk. The two musicians exchange verses about their lifestyles in an explosive, fast-paced track, leaving listeners no option but to rap along. Durk’s explosive “man what?” at 2:31 had me hyped, and left me bobbing my head to the entire song. Metro Boomin’s signature chords and drums call for attention from beginning to end.

The following track is called “née-nah” and is also produced by Metro Boomin. The song is believed to be a reference to singer and activist Nina Simone, who paved the way for much of modern African American music. The song’s excellent use of drums and 808s creates a fun piece, featuring Travis Scott alongside Savage on one of my personal favorite songs on the album.

The second to last song is “red

sky,” and it is unlike anything 21 Savage has done before. Featuring alternative artists Mikky Ekko and Tommy Newport, the track incorporates both rock and orchestral elements, generating a melancholic chorus while simultaneously leading to energetic and passionate verses. “‘red sky’ is underrated,” asserts Tobias Damon (III), “I love the sample. I love the chorus.”

The album concludes with “dark days,” a heavy and vulnerable track. 21 Savage raps about the friends and family he has lost to violence, pleading teenagers to stay in school rather than go down the same path he did. He is joined by Mariah the Scientist, who sings along to his pain to cope with her partner Young Thug’s trial for criminal organization charges. 21 Savage talks about the impact of these losses and admits that, although he exhibits a tough exterior, he still mourns.

*american dream* is an enjoyable listen and a good experience and truly like none of Savage’s other works, demonstrating the artist’s movement towards a new direction. The album is an outstanding addition to Savage’s catalog, and currently cements him as one of the best rappers in the game right now.

# K-Pop: The Ugliness Behind Perfection

By **Sophia Fortuin (IV)**  
& **Sophia Knobel (IV)**  
Contributing Writers

What first comes to mind when you think of K-pop? Is it the catchy music, alluring visuals or the upbeat choreography?

K-pop is a South Korean subgenre of pop music that incorporates elaborate choreography with the music. To many, K-pop performers are also seen as “idols.” From dancing and singing to being role models for listeners, K-pop idols are viewed as celebrities. Through intense marketing and constant content production, they develop a significant social media presence, expected to be flawless in both their routines and every aspect of their life displayed for public consumption.

The captivating performances you see on stage, however, directly contrast what happens behind the scenes. The road to becoming a K-pop star begins at ages as young as eight or nine, where prospective K-pop artists, or “trainees,” work extremely hard to achieve their dream of becoming idols. While going to school, they pour endless hours into intense training. Trainings cover both artistic and media-related tools, including lessons in dancing, singing, different languages and maintaining their public personas.

But merely working hard is not enough for a K-pop idol to make their debut — companies restrict prospective idols’ personal lives and diets, often forcing them to conform to unrealistic beauty standards. Beauty standards in K-pop are very demanding, viewing specific types of faces and bodies as more “desirable” than others. Ideal features include glass-like pale skin, double eyelids and heart-shaped lips. Trainees who do not have these features are often pressured, or even forced, to get plastic surgery as a condition to debut.

Most companies also track the weight of trainees daily. If trainees or idols weigh “too much,” they often undergo extreme diets to lose extensive amounts of weight in a short amount of time. Momo Hirai of the popular girl group TWICE recalls her extreme weight loss: “I was scared that I would not wake up again.”

In most K-pop groups, there are also designated “visual” positions, usually occupied by idols who fit Korean beauty standards most closely. These idols are the companies’ money-makers, often receiving the most brand deals and traction. Many fans, however, deem these positions unnecessary.

Katelyn Le (II), co-president of Boston Latin School Korea, believes the impact of positions extends to fans: “Pointing out one person not only makes their



TWICE’s Momo experiences “Heaven in Hell” because of Korean beauty standards.

group a competition, but it also makes our thoughts on ourselves more of a competition.”

Regardless of an idol’s position in a group, they all are often criticized for their appearances, a key reason why mental health issues are so prevalent in the industry.

Still, the effects of emphasizing physical appearances extends beyond the idols. Petula Sheehan (V), an avid K-pop listener, explains, “[K-pop] has made me more aware of how celebrities are forced into one role and just the general role of beauty standards in our society.” From websites encouraging idol diets and intense workouts to idols’ faces plastered on advertisements for unhealthy products, K-pop fans are intentionally exploited by companies and some don’t even realize it.

