



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL

Unveiling Ms. Rachel Skerritt's Portrait

By Ross Wilson (II)
& Olivia Chen (III)

Head News Editor and Assistant News Editor

On November 16, Boston Latin School held a celebration to present the portrait of Former Head of School Rachel Skerritt and honor distinguished graduates Melvin B. Miller '52 and Jeanette Towles '00.

Skerritt is the first Black American to have her portrait hung out of 27 prior Heads of School. This was the first portrait presentation since Former Head of School Lynne Mooney-Teta and only the third portrait to feature a woman.

The event began by honoring Towles, an advocate for people with disabilities and other underrepresented groups in STEM, followed by Miller, the co-founder of the newspaper *The Bay State Banner*, which focuses on the Black American community. Finally, Skerritt's portrait was unveiled. Adhering to the BLS tradition, Former Head of Schools Mooney-Teta and Michael Contompasis also attended the event.

Many teachers, faculty members and Skerritt herself worked together to prepare for the event. Head of School Jason Gallagher also spent considerable time discussing with Skerritt her thoughts on the portrait. Mr. Gallag-



Ms. Rachel Skerritt stands with the class of 2025 officers for her historic portrait unveiling.

her says, "Ms. Skerritt is a visionary. She's a trailblazer in so many different ways, and [the colorful portrait] was the vision that she had when she wanted that created, and that's what came out."

BLS Director of Operations Ms. Jesse Kwan '98 helped to run the logistics of the event and worked with

the Boston Latin School Association to provide entertainment and other services for the guests.

The event was open to everyone in the BLS community, with many alumni, parents and students attending. Students also performed in the ceremony, including the Gospel Choir and those who performed skits.

"For hundreds of years, Boston Latin School was led by white men," Mr. Gallagher comments, "And when Ms. [Cornelia A.] Kelley's portrait was raised, finally girls could see someone who looked like them. [...] And now to have a woman of color on there [...] when you're a sixie walking in, you get to see someone who looks like you."

Trump Wins the Presidential Election



Donald J. Trump celebrates his presidential victory with his family.

By Weian Xue (III)
& Stephany Zhu (II)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

In a decisive victory against Vice President Kamala Harris, President-elect Donald J. Trump has reclaimed the presidency of the United States. Accompanied by Senator JD Vance, Trump secured his win with 312 electoral votes, including those from all seven projected swing states.

In addition to Trump's presidential victory, the Republicans have secured a majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. This year, the Republicans gained four seats in the Senate and this shift is expected to allow Trump to accomplish more of his pro-

posed policies during his second presidential term.

In the U.S., the Electoral College is used to elect the president and vice president. Under this system, citizens vote for electors, who in turn cast their votes for the correlating candidates. Each state has the same number of electors as it does members in Congress: one for each member in the House of Representatives and the two senators. In all states except for Maine and Nebraska, the presidential nominee who wins the majority of votes in that state will win all of the electoral votes in that state. To be elected president, candidates must receive 270 electoral votes.

This year, the voter turnout was 20 million fewer compared to the 2020 election. Compared to Biden, Harris under-

performed not only in the swing states, but also in states that traditionally voted Democrat. In New York specifically, the Democratic margin shrunk by approximately one million votes since the 2020 election. According to Fei Li (II), president of BridgeBLS, "A lot of people also end up not doing research and not voting." This decrease in voter turnout, especially for the Democrats, contributed greatly to Harris's loss of key states.

This year, Trump easily collected electoral votes from historically Republican states in the South, such as Texas and Alabama. Trump, however, focused his efforts on winning over more demographically diverse voters, most notably Hispanic and Latino populations, which contributed greatly to Trump's victory and the red shift seen during this election.

Harris lost the swing states of Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania by narrow margins of one to three percent. She focused her campaign on these states since they were states that Democratic presidential candidates won between 1992 to 2012, before Trump first ran for president in 2016. After she lost these states, it was mathematically impossible for her to gain the 270 electoral votes necessary to win the election. AP U.S. Government and Politics student Emily Yu (I) explains, "I think what happened was that a lot of fervor from Harris stepping up was very much generated by people who were already going to vote for the Harris-Walz ticket. [...] I think that just not enough time was spent convincing undecided voters."

Despite Trump winning the swing states, Harris still managed to secure sup-

port in traditionally Democratic states on the West and East coasts. Massachusetts voted for the Democratic Party not only in the presidential election, but also in the Senate and House elections.

During his campaign, Trump pledged to establish the largest deportation of undocumented immigrants in history, increase tariffs on foreign trade and decrease inflation rates. Meanwhile, Harris advocated for higher taxes on the rich, the right to have an abortion and protection of democracy.

One of the most significant policies Trump plans to enact during his presidential term is increased tariffs. He plans to increase these taxes on foreign imports to at least 10 to 20 percent, with tariffs on Chinese goods possibly increasing to 60 percent. This policy is aimed at discouraging consumption of foreign goods to protect American industries, which could theoretically improve the national economy.

Boston Latin School AP Economics teacher Mr. Patrick Boor explains, "Generally speaking, economists don't like tariffs because it interferes with trade. [...] And so the fear about Trump's proposed 60 percent tariff on goods coming from China and 10 percent tariffs on goods coming from elsewhere is a fear that that will raise prices for American consumers."

It is unclear whether Trump's various proposed policies will be implemented under his administration, and only time will tell what changes will be made.

President-elect Trump and Vice President-elect Vance will be inaugurated on January 20, 2025.

Boston Latin School Association

EDITORS' NOTE



Happy Thanksgiving-eve!

In honor of a certain holiday tomorrow, we'd like to start this issue off by expressing some gratitudes.

First, we are grateful for small acts of kindness. Thank you to those who hold the door, who stop to help you pick up your pencils, who wait for you to tie your shoe and smile back across the room. Thank you to teachers who understand hard days and classmates who turn and actually talk. Though it sounds cliché, your gestures make life a bit more bearable.

Second, we must note our appreciation for our custodians. Thank you for being the first and last ones in the building and for keeping our classrooms spotless. Thank you for making an effort to check in on students and rushing to the rescue when we need to unlock any doors. We promise your efforts are not going unnoticed.

Third, thank you to Ms. Pierce for monitoring the crosswalk in the morning — rain or shine. Your daily signs and songs start our days off strong. Also, thank you for being our 4:00 P.M. alarm every afternoon — you bring some consistency to our chaotic lives.

Lastly, we are grateful for friendship. Thank you to our friends who laugh and cry with us, who are shoulders to lean on in times of stress, anxiety and “tenage-stential” crises. The uncertainty of the future doesn't seem so intimidating with you by our sides. You are a true testament to unconditional love.

Now that we're seniors, we've been hit in the face with the reality that time is fleeting. In the midst of a season of thanks, we hope you remember to carry appreciation for both the big and little things beyond the dinner table. Temporary moments have the potential to create everlasting memories.

Tomorrow, good luck to our football and cheer teams, step squad and pep band. Finally, thank you, reader, for opening up this issue of the *Argo*.

Bleed purple,
Mannah

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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A Guide to Massachusetts's 2024 Ballot Questions

By Rachel Starr (I)
& Amy Dai (V)

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Question One: Yes

The Massachusetts state legislature creates and alters laws at the state level, just as the United States Congress does nationally. Prior to the ballot questions, it was one of four states whose legislatures did not have someone to examine its decisions.

The vote for Question One allows the state auditor to inspect and publicly record the legislature's decisions. Supporters hope to see more transparency in decision-making because legal processes can often feel closed off from the average citizen. The state auditor would be the sole authority in these cases, so some believe that this gave them too much power over a separate branch of government.

With Question One having been passed, the state auditor, Diana DiZoglio, is now permitted to audit the legislature, but her actual impact could be limited by laws regarding separation of powers, and if the legislature refuses to comply. DiZoglio has stated that she will start by surveying if current policies and procedures are equitable.

Question Two: Yes

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is a set of standardized tests for students in Massachusetts, starting at third grade and finishing in tenth grade. Almost every state has a set of standard regulations required to graduate from high school.

Question Two proposes to eliminate the MCAS or other statewide and districtwide assessments as a high school graduation requirement. For years, teachers and families have pushed to remove the MCAS because they argue it creates pressure for teachers to only prepare students for the test. In addition, many believe that the district faces inequities in preparation and

resources depending on the school.

Some, however, are concerned about a lack of standards. "It's an easy way to test how someone is doing in school and to see if they need help," notes Vivian Hamwey (I).

As an alternative, students would only be required to complete coursework set by the district that demonstrates mastery according to the state's academic standards in STEM and English subjects. The Board of Education, as well as Governor Maura Healy's administration, has already begun discussions on possible replacements for state-wide graduation requirements.

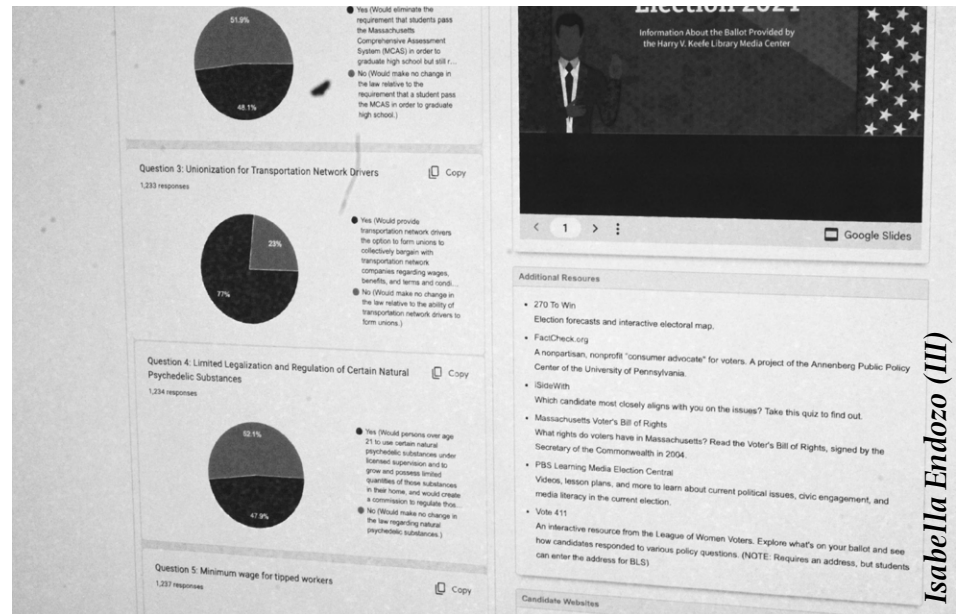
Question Three: Yes

Workers employed by the MBTA drive buses and trains that belong to the government. In contrast, rideshare drivers are independent contractors who offer rides using their own personal vehicles on apps like *Uber* and *Lyft*. They have not had the right to unionize and attempt to improve working conditions under the National Labor Relations Act.