Another ongoing issue in the K-pop industry is the sexualization of idols, specifically minors. Companies sometimes push sexual or mature concepts onto groups with very young members. As a result, they are sexualized by viewers who may be much older than them, which puts them into uncomfortable situations. An example of a song with such innuendos is “Cookie”

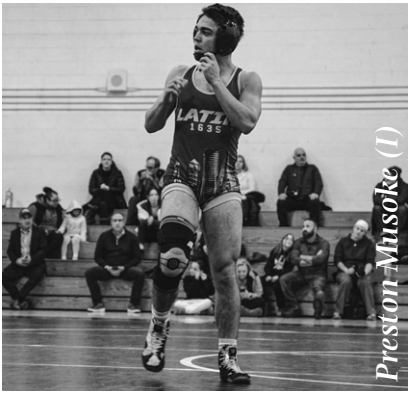
by NewJeans. At the time of the song’s release, four out of the five girls were minors, with the youngest being 14. Nevertheless, the lyrics include many sexual double meanings and metaphors.

K-pop companies are also beginning to target international audiences more, and the fetishization of East Asians, especially Koreans, is reaching a new high. The line between Koreans and Korean idols is being blurred. International fans only knowing about K-pop, and not the extensive culture of Korea as a country, greatly contributes to this issue. Because of their obsession with K-pop idols, fans often correlate their ideal partner with someone who is East Asian.

Le comments, “[K-pop] did fantasize Asians more in a way where people only look at East Asians because we’re the closest to what K-pop idols look like.” Some have gone even as far as getting plastic surgeries in order to “look more Asian,” or look like their favorite idols.

Next time you compare your appearance or lifestyle with that of a K-pop idol, remember that what is portrayed on social media is not the entire truth, and that idols, like us, are people too.

## Spotlight on... Alex Green Barrios (I)



By Julia Sax (I),  
Eliza Knight Bairstow (III)  
& Alice Fragasso (III)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writers

Alex Greene Barrios (I), known to many as AGB, first started wrestling at the age of seven. A decade later, he is a decorated wrestler, who has recently received his 100th win and led his team to capture the Dual County League championship.

Recently, the Boston Latin School senior committed to Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, where he will wrestle at the Division III collegiate level. Greene Barrios remarks, "I chose Case Western because of its great academic reputation. [...] It is an amazing university with an innovative business school. Another bonus is that it is close to my family in Cincinnati."

For the past six years, AGB has excelled on the BLS wrestling team. BLS boys' wrestling coach Jeffrey Gibbons praises AGB's knowledge of the sport, his work ethic and his dedication to training in the off-season. He also notes his strong performance in the championship match in the recent Cape Cod tournament. Although AGB lost in the first period, Coach Gibbons proudly reports, "He came back to dismantle and destroy his opponent."

His teammates are quick to highlight his positive impact on the team environment. "He works hard in the classroom and on the wrestling mat," says Graeme Dierks (I), a friend and co-captain. "He is determined, committed, responsible and a leader."

This is corroborated by Quinn Bowles (III), who named AGB "a consistent teammate who doesn't let himself have off days at any practices or matches." Bowles, who joined the wrestling team as a sixie when AGB was a freshman, also recalls AGB's approachability. "He was one of the older wrestlers on the team that was easy to talk to and ask questions — and he still is for the sixies this year," he says.

AGB emphasizes that he is grateful to the BLS wrestling team for showing him the value of teammates and leadership. "If any of us has a bad match or tournament, we all rally behind that teammate," he voices.

For the remainder of his wrestling career, AGB hopes to either qualify for the national tournament or be named an All-American, a title awarded to the best collegiate athletes within a specific sport. Outside of wrestling, he is an aspiring business major with the goal of someday getting a master's degree or attending law school.

AGB plans to continue his involvement in wrestling beyond college: "I would love to coach, probably not as a full-time job, but if I could help a high school or club team, I would enjoy that." AGB's love and dedication for the sport distinguishes him as an athlete, and continues to inspire others around him.

# Alumni Out-Hooped During Break

By Benjamin Jacobson (II)

Contributing Writer

The Boston Latin School boys' varsity basketball team won the New Year's Day alumni game by three points. When it came down to the last ten seconds, the varsity team maintained a strong defense, resulting in a missed buzzer beater three-pointer by the alumni team, securing the win for the younger players.

The tradition of the alumni game connects players from different generations under two hoops. Players who already graduated are able to reconnect with students they knew as freshmen; alumni players are able to see the new gym for the first time and the changes made by the school since their graduation.

These feelings of connection are well-put by Angel Amaya ('22) who played on the alumni team. He states, "Even though there was a bit of an age gap between some of the players, we were all there to play some basketball, so it ended up being all of us just having a good time. It's cool to be able to see the kids you've played basketball with before, and it's definitely one of those

things where you're there to see the people you played with and everybody else is a plus."

The game was also highly competitive throughout. The varsity team was able to gain a strong lead in the start, but the alumni team had a few secret weapons. Some alumni, who played in college, came back to their *alma mater* and showed off their college-level skills. "One guy that hooped at Dartmouth, literally nobody could stop him, he did what he wanted on that court," Amaya remarks.

One thing that made this year's game so special was the high turnout. Varsity basketball coach and guidance counselor Mr. Jerry Etienne used new methods of outreach, such as working through BPS's database, and was able to send out an email to a greater number of alumni than before. "There were about 40 alum who showed up, which is beyond what we could have thought."

Head of School Jason Gallagher shares, "I was so excited to see everyone there! We had alums from as far back as the late '60s all the way up to students who graduated last year." In addition to the alumni, there was also a large number of BLS basketball players from the ju-

nior varsity and freshman teams as well as the girls teams to watch the game in support.

After the whistle blew, some of the older players continued to hang around afterward to get more hoops in. Players of all different levels worked together and helped each other out. Boys' varsity basketball player Zev Ramey-Winikur (II) says, "I think that it is always enjoyable for us to play with the alumni as they can give us some pointers and we can give them that high school young feeling again. I know that everyone definitely enjoyed the day and it is a fun tradition that I hope will continue for years to come."

Overall, it was a highly successful event that highlights the strength of the BLS alumni community and the skills of the varsity basketball teams. "It was at a time that people were excited to be there, so everything just came together for the perfect opportunity to get together and play some ball," remarks Head of School Gallagher. "It's something that everyone had in common, we all played basketball here at Boston Latin. That makes it a lot of fun and brings back a lot of memories."

## Boston Gains New NWSL Team

By Juliet McVay (III)

Staff Writer

A potential renovation of White Stadium is currently under review by the Boston Planning and Development Agency, a change that will establish it as the home field for Boston's new National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) team while it continues hosting community events and serving as a resource for Boston Public Schools students.

Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2025, and two parts of the stadium will be the focus of the renovation: the Grove, an area in front of the stadium that will contain amenities such as food, beverages and tents for people to gather together in, and the West Grandstand, a gathering space and the entry point for the stadium.

Currently, the stadium is used for the practices and games of BPS students and for general public benefit.

There have been worries that the school system's athletics will be displaced after the stadium is redone. Annabelle Bagley (III) voices her uncertainty, saying, "When I first heard about the renovation of White Stadium, I was worried that we'll no longer be able to use it for our Boston Latin School vs. Boston Latin Academy football game." The annual and widely attended BLS vs. BLA football game occurs at White Stadium, hosting not only the football players but also the cheer team, pep-band, step-squad and the larger school audiences. Concerned students and families will be happy to hear that BPS is still supposed to have plenty of time allotted for schools at White Stadium after the reconstruction. BLA, however, will have to briefly relocate during development, but they will be able to return after the renovations have been completed.

The changes will provide a modernized structure with many new facilities to the Mattapan, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain and Dorchester area. BLS girls' varsity soccer coach Jon Rudzinski largely supports the plan and believes that the renovation will bring huge positive change. He notes, however, that while many are excited, "clearly there is and will be some neighborhood opposition. Many people oppose any local development, often for spurious reasons. The question will be



The Boston Breakers break through for a goal!

whether the NWSL franchise and the City administration [...] can successfully navigate any neighborhood opposition to deliver the goods."