In an attempt to increase the drivers' rights, Question Three proposes that rideshare drivers should be allowed to form labor unions regardless of employment status. Now, these workers can form unions that represent all the rideshare drivers under the condition that a quarter or more of the current active drivers give their approvals, which would allow them to negotiate with transportation companies.

Boston Latin School assistant Civics teacher Ms. Grace Forrester shares possible concerns: "Allowing for unionization will increase the cost of using a rideshare service. This will give more money to the union as a whole rather than ensuring the workers themselves see a raise in their wages."

There is also controversy about outcomes impacting workers who do not support a union, but ultimately, the goal of the union will be to improve the welfare of these drivers, including proper pay, health coverage and work-



BLS students vote in a mock election through an online ballot.

ing conditions.

Question Four: No

Psychedelic drugs — substances that can alter the emotions, perceptions and thoughts of individuals—are used more and more frequently for personal use and clinical research. They, however, are illegal and can only be obtained when issued for scientific research or certain psychedelic-assisted therapy.

If passed, Question Four would have allowed all people over the age of 21 in Massachusetts to possess and grow small amounts of natural psychedelic drugs in the form of mushrooms or plants. People who grow small amounts of these drugs would also be permitted to share them, as long as it is for personal use without the intention of being sold.

Along with the legalization of these substances, new industries that comply with state regulations for the usage of psychedelic drugs would then be allowed to distribute these drugs with the goal of supporting therapeutic centers; a 15 percent tax and a government advisory board would also be implemented to oversee an increase in psychedelic use.

Question Five: No

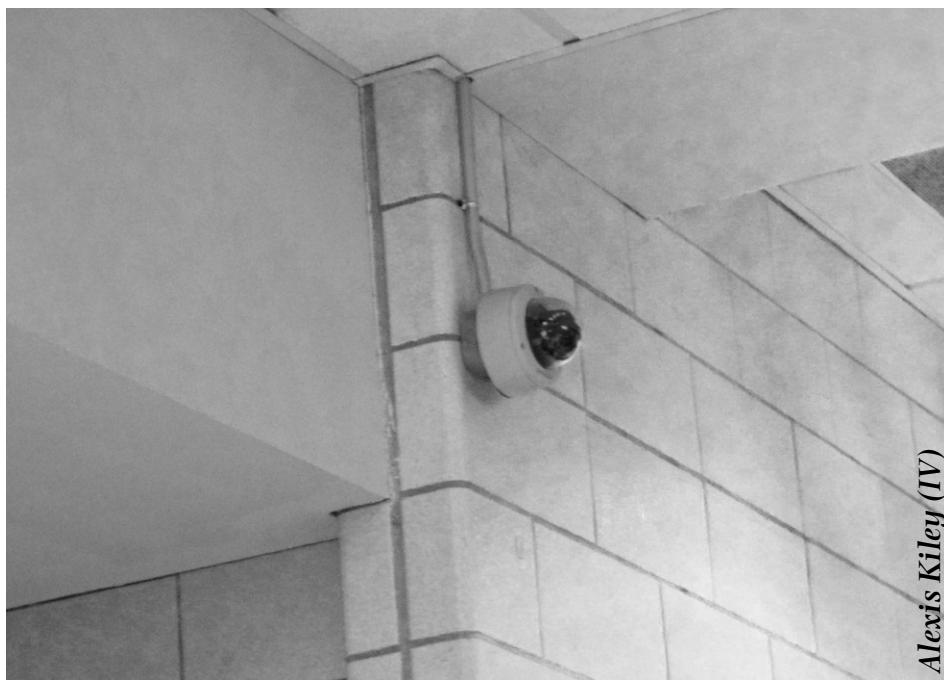
Massachusetts currently has a minimum wage of 15 dollars, but it is 6.75 dollars per hour for tipped workers such as waiters. If an employee's tips do not sum to 15 dollars, then the employer must pay them the lost wages.

Question Five proposed a raise in the tipped workers' minimum wages each year until 2029, when it would reach 15 dollars; their hourly wages, for example, would have risen to 9.60 dollars per hour in 2025, then 10.95 dollars in 2026 and so on. Proponents for the law argued that it is unfair to expect customers to subsidize a server's wage with tips, given the lack of a tipping culture in other countries.

Many tipped workers, however, opposed Question Five. Prices for meals would rise to cover the extra costs and without guaranteed tips, they would likely make less money.

BLS AP Economics teacher Mr. Patrick Boor describes the economic factors, stating, "There was fear that it would be a higher cost for consumers and restaurant owners, and that some of the tips would be shared equally [with other employees]."

Securing the School: New Camera Installations



BLS implements new security cameras throughout the building.

By Meilin Sha (IV)
Staff Writer

Boston Latin School will finish the installation of over 100 new security cameras by 2025 as part of a district-wide policy approved by the Boston City Council in 2021.

Construction workers are currently installing electrical wires, and they will begin attaching the cameras

in four to five weeks. Before this policy was passed, several dozen cameras operated in the interior of BLS, but they had blind spots. The new cameras will provide live footage of the exterior of the school building, as well as increase surveillance inside.

According to the 2023 City of Boston Annual Surveillance Report, Boston Public Schools spent 1,809,412 dollars on cameras and

cabling installation in 2023 with the goal of strengthening the security for students and staff members. All cameras were acquired before 2021, and this ongoing BPS policy allots a budget of 6 million dollars over a five-year period.

At BLS, administrators will not be constantly monitoring the cameras; instead, the cameras will act as supplementary tools to replay footage if a school-based incident occurs.

BLS Director of Operations Ms. Jesse Kwan notes, "It adds a layer of sort of comfort for me that, you know, we do have eyes, and we are able to go back and look at whatever it is that we need to look at."

The new cameras will increase surveillance inside the building by providing continuous live action video. Despite the improved safety, the policy has faced backlash regarding the privacy of students while it was passed.

Cynthia Wang (II) shares, "I know it can be a source of anxiety feeling that you are constantly monitored. Hopefully [they] can just focus on learning and their day-to-day lives."

Ultimately, the district hopes that the installation of these new cameras can help deter intruders and

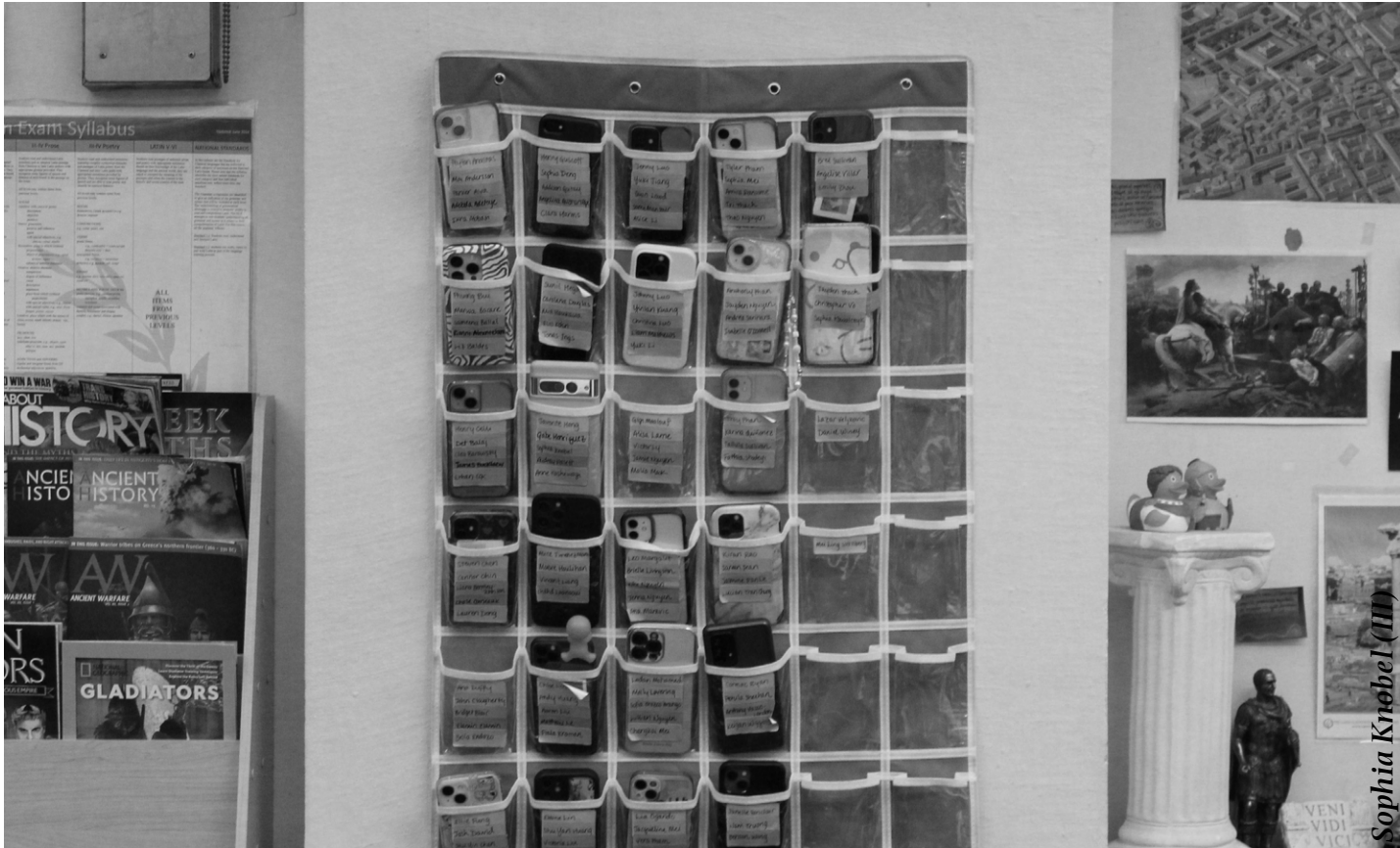
minimize outside threats. BPS rates the effectiveness of the new cameras a 'four out of five' on this ability.

BPS Chief Operating Officer Mr. Brian Forde Jr. adds, "The installation of cameras provides ways to identify intruders and feedback after an incident that really helps keep our general staff and students more secure. [...] We need to continue to build trust that these are a tool of safety."