For many fans of the NWSL, an exciting prospect that will come from the redoing of White Stadium is the creation of Boston's NWSL team. The NWSL, founded only in 2012, is a relatively new 14-team league, with several teams joining in the coming years. Boston's NWSL team will have the completed White Stadium as their home field when they make their appearance in the 2026 season.

In the past, Boston had a professional women's soccer team called the Boston Breakers, but in 2018, they were dissolved when the team failed to be sold to the New England Revolution or any other buyers. Their failure was largely chalked up to the unsuccessful and practically nonexistent marketing of the team. Such a legacy makes people question if the new team will face similar problems.

Like many people, BLS girls' junior varsity soccer coach Cleo Woodcock is excited for the new women's soccer team. Living close by to the stadium, she believes that the renovations will be great for the students of the city's athletic groups.

Coach Woodcock comments, "It is close to where a lot of students live, and I think that all of the students who get to use it will find it much more convenient

than some of the current alternatives. [...] And, if they are already using it, it will be a better experience than what they are currently having." Since White Stadium is already so widely used by both BPS and the community that lives near the area, the location should not be a problem for the student's use.

On January 31, BPS held an open meeting for student-athlete to address comments, concerns or suggestions about this renovation and the goal to up Boston sports participation to its suburban counterparts. A Strength condition center, student lounge, student locker rooms, sports medicine center and team banquet spaces in the East Grandstand of the stadium were all part of the plans focused entirely on BPS athletes.

For sports, in particular, there will be a regulation-sized soccer field that will be well-maintained and can facilitate games of many sports, such as football and lacrosse. An eight-lane track along with areas for field events — long jump, pole vault and shot put, for example — will also be added so that the stadium can be home to track teams.

Overall, White Stadium's revitalization should provide an improved facility for BPS while giving Boston a NWSL team to celebrate, one that will have close connections to the community they find in their newly redone home field.



# Checkmate: BLS Chess Club's Chess Tournament

By Rachel Li (III)

Assistant Editor

On January 10, the Boston Latin School Chess Club hosted their first tournament of the year, where students gathered in the Seevak Room for an invigorating afternoon of friendly competition.

A welcoming and enthusiastic group of students, BLS Chess Club offers a lively atmosphere for students to learn about chess and cultivate their skills. Whether new to chess or experienced in the game, all are welcome to play or watch.

Every Wednesday, the club meets after school in BLS mathematics teacher Mr. John Walker's classroom. With roughly a decade of experience as club supervisor, Mr. Walker helped in planning the tournament and has undoubtedly contributed to the welcoming and energetic atmosphere of the club. "Chess is a game that can be fun for anyone, from absolute beginner on up," says Mr. Walker. "The goal is for students to have fun, learn a new game if they haven't played it before, and for them to keep challenging themselves to get better by learning from each other."

With this mindset, the club provides a casual and fun opportunity for students who are learning and having fun.

The current officers of the Chess Club are Elden Liu (II), Shane Lundrigan (II) and Alexander Demaio (III). They organized the tournament using an online Swiss pairing software, *ChessManager*, which helped ensure that the event went smoothly and everyone could sit back and enjoy playing chess.

Out of the 14 students who competed, Noah Dang (II) was the winner of this tournament. "Once I got back into the groove of playing over-the-board chess, the nostalgic feeling came back to me," states Dang, emphasizing his rediscovered passion for chess. "The thrill of strat-



Chess club members lock in for their intense games.

egizing and outwitting your opponents reminded me of why I fell in love with chess in the first place."

As an experienced chess player who has been playing competitively since the age of five, Dang somewhat expected to win. He notes that winning was in no way an easy task, but he and the other participants enjoyed being able to simply play chess and have fun playing it together.

Chess Club co-president Lundrigan also says, "Although there was a winner, the outcome and standings of the tournament were not too important, as most people were just there to enjoy chess,

which was a goal for us."

Although this tournament was not the first for the BLS Chess Club, it had been a considerable amount of time since the previous one. Two years ago, they had hosted a large tournament with the BLS Junior Classical League, but there was a delay in following tournaments due to scheduling issues.