As a result of the requests made for the public records of the new cameras, the Boston City Council Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice ordered a hearing on December 5. Participants will include representatives from BPS, the Department of Innovation and Technology and the Boston Police Department. Members of the public can attend to learn more about the specific use case and data of the new cameras.

BLS, however, has not received any complaints or requests regarding the new cameras, and administrators are optimistic about the benefits. Head of School Jason Gallagher concludes, "I think it's comforting to me to know that we can have a better role in our surrounding community and make sure that not only that our students are safe, but we can be a part of a community that's a little bit safer."

Phone Policy Crackdown



Teachers hang up phone walls for students to store their phones away during class.

By Trinity Ngo (II)

Staff Writer

Boston Latin School is concentrating on phone usage this year in response to growing concerns over excessive screen time.

Students are noticing that staff members have been more vigilant in imposing the phone policy lately. The truth, however, is that BLS has not changed its policy regarding phones in recent years. According to the BLS Student Handbook, the use of personal electronic devices before school is limited to the dining hall. During

the school day, students are prohibited from using these devices unless a teacher or staff member gives them permission.

The School has always had a “no phone policy” ever since cell phones became common among teenagers, but the sudden shift in enforcement confused many students. Assistant Head of School Steven Chen comments, “I don’t think that the BLS approach has changed as much as the way that students rely on phones has changed, and as a result of that, it feels like we are cracking down more.”

The growing dependence on phones dates back to the late 2000s with the release

of smart products by brands such as Apple and Samsung. Since then, young people have been attracted to its convenience and the age at which they get a phone has been decreasing.

To combat the urge to use phones during classes, some teachers have started to use “phone walls,” which are small pockets that students can put their phones into at the beginning of class so that they are away. Teachers create an incentive for students by offering extra credit in return for keeping their phones inside these pockets for the duration of that class.

“The temptation to check it, to look

at it, to think about it, [and] to have your attention kind of pulled is very real. I think adults feel this too,” notes BLS history teacher Mr. Nicholas Fogel.

As a teacher who implemented a phone wall, Mr. Fogel explains that even though it only takes away the possibility of turning on a phone inside of the classroom, it also can reshape how students relate to their phones outside of it. He encourages readers of any age to check their own screen time data and be aware of other ways they can spend their time.

Other schools have acted as well. One of the most controversial rules that a small number of schools across the country have enforced involves the Yondr Pouch, a small bag that locks a student’s phone inside it until the end of the school day.

Concerning the possibility of using the Yondr Pouch at BLS, Chen argues that “[students] would get mixed messages if, on one hand, I’m telling you that you don’t have enough control to put your phone away, and at the same time, asking you to mature into functioning young adults and get ready for college.”

Sha’Rahn Pullum (II) shares her frustrations for the growing vigilance against phones, remarking that taking away personal devices or using a Yondr pouch limits students’ independence. She believes that students should be able to use their phones in school responsibly. Some students can benefit from the advantages that phones provide, such as listening to music to increase productivity.

Pullum states, “I believe there are pros and cons of phone usage and social media. It can be resourceful, a place of expression and a successful source of communication, but it can also be a place of comparison, distraction and social isolation.”

Mayor Wu’s Property Tax Plan

By David Wang (IV)

Contributing Writer

Mayor Michelle Wu recently proposed a new property tax policy to protect residents from a sharp tax increase in the future. Developed with input from business groups, the plan balances a small tax increase spread over three years for businesses while maintaining stable property taxes.

In order to pass, the policy would have to be approved by the Boston City Council, both houses of the state legislature and Governor Maura Healey.

Massachusetts law allows cities to set different property tax rates for businesses and regular residents. The current upper limit for property taxes on businesses is 175 percent of the rate paid by residents, but according to the proposal, the upper limit for property taxes will increase to 181.5 percent in 2025. After that, the plan would decrease the rate to 180 percent in 2026 and 178 percent in 2027.

An additional 45 million dollars will be given to any small businesses pressured by this sudden tax increase. The personal property tax exemption will also be raised from 10,000 dollars to 30,000 dollars, which means that small businesses won’t have to pay taxes on the first 30,000 dollars worth of their equipment and items.

With all of these changes taken together, some think that this policy only punishes small businesses and could be accomplished through budget cuts. Small Property Owners Association Vice President Amir Shahsavari argues, “Mayor Wu’s plan is to turn to the commercial real estate [sector] to make up the difference in her overly bloated budget.”

According to the Boston Policy Institute, many offices that these businesses



Mayor Wu testifies on tax shift proposal.

own will go down in value, due to the rise of hybrid and remote work caused by the pandemic and high interest rates. This decreases the amount of money that the city gets from taxing businesses, reducing an already tight budget. Before the proposed tax plan, the city faced an additional 14 percent tax hike on the average home-owning family to cover an estimated deficit of at least 1.2 billion dollars from 2025 to 2029.

BLS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Club resident Rhys Crawford (I) shares, “The

plan honestly feels more like a temporary fix than a long-term solution. While it helps avoid immediate budget cuts and shields homeowners, it doesn’t address Boston’s underlying reliance on property taxes or the declining value of commercial tax real estate.”

Mayor Wu originally wanted to increase the maximum tax rate to 200 percent for businesses, causing major concerns among business groups. After many weeks of compromises and debates, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, Boston Mu-

nicipal Research Bureau, Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation and others finally reached a compromise with the city to support the legislation.

BLS history teacher Mr. Andy Zou is optimistic about the policy. “If we want to keep Boston more residential, we need to give Boston families economic opportunities to thrive. [Otherwise,] we end up with only pricey high-rises and corporate offices that don’t represent the complexity and diversity of this great city.”

Isabel Leon

The End of the Orange Line Project

By **Xintong Guo (II)**
& **Yifei Luo (V)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

For the first time in 15 years, the MBTA lifted all speed restrictions on the Orange Line following the conclusion of the Orange Line Project.

From October 8 to October 20, the Orange Line shut down its service between Forest Hills and Back Bay, with a one week extension to North Station. Over the two weeks, the Track Improvement Program made critical progress on the tracks, lifting 20 miles per hour speed restrictions, along with several repairs in the stations.

Between October 26 and November 1, the Orange Line further suspended service from Oak Grove to Ruggles and North Station. The Orange Line's track team was able to replace approximately 17,500 feet of rail and repair 20,600 feet of track in the process, removing the rest of the nine miles per hour speed restrictions for the first time since 2010.

During the full shutdown, the MBTA provided shuttle bus services from Forest Hills and Copley station. The agency additionally recommended that Orange Line passengers affected by the maintenance to make use of the Commuter Rail fare-free service for quick transport from Forest Hills to Back Bay station. With Boston's traffic, nonetheless, passengers were compelled to plan ahead for their daily commutes. Cecilia Carey (II) comments, "Alternatives are not better because Boston traffic is horrible. Sometimes I take the bus, but it is not any better [...] it just takes longer."

The Red Line has also faced ongoing shutdowns throughout the year to remove restrictions. This September, the Red Line suspended service between the JFK/



Orange Line train leaves station at a normal speed following the end of the Orange Line Project.

UMass station and the Braintree station for 24 days. With unencumbered access to the tracks, workers were successfully able to remove 37 miles per hour speed restrictions across 18 miles of track.

Due to several accidents with MBTA trains in the past years, the agency imposed these speed restrictions in areas with worn-out tracks to ensure riders' safety.

With many students across Boston relying on the Orange Line, the Red Line and other MBTA transportation, the clo-

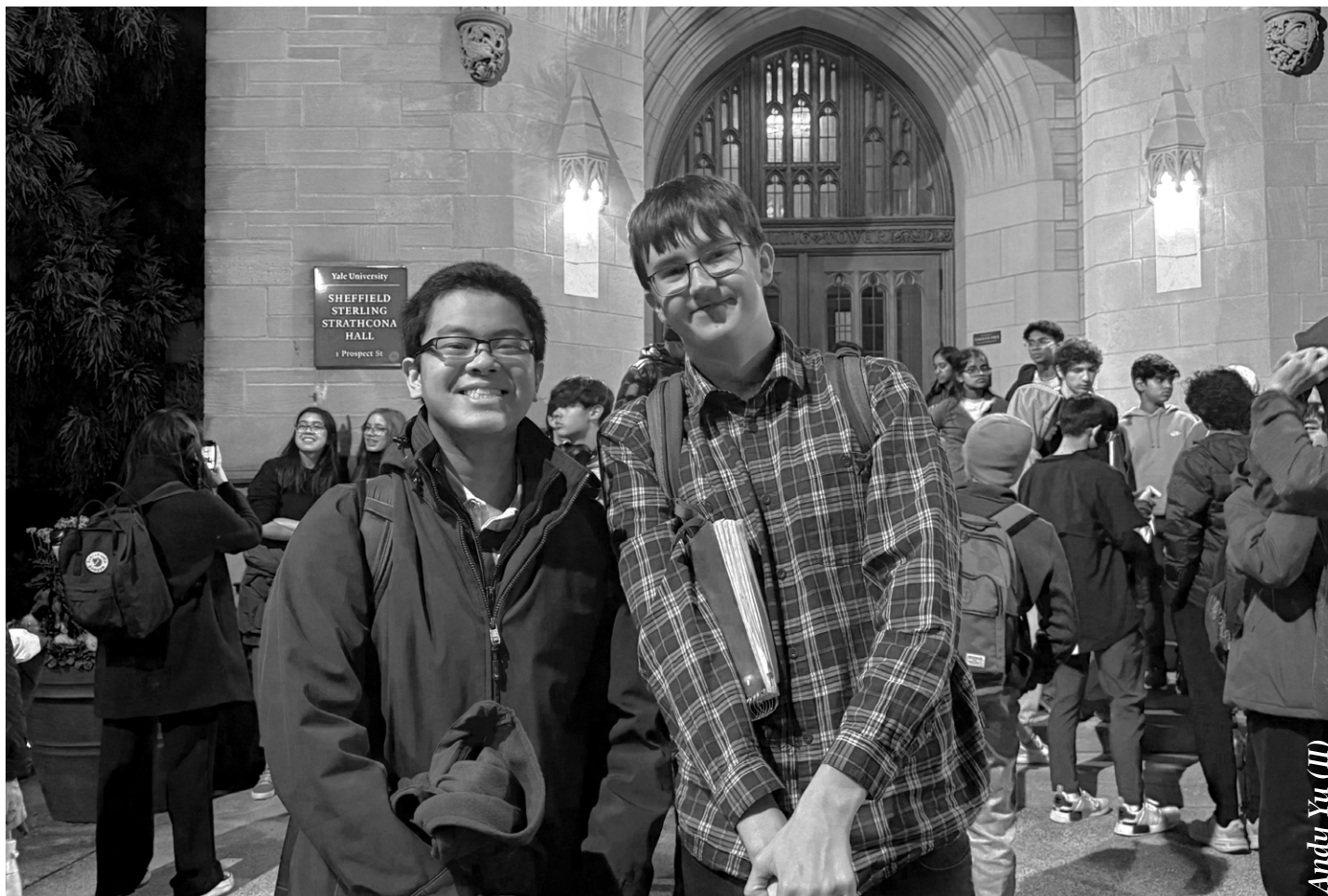
sures have impacted some students' daily commute and even their performance at school. "I usually get home at 3:00 P.M., but because of the closures, I get home at 3:30 P.M. instead," shares Xin Wu (V).

Boston Latin School, in response, has partnered with the MBTA to provide charter buses for students extending across 14 routes. All Boston Public School students also have full access to an M7 student CharlieCard with unlimited passes to all MBTA subways. The School, additionally, has demonstrated flexibility

with tardies when there are mass delays with the MBTA.

Assistant Head of School Jaffrie Perrotti sees the benefits in students who take public transportation, explaining, "I work mostly with the sixies, when we talk to the parents, our goal is to get them to [be] independent [...] A student who [...] takes public transportation has a huge, enormous, leg up on virtually any other suburban student from any other place because [they] have found a way to navigate it."

JCL Conquers Certamen



Advanced Certamen team members Andy Yu (II) (left) and Joseph Hemr (II) (right) pose for a photo at Yale.

By **Abrielle Huang (V)**
Contributing Writer

On November 9, several teams from the Boston Latin School Junior Classical League (JCL) competed in a Certamen tournament held at Yale University.

JCL is an organization consisting of students who enjoy different aspects

of classics and do various events to serve their community. A major event students participate in is Certamen, a buzzer trivia game played with a team of up to four people. Each round includes 20 questions about various topics concerning the classics, including the Latin language, Roman history, mythology, culture and literature.

At Yale University, students from

all over the country competed at the novice, intermediate and advanced levels. The two novice and intermediate teams played their three preliminary rounds in the morning while the advanced teams prepared for their rounds in the afternoon. After lunch, many BLS teams proceeded to play in semifinals, and some even made it to finals.

To prepare for Yale Certamen, ad-

vanced players underwent a five week intensive training course before the competition. In addition to studying the syllabus, BLS Latin teacher and advanced Certamen coach Mr. Michael Howard adds, "We build in some teamwork. [...] and then, of course, there has to be some conditioning work; [I'm] big on the push ups and things like that, to help us have the right mindset."

As a result of their diligent preparation, the students did very well at the competition. The two novice teams placed 13th and 15th, one of the two intermediate teams placed 2nd, and the two advanced teams placed 2nd and 14th, out of a total of 82 teams who competed in the tournament.

Members of teams on all levels were satisfied with their performance. Advanced Certamen player Joseph Hemr (II) states, "[A]s a team we are very happy with this performance and are looking to improve before our next tournament."

At the conclusion of the competition, the teams celebrated with cake before the bus ride back to BLS. Students thanked their coaches for preparing them and taking them to this unique experience.

Team members also attended Classics Day, a statewide JCL event at Boston University, which was held on November 21. Classics Day has a myriad of activities, including lectures, workshops and group activities with over 300 attendees from all over Massachusetts.

Brynn Bennett (III) shares, "It's so cool being able to see people go to all these tournaments and get to know people more. We're competing against each other but it's a community."

Staying Positive about Politics

By **Angelina Tang (II)**

Contributing Writer

With our country's current political climate, it is no surprise that students are worried: important policies like *Roe v. Wade* have been overturned, and the incoming Trump administration's plans for immigration and climate are leaving many feeling concerned. Though we can be disheartened or even afraid, we cannot give up. Boston Latin School science teacher Mr. Jesse Southwick remarks, "The United States has a long history of messing up things and finding ways to still make the future move forward. Sometimes it's three steps forward, then two steps back." There is so much we can do as youth to continue fighting, especially at the local level, where change begins.

First, educate yourself. Staying well-informed is the first step towards taking action. One way you can do that is by taking courses that discuss history and human rights, such as Facing History and Ourselves. Khaya Dryden-Peterson (I) comments, "It's a hard class. [We learn] about genocides all around the world and how they came to be, and the persecution of people and what leads to it.

But we also spend time learning about hope." The opportunity to reflect on how humanity has moved past atrocities before and how that can be a guide for the present and the future is precious — if you are a rising junior or senior, it is definitely a course worth taking.

You do not, however, need to take a specific class to learn about history and politics: self-education can become part of your daily routine in smaller ways. Having a fully formed opinion is important, but you must also take the time to consider the views of those around you. Dryden-Peterson suggests, "You can decide that you're going to read the news from three different news sources every day to get varied perspectives. Actively talk to classmates who have different opinions than yours, or ask a teacher after class about an idea they mentioned." After all, the construction of a future where all voices are heard is crucial for a successful democracy.

Second, seek public service opportunities. The BLS website is an excellent resource for finding different programs to apply for. For example, the Ward Public Service Fellowship allows you to be in the very offices that make decisions for all of Boston and to learn

more about public service and how the government works. Whatever you're passionate about — law, education, healthcare, or non-profit work — there are internships that await your application. Mr. Southwick adds, "Young people are at this point of making decisions about where they're going to direct their lives, what they want to work on and what kind of engaged citizens they're going to be."

For students who decide to take Facing History and Ourselves their junior year, the Seevak Human Rights and Social Justice Fellowship is also a potential opportunity for the following summer. Dryden-Peterson reflects on her own experience with this program: "[As] a Seevak fellow, [...] you end up being placed with an organization in Boston doing some sort of human rights or justice work. I worked at the *Women's Lunch Place* [...] and it's transformed the way I see everything; it's infused itself into so much of the work that I am doing this year." Being part of such esteemed fellowships allows members to advocate for what they care deeply about and receive funding to support these efforts.

Third, be active in your community. BLS has many clubs advocating for different

human rights causes and celebrating different identities. Clubs like Gender-Sexuality Alliance and Amnesty International strive to educate our community on human rights topics through its advocacy and collaboration while still having fun. Fellowships like the Sid Topol Fellowship for Peace and Non-violence run projects promoting peace and justice on issues ranging from landmines to migration and host many events for all students to get involved with nonviolence advocacy.

No matter what happens in the world around us, good or bad, we must keep pushing towards progress and maintain a positive attitude. BLS history teacher Mr. Dominic Rinaldi leaves students with this message: "The only real way to lift each other up is to just be kind to each other. Don't be afraid to discuss important topics, but do so with tact, do so intellectually, and don't outright attack. Many folks do not have malice in them, they just hold opinions that they have been conditioned to hold. Many of us are open to change and just need the proper environment. An environment that looks to shame and accuse first is not an environment that is honest and open and seeking to evolve."

Spike Out or Strike Out in College Admissions

By **Angelina Wei (II)**

Staff Writer

Congratulations! You have been accepted into your dream school. The all-nighters and countless cups of coffee that you have dedicated to your grades, extracurriculars and passion projects have truly paid off! For many students, this is the result of a strategy called "spike theory." By developing a very specific, deep, expertise in a single field of study, students can distinguish themselves among crowds of applicants, increasing their chances of admission to elite universities. The spike theory is essential for students in the progressively more competitive college landscape, preparing them for success in any field, whether that is academics, arts or beyond.

As students discover their passions, spike theory empowers them to pursue their genuine interests, encouraging motivation rooted in curiosity rather than superficial resume enhancement. Many students tend to join numerous clubs without any true intentions simply because it looks good on paper. In contrast, students who stand out are the ones with "spikes." Driven by their love of the subject, these students can be more engaged and enthusiastic about their studies. Their single-minded pursuit of knowledge in the field creates authenticity in their applications, as admission officers can see the countless hours of commitment poured into their work. Such authenticity plays a key role in becoming a compelling candidate in the admission process.

Andrew Xue (I), a student that spikes in computer science and physics, says, "I did find more fulfillment in concentrating in two 'spikes,' and I found that I explored the two fields on a much deeper level than I would have otherwise [...] I think it's better than doing a bunch of random extracurriculars without a clear focus just because they'll 'look good.'"

Spike theory also stimulates students to build foundations for academic mastery and develop their professional goals. Through passion-driven motivation, many students with "spikes" can aim for higher-level achievements and impactful passion projects. By presenting their commitment through distinct



Gretchen Curran (I) works on their college applications in the Schawbel Center.

accomplishments, students with spikes can demonstrate their genuine interest in the School's programs rather than their prestige or ranking. Their expertise in the field and alignment with the School's offered programs ultimately boosts their chances of acceptance and even establishes long-term success.

Many students, however, argue that spike theory discourages students from becoming well-rounded. Xue adds, "It also forces teenagers to pick and choose their paths too early, [...] some colleges like Cornell and [the University of Pennsylvania] that only admit to specific majors don't help with this either." The spike theory never discourages students from exploring other career paths or extracurriculars; instead, it motivates students to identify their strengths, even while pursuing other subjects and hobbies they enjoy.

Sienna Barney-Yapo (I), a student who has loved art for her whole life and is also passionate about math, says, "For

college, my mindset is that I'm looking at art as a supplementary focus, and math or more STEM-oriented major as my main thing. [...] In my applications, I was [...] able to leverage my skills as an artist and connect them to other subjects that I am planning to pursue. [...] Admissions counselors will hopefully see that dedication and passion for my 'spike.'"

Focusing on a spike does not mean prematurely choosing a lifelong career. As someone grows, they develop new interests or their past interests evolve, which adapts the spike over time. A student who was once interested in biology might eventually find a passion in business, and through effort and connections, they could become a bioentrepreneur. Spike theory allows students to develop the necessary skills to excel in areas they are currently passionate about, providing the discipline and ability to succeed in any field they choose later in life.

As students enter college, spike theory prepares them not only for more efficient time management and focus but also in making meaningful contributions to their fields. In the real world, success does not come from mastering everything but instead from specializing in one specific interest. Universities have the right to seek students who bring distinctiveness and diversity to their campus, as they will likely contribute most to the field they pursue. Every class also comes at a cost; students should have a clear purpose in their education for maximum investment and return.