Following the success of this past tournament, the club is making efforts to widen their scope of competitors, hoping to compete against teams from other schools. Mr. Walker is working on organizing a virtual chess tournament with

former Assistant Head of School Jonathan Mulhern and his chess team at the William Galvin Middle School in Canton.

Hoping to compete in more tournaments, both virtual and in-person, the BLS Chess Club is enthusiastic to further expand the club and diversify the chess community at BLS, seeking to develop and strengthen their thinking skills, concentration, memory and even self-confidence. Not to mention, the students have been able to meet peers and bond because of their common interest in chess, allowing them to strengthen their interpersonal skills while learning and having fun.

## Let the (March) Madness Begin

By Luke Fredericks (I)  
& Michael Tran (III)

Contributing Writers

On March 19, the ever-so anticipated March Madness tournament will kick off with 68 college basketball teams battling in a single-elimination bracket for the chance to win the national championship. Each year, millions of fans compete by picking who they believe will win each of the 63 matchups, all the way from the round of 64 to the championship game.

Throughout the month-long event, we can be sure to witness countless upsets, overtime thrillers and occasionally, a Cinderella story. As we get closer to the start of the tournament, three teams — Purdue University, University of Connecticut (UConn) and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) — have proved themselves this season as contenders for the national championship.

Let's start out with the defending champions, the UConn Huskies. After a historic run in last year's tournament, becoming only the second four seed to win it all, the Huskies have only gotten better. Currently at 17-2, UConn holds the number one spot in *ESPN's* top 25 rankings. The team's scoring is led by senior guards Tristen Newton and Cam Spencer, both averaging 15 points per game.

Newton is a versatile playmaker who is able to get his teammates easy

looks at the rim, a large reason for the remarkable run in last year's tournament. Spencer joins the team this year as a transfer from Rutgers and serves UConn as a prototypical two guard, with his ability to both create his own shots and knock down open looks. He leads the team in three-point percentage, at an elite 45 percent. This duo is able to play very well off each other, which has led to the tremendous success for this Huskies team.

Arguably the most important piece for UConn this year, however, has been the sophomore forward, Alex Karaban. Boston Latin School boys' varsity basketball Coach Jerry Etienne coached the Massachusetts native for several years and has come to know his skillset well. Coach Etienne calls Karaban a "high IQ perimeter threat," and most importantly "a glue guy." This description proves apt. When center Donovan Clingan suffered a foot injury, Karaban seamlessly transitioned to the five position, enabling the Huskies to continue their domination, even in the absence of their primary big man.

Despite an incredible record, UConn lacks an elite presence on both sides of the ball. The team ranks No. 46 in points per game, and allows 64.6 points to their opponents each game, which is only good for 30th in Division I basketball according to *ESPN*. While these numbers are not bad by any stretch, the Huskies need to enhance their performance if they wish to repeat as champions.

Contrasting the success of UConn, no team crashed and burned more than Purdue University in last year's tournament. After earning a number one seed, the Boilermakers lost in the first round to sixteen-seeded Fairleigh-Dickinson University, marking the largest upset in March Madness history. This year, they have put themselves in a position to erase their previous embarrassment and redeem themselves.

Purdue is headlined by Zach Eddy, the 2023 Naismith Men's College Player of the Year. The 7'4", 300-pound center is the most unstoppable force in college hoops, and yet, he's still improving. Kyle Tucker, a staff writer for the *Athletic*, claims that "Eddy has gotten smarter, stronger, more confident and competent seemingly every day he's been in college." In his senior season, Eddy is averaging 23 points per game, the third highest in Division I, an extremely efficient 63 percent from the field. Due to Eddy's output, supplemented by sophomore guard Braden Smith's playmaking, the Purdue Boilermakers are top ten in points per game and rank second in *ESPN's* top 25 teams. With Purdue's current construction, they have the ability to make a long run in the tournament. Due to their long history of disappointments, however, it may not be wise to put the fate of your bracket in the hands of the Boilermakers.