With constantly evolving circumstances and standards while applying to colleges, Boston Latin School College and Career Advisor Ms. Sydney Lang states, "[What's most important is that] your application is truly reflective of who you are as a student and a person." Spike theory is a helpful way to focus on your passions and truly distinguish yourself among your peers during admissions.

Brigitte Currier (III)

Should MCAS Be Removed as a Graduation Requirement?

Yes, MCAS Should Be Removed

No, MCAS Should NOT Be Removed

By Harry Dinh (IV)

Contributing Writer

Every year, Massachusetts students from grades three to ten are required to take the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and the stakes are high: failure to pass the test in tenth grade means no high school diploma come senior year. The passage of Question Two this November thankfully eliminates that requirement. Adrlthough most Boston Latin School students rejected the proposal in a mock election, the end of the MCAS graduation requirement benefits students as a whole across Massachusetts.

The biggest beneficiaries of the passage of Question Two are English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. A study conducted by Brown University showed that in Louisiana, there was a seven percent increase in the number of ESL students graduating from high school after their standardized test was removed as a graduation requirement. Standardized tests unfairly punish ESL students who grasp the content they are learning but cannot demonstrate this due to language barriers.

BLS ESL teacher Dr. Kelly Sample explains, “A lot of the issues that [ESL] students might face are due to language obstacles and not actual content knowledge, so [the MCAS] may not have been an accurate representation of what they actually knew.” ESL students should not be denied a diploma solely because they do not understand English as well as their peers.

Before Question Two passed, Massachusetts was one of only eight states that still maintained a “high stakes” test for students to graduate. These tests represent a disproportionate amount of a student’s academic performance and do not sufficiently prepare students for higher education and life.

Instead of a single test that determines everything, there can be alternatives to make measuring student growth and comprehension more accurate. For example, the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment is currently working with school districts to design performance-based assessments for students to demonstrate their understanding.

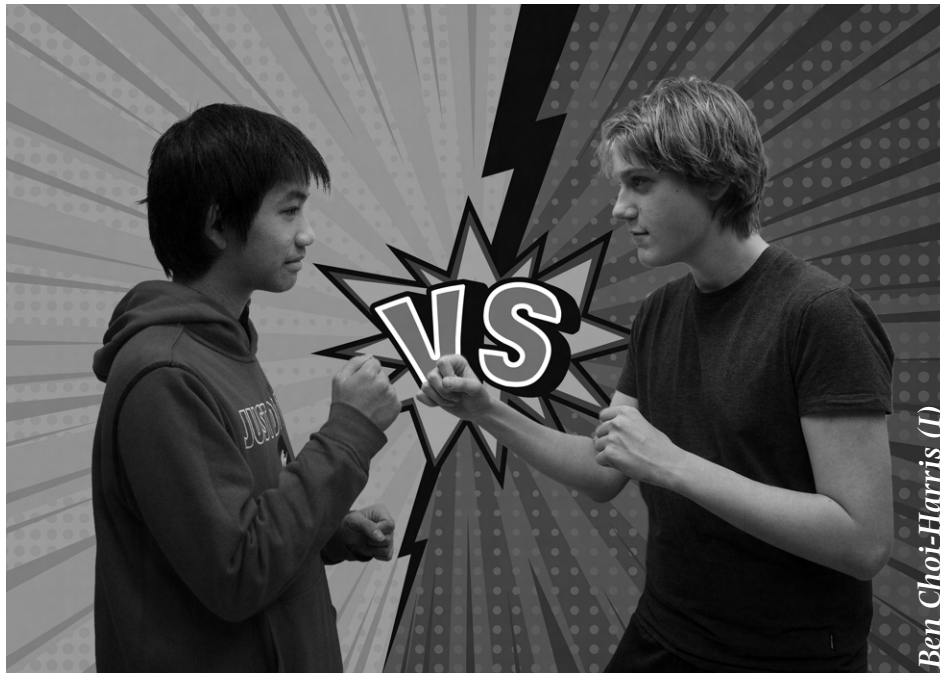
BLS ESL teacher Mrs. Caroline Falcone Dolan furthers, “Teachers [could] gather work samples from students over time [and] that could show their growth [...] and what they’ve learned.” These alternative assessments remove the “high-stakes” of the MCAS that students stress over.

Test scores for the MCAS at BLS are relatively high compared to other schools in the state. The curriculum of BLS is more rigorous, which means the MCAS is inaccurate in measuring student growth and demonstrating what they have learned. Andy Yu (II) states, “The teaching [at BLS] goes a lot farther beyond what the MCAS assesses for, so [...] we’ve soared above that bar.” When a school far exceeds the state standard, a standardized test does nothing to assess student growth.

Some may be concerned that without a standardized test, there will be no benchmark to track students’ performance. The removal of the MCAS, however, only impacts the graduation requirement — the test itself does not go away. Teachers can still use the MCAS data to assess student performance and modify their teaching methods.

However, although standardized tests can point out poor student performance, they fail to provide solutions with how to improve it and help students who struggle. Yu points out that “the problem is that we are not doing enough to bring those students who are doing poorly and make them perform better.” If the assessment that measures student progress is not helping those who are struggling, then what benefit is there to still have it?

The removal of the MCAS as a graduation requirement decreases barriers for ESL students and disparities in graduation rates. The removal of one test that determines everything will allow room for lower-stress assessments that more closely assess student comprehension and growth throughout the year.



By Atticus Scovel (II)

Contributing Writer

Nobody likes taking the MCAS. You sit in the dining hall for a few hours, four or six days a year. Most people are bored. Some are nervous. Despite the annoyance it may cause, we still need to take it.

In November, nearly 60 percent of Massachusetts voters decided to remove the MCAS as a high school graduation requirement. These voters had reasonable and well-considered rationales for voting as they did: the potential for standardized testing to exacerbate inequality, the concern of teachers “teaching to the test” and students being unable to get jobs solely because they cannot pass the test, among other reasons.

All of these reasons, however, stem from a single concern: public education is failing Massachusetts kids. Removing a

standardized test will not fix any of that.

Many argue that standardized tests like the MCAS cause teachers to “teach to the test” and not focus on meaningful skills. Director of the McCarthy Center Ms. Rose Delorme Metayer argues against this concern, saying that “[Schools are not] supposed to be spending months teaching the MCAS because it should just be built into your standards [...] You teach children to high levels of curriculum and all else will fall in place.”

Additionally, teaching the skills covered in the MCAS is actually beneficial for students. Unlike many assessments which contain niche content with little real world significance, the questions on the MCAS assess important and applicable skills like reading comprehension, interpreting data and problem solving with math. Having a test that assesses these skills forces teachers to ensure that students understand them, since teachers and schools have an outside benchmark to which they are accountable.

Another frustrating aspect of the MCAS being abolished as a graduation requirement is the negligible amount of planning that went into it. “I don’t even think we went into this removal of the test with a plan,” says Ms. Delorme-Metayer. “[And] who is at stake? All young people.” The removal of the test did not include any form of a holistic plan to accompany the change. The change was instituted in order to solve problems with the system, but very little discussion took place as to what specifically those problems were and what alternative ways there might be to address them.

The primary goal of standardized tests like the MCAS is to keep schools accountable and ensure that students are being provided with a quality education. “To not have a statewide graduation standard feels scary,” says Ms. Delorme Metayer. “When you live in a town where the [median] home [price] is in the millions, your school community will always have access to rigorous and high quality teaching [...] To say that those schools who are already well-resourced, [won’t] have to compare standards to other districts [poses a major problem].” Ms. Delorme Metayer argues that the removal of standardized tests can potentially exacerbate socioeconomic differences and inequities between schools and districts.

Opponents of the MCAS argue that it prevents kids who have attended high school but cannot pass the exam from getting jobs. BLS science teacher Ms. Gina Castellanos-Ellsworth argues, “For the students across Massachusetts that don’t get a diploma because of the MCAS, what is their future? What are their job prospects now that they don’t have a diploma?” While this argument is a powerful one, it misses a crucial point: the skills that are tested on the MCAS are themselves necessary for the majority of jobs. Most jobs that do not require skills such as mathematical problem solving, reading comprehension and writing composition (the skills required to pass the MCAS) will not require a high school diploma either.

We, as citizens, parents, teachers and students must ensure that we educate our children and provide them with opportunities later in life. In a perfect world, students would not need to spend 20 hours a year taking a test, but as it stands, the MCAS requirement ensures that school systems are providing students with the necessary skills to succeed later in life.



Interested in Joining the Argo?

Scan the QR code or sign up for the mailing list at bit.ly/blsargo2425.

Advanced Workshops and First Writers’ Meeting will be held after school on January 8 in Room 207 at 2:30 P.M.

Be there or be square.

Breaking the BLS Bubble 101



BLS step squad prepares for their annual school-wide pep rally performance.

By Fathia Shodeyi (III)

Contributing Writer

Craning your neck to catch a glimpse of the step team, you turn and see hundreds of other smiling, purple-clad classmates. It's pep rally day, and school spirit is at its peak. But this event is a rarity. People often discuss the lack of fun events at Boston Latin School, and it's true. BLS students are almost always focused on keeping up with rigorous academics, extracurriculars, or "passion projects," leaving them with little time to attend events such as sports games that build school-wide spirit. Furthermore, outside of school-sponsored social events, many at BLS struggle to form social lives of their own.

Dividing students into clusters restrains them from exploring friendships at the start of their BLS career. Clusters hin-

der students from diversifying their friend groups and force most to stick with the same people. Ava Phan (III) remarks, "Coming to BLS, I was introverted and stayed with the same three people. [...] It was scary making friends in a different cluster." Those in the same clusters often join similar clubs and have the same teachers, so they bond over the identical interests and experiences. Although clusters make BLS more organized when sorting the massive student body, the School, as a whole, should make an increased effort to diminish clusters and their confining nature.

Students may also meet others outside of their cluster that they feel closer to, and school activities like sports games are perfect opportunities to connect with new people. Some also might be a part of social groups that do not share the same interests. Instead of strictly having one friend

group, students should explore groups with unique interests and hobbies that allow them to learn about themselves and their preferences.

Oriana Dunker (I), who supports this phenomenon, saying, "Being senior class president, I talked to a lot of new people that I didn't talk to before. [...] I feel that's part of why I was successful, because I didn't stay locked to a certain clique." Having different friends challenges your thinking because they can bring in fresh perspectives and knowledge; constantly being around the same views can cause ignorance.

Cliques may sometimes be toxic, and many students may be too scared of losing friends to leave their friend group. Attending games, club events or after school activities aids students in finding friends better for their mental health. Who knows — maybe branching out of your clique can

help you find things you're more passionate about. A new friend may introduce you to a new activity or club you've never tried or weren't initially interested in, and you may end up truly enjoying it.