North Carolina is another team looking to have a big bounceback year, coming off of last year's underwhelming performance when they failed to qualify

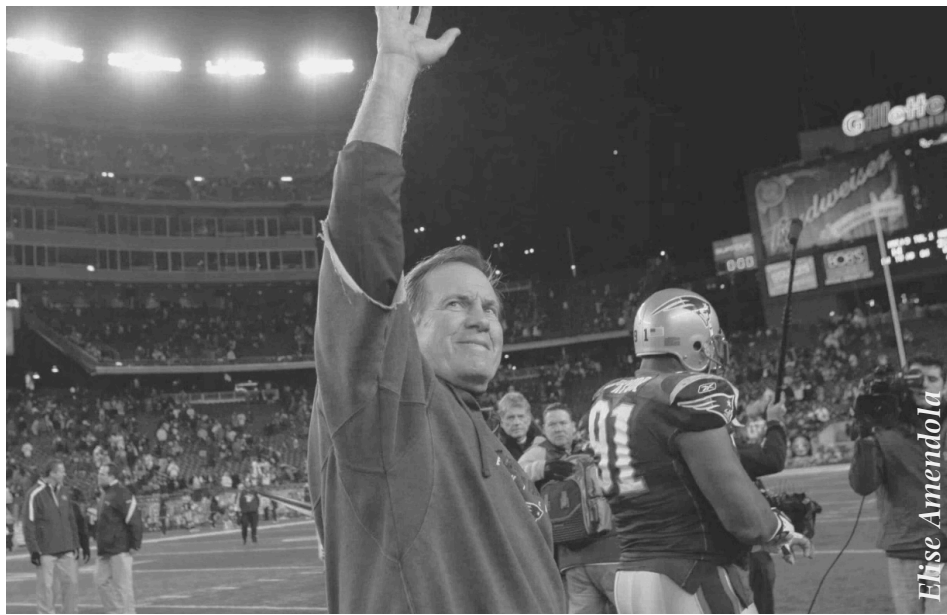
for the tournament, despite making it to the national championship the previous season. UNC is led by arguably the best pick-and-roll duo in college basketball.

The initiator of their offense, RJ Davis, is a crafty three-level scorer currently averaging over 21 points per game. After receiving the AP player of the week for the third time this season, Matt Norlander of *CBS Sports* went as far as to call Davis the "best guard in the country." The big man Armando Bacot is a dominant presence inside, averaging a double-double while anchoring their defense. Coach Etienne believes that "UNC will only go as far as Davis and Bacot take them," emphasizing the importance that this pairing will have on the outcome of their tournament run.

The Tar Heels currently sit at 16-3 (9-0 in conference play) despite the loss of Caleb Love to the transfer portal. UNC made up for some of his offensive output by adding Stanford University transfer Harrison Ingram, five-star recruit Elliot Cadeau and University of Notre Dame transfer Cormac Ryan. Without the same level of star power that they had during their 2022 run, however, the Tar Heels will have to rely on contributions from each member of the organization if they wish to add another banner to the historic program.

While we can try to predict the outcome, we cannot know for sure what will come to fruition. Wishing everyone luck in making their 2024 March Madness Brackets!

# The End of an Era: Belichick Parts Ways With Patriots



Bill Belichick waves to fans at Gillette Stadium.

By **Liam Sullivan (II)**  
& **Benjamin Ahmuda (VI)**  
*Contributing Writers*

The New England Patriots have been a football powerhouse known for their numerous Super Bowl wins and special moments under the seasoned leadership of Bill Belichick. Across the last five seasons, however, the Patriots dynasty has come to an end.

Belichick began his career as an assistant coach in 1975 with the Baltimore Colts. From there, he bounced around coaching jobs in the National Football League (NFL), including coaching for the New York Giants, where he won two Super Bowls as a defensive coordinator.

Belichick then took over the head coaching job for New England in Janu-

ary of 2000 and would go on to win a total of 302 regular season games while amassing the most playoff wins as an NFL head coach of all time at 31 wins. The decorated coach also won the *Associated Press* Coach of the Year award in 2003, 2007 and 2010. Belichick's reign as one of the most dominant head coaches in sports history persisted well into the later half of his career as a Patriot, winning his last Super Bowl in 2019.

In the 2020 season, the Patriots faced the departure of legendary quarterback, Tom Brady, a core component to the six Super Bowl victories. The subsequent seasons following Brady's departure, saw the team enter a rebuilding phase, experimenting with new young talent and coaching strategies.