Dunker remarks, "You might fail once, your friends might not do it, but if you stay true to yourself and keep doing it, a lot of great things can come out of that." Joining cultural clubs that target certain demographics can also offer a safe space to begin expanding your circle.

Although BLS has made progress in supporting students' mental health, this can still be improved. BLS has done a great job integrating non-academic days to boost the mental health of students, such as Positivity and Wellness (PAW) Day, where students engage in fun activities that foster positive mental health.

These types of activities, however, should be incorporated more often. The School should create traditions of having cool-off periods after finals to help everyone bounce back and relax from the stressful week. Caela Thompson (III) remarks, "BLS should make mental health day a real event [...]. It should be like a no test day, chill lessons, maybe even an ice cream bar for lunch." Reforming days like PAW Day to be fully dedicated to the students' mental health would be extremely impactful because more students are likely to attend and benefit from the destressing environment.

Finally, BLS should offer more freedom to engage with each other during school-wide events. Currently, the performative and strict nature of these events means that students aren't fully allowed to interact with one another. The School should give students more freedom during fun events and incorporate more field trips, if the budget permits.

It is crucial to note that BLS should continue to maintain high academic standards and quality education for all students. It should, however, also strive to better support the mental health and wellness of students.

Tip Your Hat to Service Workers: Pay Them More!

By Elaine Lin (IV)

Contributing Writer

Question Five of this year's state ballot questions called for the minimum wage of tipped workers to be gradually increased over the course of five years until their wages become equal to the state minimum wage.

This law would also allow employers to create tip pools, in which all the workers' tips would be combined and equally distributed. This question, however, was overwhelmingly rejected, with about 64.4 percent of voters, over two million people, voting against it. The result of this ballot question was not just politically disappointing; it was a direct failure to provide for all service workers, including students at Boston Latin School, with the stability and support that they need to thrive in today's economy.

Question Five would have tremendously changed the way tip workers are paid in Massachusetts. Their current minimum wage of 6.75 dollars would have increased gradually to the state minimum wage of 15 dollars by 2029. Large companies especially must be held accountable for paying their workers fairly without having to rely on customers to tip. Employers should be responsible for paying their workers enough without their employees often having to work other jobs to make a living.

As inflation and the cost of living grows while the minimum payment for

tipped workers remains the same, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to maintain livable conditions. Nam Truong (IV) notes, "Working as a high school student for wages to be this low forces me to work more and causes extra unnecessary stress."

Workers must rely on tips, which are not always very high, or at times even nothing, since tipping is not required of the customer. It is also not fair that employers are able to pocket more money while employees struggle to get by.

Tip pooling was one of the most controversial and misunderstood aspects of this proposal. Many voters were concerned about the fairness of tips; some thought that pooling tips would ensure fairness, while others disagreed, arguing that tips should go to whoever earned them.

Kate Lincecum (II) explains, "At the end of the day, in many jobs, you don't pick your shifts; they are assigned to you. So if someone happens to get a shift with bad weather, or [one that is] just slow, they will get less tips, even if they worked for the same amount of time." The tips workers receive do not always depend on their performance, but other external variables.

Tips, however, should not be pooled. The creation of tip pools may allow workers to start relying on other employees to receive higher tips, as they would ultimately still receive the same amount as them. Many people misunderstand this attribute of the ballot question, believing that tip pools would be mandatory at every loca-



Jacey Thai (II) works at her tipped barista job.

tion where workers are tipped, when in reality the passage of this amendment would give employers the option of facilitating tip sharing.

Another major concern about Question Five was retaliation from employers who feared losing money. BLS AP Economics teacher Ms. Ashley Balbian states, "Many employers spoke out against Question Five, threatening layoffs, closing restaurants and increased prices." Had these threats come to fruition, they would have negatively impacted the economy, with jobs lost, businesses closed and restaurant prices inflated. The minimum wage,

however, would have been only raised in increments year by year. If employers didn't take action to protect their business and their own financial affairs, the impact would likely only have been marginal.

Question Five was ultimately not passed, but the debate and conversations that it sparked on the need to better protect and support minimum wage workers must continue to be held. The proposal's rejection should not be seen as the end of this discussion, but rather the beginning of an attempt to fix Massachusetts's relationship with minimum wage workers through policies.

P. Diddy Memes: A Slippery Slope

By **Brandon Flores (II)**

Staff Writer

Baby oil. What once was an innocuous household product is now synonymous with rapper Sean Combs, also known as P. Diddy, who kept a stash of more than 1,000 bottles at his home for use during his infamous parties, some of which allegedly involved sexual assault against minors. Now, P. Diddy is under arrest, and his crimes are as serious as they get. But this has not stopped people from making problematic jokes about the circumstances surrounding P. Diddy.

Simply put, jokesters often neglect the real human victims involved in these situations. Women were coerced and trafficked, children were violated and the people who attended P. Diddy's parties allowed these crimes to happen, without any regard for the consequences. When people crack inconsiderate jokes, they turn these victims' suffering into humor for widespread consumption. The trauma carried by P. Diddy's victims is real, and reducing the situation to a meme is wrong, even if the jokes do not specifically target the victims.

Another factor that harms society is the way we consume media. Memes and headlines only tell part of the story, and people often do not take the time to investigate topics more deeply. This leads to a warped perception of what happened to the victims, which makes it more likely that only certain voices are heard.

Charles Ellrodt (II) disagrees, arguing that, "In a way, [P. Diddy jokes] are somewhat helpful in that they're raising awareness about what he's done." This perspective does not tell the full story, however, because it only focuses on the perpetrator without properly acknowledging the victims. This outlook does not heal society, as it merely attacks P. Diddy without creating an atmosphere of growth and



P. Diddy memes circulate social media platforms.

progress that helps victims recover. While P. Diddy deserves to be regarded as the criminal he is, his victims deserve to be remembered even more, since they were the ones impacted by his crimes.

Some argue that it is necessary for society to use humor to discuss serious topics since they are otherwise uncomfortable to address. BLS history teacher Mr. Brian Smith acknowledges this, but also recognizes that, "The more we crack jokes or make light of something, the more desensitized people can become." Over time, this desensitization becomes normalization, as we have seen with discriminatory

messages that have recently surfaced. Slowly, this normalization has altered many people's mindsets, enabling problematic responses to real issues.

Another important question to ask is why these jokes did not occur with similar cases in the past, like those of Harvey Weinstein or Jeffrey Epstein. BLS history teacher Mr. Nicholas Fogel comments, "Our near-constant use of media, especially social media, allows us to see bad things happening in a way we might have been more blind to before. This helps spread awareness and can spur action and change, but it can also be hard on us emotionally." Ellrodt elaborates on

this trend: "Over the past five years, over COVID-19, people have started taking things less seriously."

Although it is easy to assume that there is no harm in a joke, we should consider our words carefully and ensure that they genuinely align with our values. It is a battle trying to confront societal issues, but it is our responsibility to handle them properly to prevent similar situations from happening in the future. Mr. Fogel leaves the BLS community this reminder: "Having a mindset of empathy and always being aware of the impact your words can have is an important thing to learn."

Warm Feelings for Warm Weather



A student enjoys the warm sun on an autumn day.

By **Ellie Fung (IV)**

Contributing Writer

When people think about fall, they usually envision steamy pumpkin spice lattes, apple picking and raking leaves. Days of warm, summery weather? Not so much. That, however, has been the reality of the past few weeks, causing many people to become concerned about climate change and its increasing effects. While these worries about the climate are valid, people

should not necessarily feel guilty for enjoying it.

For one, the warm weather has many health benefits; this is something people should take advantage of, not feel guilty for enjoying. For example, the high temperatures allow people to stay outside longer and enjoy nature without bundling up indoors. This can encourage more outdoor exercise, which is helpful for improving physical and mental health. Mayo Clinic notes that physical activity can help people

feel happy and relaxed. It can also reduce anxiety, which is a growing problem, especially in the highly stimulating and overwhelming environment of Boston Latin School.

Sports teams and clubs also reap the benefits of the weather. They are able to continue practicing in the open air instead of moving inside. Peter Guo (I), president of BLS Volleyball Club, explains, "[w]e can keep the net up on Fridays after school. [...] Last year, I think we cut it off a little earlier than November because the weather was too cold and nobody was willing to practice outside. Additionally, since you have to move around a lot in volleyball, wearing multiple layers of clothing make you move slower, and overall make[s] the sport less enjoyable."

Being able to spend time outside often encourages students to meet with their friends and hang out allowing for better relationship development and more physical contact. In a time where screens seem to increasingly dominate our lives, it is crucial to take breaks and spend time with real people outdoors, rather than just using electronics.

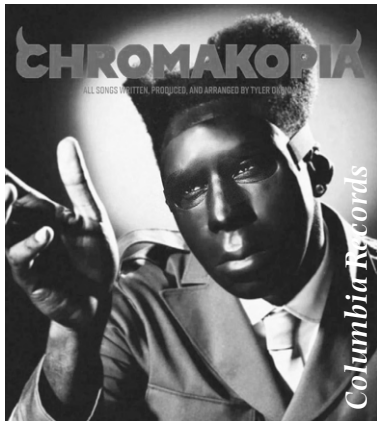
While these advantages are clear, many feel the impact to the climate outweighs the pros. Gretchen Curran (I), Youth Climate Action Network (YouthCAN) co-president, elaborates, "The long-term impacts of climate change concern me as the weather gets warm-

er. While you might see it as a nicer day out, this is causing an increase in natural disasters and heatwaves during the summer. These changes are dangerous and have long-term consequences for our planet."

Although warm weather is related to climate change, it is a symptom of the cause. Being upset or passionate about the climate is absolutely warranted, but it's important to remember that one can still enjoy the weather, amid their concerns for the climate. Simply being upset that the weather is warmer for a spell will not change it or improve the state of the environment, so people may as well find solace in what they can.

Warm weather ultimately isn't the problem, and people shouldn't be antagonized for not being angry about it. Climate change, however, is an immediate issue that needs to be addressed. YouthCAN co-president Caleb Thompson (I) says, "I'd love to say that you could make a difference by doing your compost and recycling what you can, but realistically those things don't make a huge difference. I'd say the best way to be environmentally conscious is to use your voice — commit to the movement. Eventually, we are going to have to deal with this issue, and even if it seems like we can't make a difference now, it is imperative that we try anyway."

“Darling, I” Can’t Stop Listening: *Chromakopia* Album



Chromakopia

by Tyler, The Creator
October 28, 2024

Genre: Rap, Hip-hop, Jazz,
Contemporary and R&B

Highlights: “St. Chroma,”
“Darling, I” and “I Hope
You Find Your Way Home”

Rating: 9/10

By **Kenneth Cacho-Bermudez (II)**
& **Raymond DuFauchard (II)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Fatherhood, paranoia, love and fame are at the heart of Tyler, The Creator’s eighth studio album, *Chromakopia*. The Los Angeles rapper’s album explores changes in attitude, morals, values and maturity over the background of a beautiful mix of modern R&B and old school lyricism. The heavy bass, drums and synth accompany an unconventional sampling of jazz, soul, funk and rock.

Announced via his *Instagram* on October 16, Tyler, The Creator’s *Chromakopia* quickly took the internet by storm with a teaser trailer of the album’s first song “St. Chroma,” leaving many fans speculating the album’s various features, the musical and linguistic style that Tyler would take on and the most important question of all: “Is that Frank Ocean on vocals?” While Ocean unfortunately did not make a return on the album, there is still lots to love and appreciate on *Chromakopia*.

On October 31, only four days after *Chromakopia* was released, Tyler, The Creator had a surprise pop-up concert in Boston at Converse’s flagship store a few blocks from North Station. The setup of the concert was simple: a green shipping container placed in front of the store’s headquarters with the word “Chromakopia” transcribed onto it.

“The energy was crazy,” says Belmont High School student Amir Molineau, who attended, “Just great vibes all around.” Tyler performed 12 of the album’s 14 tracks to an audience of Boston fans. This concert was one of four Converse-sponsored shows that also took place in London, Atlanta and New York.

Tyler starts off the album with the lead single “St. Chroma,” working

alongside the talented Daniel Caesar to create a track that captivates the audience on the first listen. The song begins with Tyler’s mother, who contributes quotes to tracks throughout the album, reminding Tyler to never “dim [his] light for nobody.” In the first half of the song, Tyler raps in a whispered tone, which creates a rapport with the listener, whereas the second half is explosive, showing Tyler accepting his chaotic nature. Caesar compliments the song with his angelic singing, establishing the tone for the rest of the album.

The fourth track is named “Darling, I” and expands on the themes of introspection and confusion found in Tyler’s previous album, *Call Me if You Get Lost*. Tyler reunites with Teezo Touchdown, who he collaborated with on his 2021 song “RUNITUP,” giving the track an R&B feel. In the song, Tyler reveals to his partner that he doesn’t feel he can commit to one person. The song is both slow and upbeat, supplying an unapologetic sound and indicating that Tyler has no regrets about this aspect of himself. The song also shows a bit of a new side to the Creator, as Xavier Chodkowski (II) remarks, “I liked his vocals on the song [...] I thought it was a little different from what he normally does as an artist.”

Halfway through the album, Tyler showcases his heavy lyricism and storytelling ability over a steady and consistent beat on “Hey Jane,” which mirrors his previous work in “WILSHIRE” from *Call Me if You Get Lost*. In the track, Tyler takes a deep dive into two sides of a relationship and conversation after he impregnated a woman. In the first half of the song, Tyler talks from his own perspective of the event, explaining the foundation of their relationship and his own thoughts on the woman and the pregnancy. He heavily hints throughout the track that he is either not ready or

unwilling to be a father at this point in his life, but at the end of the first verse, he accepts that it is the woman’s choice whether to keep the child or not.

The second verse explores the woman’s perspective on the pregnancy as she goes into detail about her feelings concerning motherhood. Tyler himself worries due to her age, suggesting this might be her last chance to have a child. The track ends uncertain of the fate of the child and the pair but shows off how Tyler can make both R&B hits as well as storytelling masterpieces.

On *Chromakopia*’s 12th track “Like Him,” Tyler once again gets extremely personal and intimate with the audience. In the song, Tyler narrates his own struggle and experience without a father. The listener gets a glimpse into the musician’s mind as he is constantly compared and contrasted to a man he never knew, met and would ultimately ever understand. This is presented to the listener through a repeating question in the music which asks, “Do I look like him?”

Similarly, this song shares a strong connection to the song, “Answer” on Tyler’s 2013 album *Wolf*, which also analyzes the relationship with his dad ten years prior. The first half of the track is fit with soft instrumentals and a simple chorus. In the second half, however, as Andy Tran (II) puts it, “The instrumental and music really take over,” as beautiful vocals and melodies from Lola Young take control and lead the song into an emotionally intense finish.

Chromakopia is a great addition to Tyler, The Creator’s discography. Channeling past styles and themes while creating new worlds and experiences, *Chromakopia* is a phenomenal album that takes us further into the mind of Tyler. Fans eager for more of his content can watch his Camp Flog Gnaw performances while waiting for the *Chromakopia* World Tour in 2025.

One Acts: Behind the Curtain

By **Bridget Blair (III)**
& **Ashley Hur (III)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

In the beginning of November, Boston Latin School theater presented its annual One Acts production, a collection of three short plays performed by actors from Classes VI to III.

The three shows this year were *Jason and the Arrrrgonauts*, *It’s Always the Butler* and *The Waiting Room*. Each show was written by either a current BLS student or an alumnus.

Jason and the Arrrrgonauts, a play by Isa Gonzalez ‘24, kicked off the production. This show follows the storyline of the ancient myth, Jason and the Argonauts, but with a slight twist. In this production, Jason’s crew pokes fun at his not “pirate-like” name throughout their journey; at the end of the play, however, the crew eventually accepts the name as “pirate-like,” after Jason saves their lives during a confrontation with a monster.

Second up was *It’s Always the Butler* by Gus Vivieros ‘16 and Nathan Krieger ‘16. This play is a complex adaptation of the popular murder mystery trope, subverting expectations at every corner. It begins with two detectives attempting to solve a murder and immediately accusing the butler. During a few blackouts, three out of

the five are murdered, and through much fourth-wall breaking, it is revealed that the director had killed them in order to gain fame.

The final show performed was *The Waiting Room*, written by directors Kelly McKenna (I) and Mae Noonan (I). The play follows several characters as they wait to see a doctor. The characters continue to wait impatiently until they start to realize that the doctor is not coming to see them and that the room they are in is made of cardboard.

The One Acts successfully showed all the hard work and dedication of those involved in BLS theatre. Rehearsals began for the shows in September; actors and directors rehearsed several days a week all throughout October, even practicing late on Halloween.

Audience member Mairead Gagnon (III) explains her thoughts on the show, saying, “I thought it would be much more novice since it’s been so emphasized that it’s [for] younger grades and [they were] learning how to go into it, but they were all acting really well.”

Collaboration was required on every front in order to make sure the shows went smoothly. BLS students working in stage management, sound design, set design, costuming, hair and makeup all came together and put



BLS theatre performs *Jason and the Arrrrgonauts*.

in the work to make the performance a success. In the final weeks leading up to the show, all students involved in the One Acts rehearsed every day after school, often going past 4:00 P.M. to work on finishing touches.

Reflecting on a few specific challenges that One Acts faced, Noonan recounts, “[It] was really difficult, because it was obviously [in] the fall, and a lot of people were getting sick. They were in and out of rehearsal.”

Time constraints also proved to

cause some difficulty for the actors as they had to dedicate lots of time to memorizing their lines and actions at different parts of the play. Nevertheless, with their dedication, they were able to create a final product that proved their efforts well worth it.

Actor Catherine Bao (VI) concludes, “[The best part of the production is] being a part of the One Acts community in general. I mean, everyone was nice, and I also made friends from other clusters and grades.”

The Wild Robot: A Sleeper Hit

By **John Clougherty (IV)**
& **Kaya Ertan (IV)**
Contributing Writers

The Wild Robot, a Dreamworks Studios movie, was released in theaters on September 27. Adapted from the trilogy of books bearing the same name, the film follows Rozzum Unit 7134, or Roz (Lupita Nyong'o), who finds herself washed up on an island filled with local wildlife. She, along with the forest's local fox, Fink (Pedro Pascal), end up raising a gosling named Brightbill (Kit Connor), preparing him for the fall migration and his role as the savior of the forest.

The movie primarily focuses on parenting, but Roz is not built to be a parent. Over time, however, she changes her ways, allowing her to experience

emotion and learn to care for Brightbill. The movie is an appealing watch for both adults and kids as it shows a parental journey that many can relate to.

The art style elevates key moments in the movie. There are several scenes that emphasize the beauty of nature, such as a scene with butterflies on a tree at the start of the movie, which fills the screen with a mirage of yellow and orange. Lazar Veljkovic (IV) comments on the visuals of the movie: "I thought that the art style was nice, but not seamless. It was very well-put together, and the shifts in frame rates at key moments really helps accent the pace of the movie."

Although the film has many incredible moments, the standout has to be the end of the second act, where Roz and Brightbill part ways. The beautiful

visuals and fantastic musical score enhance the scene, increasing in intensity as the scene goes on. The humor is hilarious as well. Concerning the humor in the movie, Mack Losi (IV) says, "I believe that the film does an excellent job of adding dark humor, such as the 'I have six kids' joke, without babying or putting down the audience."

The Wild Robot branches off from the traditional formula of Dreamworks films. Most Dreamworks movies, including *Shrek*, *Kung Fu Panda* and *How to Train Your Dragon*, all include similar tropes of crude humor and celebrity voice casting. Whether these elements benefit these films is debatable, but what is different about *The Wild Robot* is that it doesn't use these patterns. Voice actors like Pedro Pascal and Mark Hamill (Thorn) fit right into the film, as they aren't the standout features.

In this way, *The Wild Robot* takes more cues from "golden age" Pixar films rather than Dreamworks films. This is in part due to the director, Chris Sanders, a three-time Oscar winner and director of Disney classic *Lilo & Stitch*. In an interview with digital entertainment publication Collier, he shares why he decided to direct the movie: "The idea of working with a robotic character, of course, is really exciting to me, and the story of a robot that becomes a mother — that's even better. That's something really fresh and unusual."

The Wild Robot received a 98 percent approval rate from both critics and audiences on *Rotten Tomatoes* soon after its release, but it is too early to know whether it could earn an Oscar. The movie is available on major streaming platforms and is now playing in theaters.

How to Navigate Boston's Thrift Hub



Cambridge's Garment District provides vintage and used clothing.

By **Catherine Cox (I)**
& **Julia Morellato (III)**
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

A Guide to Thrifting in Boston

1. Research:

There are countless spots for thrifting around Boston, and it can be hard to find a spot that has exactly what you are looking for. Researching each spot

can help you narrow down some of their unique factors and determine which is your best bet.