During this phase, the team struggled, needing to fill the role of a crucial

player to any football team, the quarterback. In 2021, New England fans began to see resilience and adaptability from then-head coach Bill Belichick after he drafted former University of Alabama standout, Mac Jones.

Patriots fans, however, were soon disappointed in Jones's less-than-ideal start with the Patriots, posting a record of 22 wins and 29 losses since 2021. Mac Jones was benched four separate times throughout the 2023-2024 season before ultimately being benched for backup quarterback Bailey Zappe in week 12.

The 24-year-old backup threw six touchdowns and nine interceptions in his ten appearances in the 2023-2024 season. Jones, comparatively, threw for ten touchdowns and 12 interceptions in 11 appearances. New Englanders soon grasped that the Patriots' days of dominance were behind them.

Boston Latin School varsity football quarterback August Groh (II) understands the challenges and difficulty of the position. As such, he is perhaps more sympathetic to Jones's and Zappe's struggles than other Patriots fans. Groh explains, "He has had no weapons these last two seasons," referencing the lack of offensive talent surrounding the two young quarterbacks. Groh adds that the struggle was not completely Jones's fault, saying, "Yes, he played poorly, but also was never bailed out by any of his teammates who also played poorly at times."

Following the 2023-2024 season, where the team missed the playoffs by a longshot with an overall record of four wins and 13 losses, the New England Patriots and Bill Belichick decided to

mutually part ways after 24 seasons full of championships, broken records and magical moments.

Belichick said in a news conference to *USA Today*, that "Robert [Kraft] and I, after a series of discussions, have mutually agreed to part ways." His departure brings forward a multitude of questions about the Patriots' future success.

Following the mutual split, Patriots owner, Robert Kraft, expressed interest in hiring former Patriots linebacker Jerod Mayo, who accepted the position to fill the head coach vacancy for the Patriots. Although change can be daunting, the Patriots are known for their quick adaptability.

"I've been a Patriots fan my whole life," says Will Ferraro (II), a two-year veteran linebacker for the BLS varsity football team. "But in recent times, I've come to be annoyed by the Patriots' frequent losses." Ferraro, additionally, who was initially excited to see Mac Jones in a Patriots uniform, has since become frustrated stating, "Mac's track record has slowly but surely declined to a very low point, and Zappe now seems like the next best thing."

At 71 years old, Belichick, the 17-time American Football Conference East division champion, did not allude to retirement during press conferences and media responses, leaving the door open for future coaching opportunities. Belichick believes he has more work to do, expressing interest in going for the regular season win record. He has received interest from the Dallas Cowboys, Los Angeles Chargers and Atlanta Falcons, but has not made any decisions yet, still searching for the right team.

## Winter Sports Updates

By **Rachel Li (III)**  
& **Simon Hay-Sutton (III)**  
*Assistant Editor and Contributing Writer*

### Powerlifting

The Boston Latin School powerlifting team, coached by BLS World History teacher Mr. Eric Cordeiro and BLS mathematics teacher Ms. Rachel Kelly, has been performing better than ever this season. Compared to last year's 40 lifters, there are now over 70 members on the team. Amidst this massive increase of enthusiasm for the sport, all lifters participated in the annual Intrasquad meet this past December.

According to Coach Cordeiro, "The main goal is always to introduce students to lifting weights, give them confidence in the weightroom, teach them the proper form to lift and to make sure that all the lifters succeed and have progress."

On January 13, over 40 BLS students participated in the 2024 USA Powerlifting (USAPL) St. John's High School Classic, where they won overall first place team. Recently, BLS hosted the 2024 USAPL *Sumus Primi* Meet where 30 lifters set personal records. So far, 14 students have qualified for the 2024 USAPL High School Nationals in April taking place in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where they will compete against lifters from across the country. Currently, the students who plan to attend are Alex Ahmed (I), Alex Lam (I), Wendy Ruan (I), Simon Brown (II), Christian Le (II), Emily Polcaro (II), Ava Vu (II), Edison Wei (II), Kate Lincecum (III), Aidan Mak (III), Aina Nguyen (III), Katelyn Tran (III), Alexis Dakin (IV) and Lyra Kirouac (IV). This month, BLS Powerlifting will be hosting the 2024 USAPL Wolfpack High School Open, and in March, they will compete in the Ryan Moore New England High School State Championships.

### Hockey

As of January 26, the BLS girls' hockey team, led by Coach Tom McGrath, currently ranks No. 19 out of 44 teams in the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) Division 1 with a record of 11-3-1 (wins-losses-ties).

On December 27, 2023, the team played in the Michael Giordano Christmas Classic, where they defeated Shrewsbury in a shootout victory, becoming champions.

This season, captain Maeve Murray (I) has tallied 13 points (nine goals and four assists) and captain Ava Enright (II) has earned 16 points (four goals and 12 assists). Angela Wells (IV) has earned a whopping 21 points (13 goals and nine assists). The defensive line is led by captain Maeve Greeley (I) and goalie Kelly McKenna (II) with three shutouts. Having qualified for the state tournament, the team hopes to make a deep playoff run and continue their fantastic form.

As of January 26, the BLS boys' hockey team ranks No. 10 out of 40 in the MIAA Division 2 with a record of 6-6 (wins-losses).

Head Coach Frank Woods describes his 20th season, "The league is extremely competitive this season with four teams ranked in the top ten in the division, including Concord Carlisle who is ranked No. 1 and Tewksbury ranked No. 3."

Captains Matt Carrara (I) and Aidan Fitzpatrick (I) lead the team in points with 16 (eight goals and eight assists) and 15 (five goals and ten assists). On the other end of the ice, captain Bobby Banks (I) leads the defensive line with goalie Oliver Murphy (III) totaling an impressive 215 saves. As the team enters the second half of their season, Coach Woods says, "There are no nights off in our league but we have played competitively in league play and hope to continue to do so in the second half."

### Boys' Swimming

The BLS boys' swim team has qualified in multiple events led by captains Piotr Kierner (I), Alex Xu (I), Cal Hale (II) and Caleb Kohn (II). Individually, Xu has excelled with his state-qualifying 100-meter butterfly and 100-meter freestyle times, in addition to qualifying twice for sectionals with his 50-meter freestyle time and three times in 100-meter backstroke event. Hale has also qualified for the state tournament in the 50-meter freestyle event and three times in the 100-meter freestyle event. In the 200-meter relay, Xu (I), Brian Xu (V), Hale and Kohn qualified for the state tournament and Xu (I), Xu (V), Hale and Kevin Wang (III) qualified for sectionals in the 400-meter freestyle relay. Impressively, Kohn has stepped up to become the first-ever diver for the boys' swim team, earning some much needed points for the Wolfpack in wins against teams like Bedford, Cambridge Rindge & Latin and Waltham.

### Basketball

The BLS boys' basketball team has four more games to look forward to this season against Bedford, Brighton and Medford among others.

For the BLS girls' basketball team in the MIAA Division 1 League, although the team lost 22-35 in their game against Wayland on January 26, they put up a good fight with 49 rebounds and eight blocks. So far, they have won against O'Bryant, Boston Latin Academy and have a couple of games left in their season, including Bedford and Cambridge Rindge & Latin.

### Indoor Track

As the Indoor Track Dual County League (DCL) Championship on February 15 draws near, the BLS indoor track team has been racing hard and training harder. They have competed in a total of ten meets so far and have three approaching. Past meets include the Massachusetts State Track Coaches Association Coaches Invitational on January 27 where Colin Fisher (I) took first place in the one-mile, Bilal Elhaji (II) took second in the two-mile and Theresa Thompson (IV) took third in the high jump. Coming up is the long awaited MIAA Division 1 Indoor Track & Field Championship on February 15, the MIAA Meet of Champions on February 24 and the New Balance Indoor Nationals in March.

### Wrestling

This season, the BLS wrestling team is dominating the DCL Large Division with an overall record of 16-2 (wins-losses). To claim the DCL Championship, they went against Wayland and won 44-21. At the Cape Cod Invitational Tournament on January 20, they took second place overall with 13 placers. They placed second out of twenty teams at the Weymouth Invitational on January 14 with seven individual placers, and at the Dan Balboni Holiday Classic, they took second out of 26 teams. At the George Bossi Lowell Holiday Wrestling Tournament on December 25, they finished 25th out of 93 teams.