2. Stores versus Markets:

While there are some great stores around Boston, they often have the same types of pieces available all year round. Seasonal markets, such as The Fenway Flea, can bring a new rotation of pieces. These markets are also a great way to support small businesses, as they usually

form partnerships with some local shops!

3. The Bins:

Some thrift stores have bins that you can sift through, and even buy clothes by the pound. The bins are a great way to find unique pieces and discover new layers to what is available at thrift locations. Beware, you may want to bring gloves to sort through the sometimes dirty bins!

4. Prices:

Prices range per location, item and status of the piece. Some designer pieces can still be costly, but they are still significantly marked down from their original price in thrift stores.

Curated shops tend to be on the pricier end, but massive warehouse style locations are a great way to find cheaper items.

5. Pieces:

Hardcore thrifters are super particular about the specific details of their thrifting finds. From certain brands to the stitch type of clothing, every bit counts!

6. Have Fun:

Go thrifting with your friends, dis-

cover new parts of Boston and have a good time!

Student Thrift Store Picks:

Khaya Dryden-Peterson (I)
The Garment District in Cambridge

"The pit at the Garment District is great; it is always an adventure, and you never know what you are going to get. It is also a lot less expensive!"

Olivia Huynh (I)
Goodwill in Allston

"The location is super accessible (right on the Green Line) and usually has a good selection of style since it's next to a college [...] I love the purse rack coat hanger situation going on to display all the bags."

Madeline Kim (III)
Buffalo Exchange in Brookline

"They have a lot of cool pieces you won't find elsewhere, and it's [at] Coolidge Corner, so it's a pretty good shopping area. [It's] fun!"

Dearbhla Reilly (III)
Goodwill in Jamaica Plain

"I found a piece that was trending for the summer in a bin underneath a pile of black leather stiletto boots [...] [There are] endless colors and styles of clothes."

What a Hit! Billie Eilish's World Tour

By **Isabella Connelly-Dow (II)**
Contributing Writer

On October 11, over 12,000 Bostonians filled TD Garden to witness pop star Billie Eilish perform the Boston leg of her "Hit Me Hard and Soft" tour, which — fans agree — did just that. On stage for just over 90 minutes, the 22-year-old singer carried her audience through a performance that was punchy, emotional and even a little tear jerking.

After an exciting opening act by brothers Nat and Alex Wolff, roars of anticipation overwhelmed the arena as Eilish began to make her entrance; in the crossfire of lasers and strobe lights, the singer emerged atop a fluorescent cube, where she performed her hit song "CHIHIRO." Eilish then took the stage with "LUNCH," the lead single from her "Hit Me Hard and Soft" album, which gained significant popularity on social media.

One of the most notable characteristics of Eilish's performance, and the album overall, is the dynamic range of genre and styles that listeners experience.

Critics from *Boston.com* comment that Eilish "seamlessly transitioned from one energy level to the next." Her Boston setlist included hit songs like "What Was I Made For?," "bad guy" and "BIRDS OF A FEATHER."

An exciting moment for showgoers occurred about midway through the show, during the song "Male Fantasy." Eilish made the surprising request for total silence in the arena, and took the time to record vocals with her fellow musicians Jane and Ava Horner. Amir Rodrigues-Carabjal (II), another concert attendee, says, "Watching her record and sing live was amazing, even better than I thought it would be, [...] not that I had anything but high expectations."

When asked what their favorite part of the show was, most replied that it was Eilish's passion and energy that really made the night memorable. Amelie Kassabian (II) agreed that her stage presence was exceptional, saying, "She really engages with her audience and clearly enjoys being there [...] She's not just singing her songs in front of people; she's singing



Billie Eilish performs at TD Garden during her tour.

a story to us."

Whether it was through her performances of edgy songs like "Guess," or more heartfelt hits like "BIRDS OF A FEATHER,"

Eilish proved to be a prominent storyteller, creative and a friend of Boston, ending the night by telling the crowd, "You guys are awesome!"

ASK H.I.M.



By Hayden Cooper-Dupont (I), Islay Shilland (I) & Milda Miranda (I)
Creative Consultants

How did you get so nonchalant, Duke?
H: Long hair and chewing gum.

What do I do if he randomly ghosted me...like stopped “snapping,” stopped liking my spam posts, stopped replying to DMs...? No explanation or obvious cause either.

H: That which leaves was not meant to stay; unless you deeply care for this person and the relationship you have with them, the best thing is to move on just as they did. Trying to assume a reason or rationale just leads to confusion and allows the problem to hang over your head.

I still don't know what I want to do, and I feel like a fraud when picking out my majors for college apps.

M: Trust me, I hear you! It took me forever to figure out what I wanted to do, but I realized that was because I believed everything was finite. It's not. The point of a major is to explore new areas and learn new things about yourself through education. Even if the major you're choosing on *Common App* doesn't perfectly label you and your aspirations as a person, college is the opportunity to learn what does. Don't put yourself down or discredit yourself for not knowing what you want, it is admirable to do thorough research and look into all possible options!

Is it weird if I'm a senior and I like a sophomore?

I: If the grades don't touch...

How do I come out to my close friends and family to tell them that I'm a furry?

M: Usually, I would tell furries that people are never going to understand or show compassion to you for being a furry. I could also say that you should keep howling at the moon and rolling around in grass-- but I don't believe that. I believe you should hang up that fursuit while you still can. Best wishes!"

I feel like I'm competing with my friends sometimes in terms of college, but I don't want that to get in the way of friendship because I love them.

I: It's normal to compare yourself to the people around you, but do your best to compartmentalize so that things like college don't hurt your friendships. Maybe it's best not to discuss college a lot with your friends, especially during application season. Try to remember that at the end of the day your friends aren't your competition — they're your friends, and you should be happy for each other's accomplishments.

I think I'm in love with my sister's boyfriend.

I: Boyfriends are temporary, but sisters are forever. We do not know what type of age gap you and your sister have, but her man is *her* man, so just don't act on it and eventually your feelings will probably go away.

November 2024 Crossword

By Ailin Sha (I)

Across

- 1. Tolkien monsters
- 5. Mott's product popular with children
- 13. *Vicky Cristina* _____
- 14. "Boron" in Polish
- 15. A surgical procedure that joins two open ends together to form a seamless tube (abbr.)
- 16. Second wife of Henry VIII
- 18. *Sumus* _____
- 20. Advanced Placement (abbr.)
- 21. ___ v. *Wade*
- 22. *Fury*
- 24. "No" in Italian
- 26. *Dead* _____ *Society*
- 27. To such a great extent
- 28. Digital icons
- 30. Abbreviation for "aged"
- 31. First initial, last name of No. 16 of Chicago Cubs
- 34. 25-member South Korean boy band
- 36. 2022 Oscars Best Picture (abbr.)
- 37. Not applicable or not available (abbr.)
- 38. Bloated
- 41. Harvard Model United Nations (abbr.)
- 43. *Cartoon Network* (abbr.)
- 44. "That is" in Latin (abbr.)
- 45. Topic of Massachusetts ballot question No. 4; "magic _____"
- 48. Predicted 2025 Oscars Best Picture winner
- 50. Pop singer Rita _____
- 51. Part of a tree; subdivision
- 52. Child
- 54. Shows disapproval on *Reddit*
- 58. _____ Theatre of Boston
- 60. Gorillas, chimpanzees, humans
- 63. *Old McDonald had a farm*, _____
- 64. _____ Vera
- 65. Popular herb for pickles
- 66. Obi-Wan Kenobi quote

Down

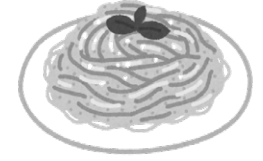
- 1. Four-sided pillar (e.g. Washington Monument)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13									14			
15				16				17				
		18		19				20		21		
22	23			24			25	26				
27					28	29				30		
		31	32		33				34	35		
	36					37			38		39	40
45			46	47					48	49		
		50						51				
52	53			54	55	56		57				
58			59							60	61	62
63									64			
65					66							

- 2. musk____, aristoc____, b____
- 3. French pancake
- 4. *Lion King* villain
- 5. _____ Drafthouse Cinemas
- 6. Incorrect Latin imperative for "put!"; incorrect spelling for a small horse
- 7. Latin phrase that means "first, do no harm" (abbr.)
- 8. "Layers" in Afrikaans
- 9. Popular grocery store vehicle
- 10. Popular food delivery service
- 11. Wolf lookalike native to North America
- 12. _____ Hemingway
- 17. College degree (abbr.)
- 19. South Asian country
- 23. A document that describes the conditions for a defendant's release from custody or holding until trial (abbr.)
- 25. Descendants of Romulus
- 28. Early decision (abbr.)
- 29. Extremely important and significant

- 31. Group of people who follow orders
- 32. Washington state (abbr.)
- 33. Neighborhood in New York
- 35. Battle of _____ in the Second Punic War
- 39. Spaceborne Imaging Radar-C (abbr.)
- 40. Affirmation *Modus operandi* (abbr.)
- 42. Form of potatoes
- 46. Human resources (abbr.)
- 47. _____ head
- 49. Black Friday 30 percent off
- 51. Singular drum
- 53. An enthusiastic French "yes"
- 55. "On" in Latin
- 56. Five-member South Korean girl group founded in 2005 (abbr.)
- 57. Voiceover (abbr.); Alternate form of "until"
- 61. _____ favor
- 62. Sharp scream in a horror movie
- 64. Shout of excitement or to show understanding

Don't be upsetti... Eat some spaghetti!



By Madelyn Buksbaum (II) & Kierstin McMahon (II)
Culinary Consultants

Pasta & Marinara Sauce:

A simple recipe anyone can make. If you want to make your own sauce, try this:

Marinara Sauce:

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 can crushed tomatoes
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes

Marinara Directions:

1. Heat a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add olive oil, garlic and crushed tomatoes. Stir and let simmer until minced garlic is golden brown.
2. Add kosher salt, pepper and crushed red pepper flakes. Stir and let simmer on medium heats for seven minutes.
3. Let cool and enjoy!

Pasta Directions:

1. Bring a medium saucepan full of water to a boil.
2. Boil the pasta according to package instructions (typically for 7 to 12 minutes).
3. Strain and serve.

Vegan Pesto:

If you're tired of marinara or simply don't like it, try this instead, either on top of pasta or as a dip!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup fresh basil
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 cup walnuts or 1/2 cup pine nuts
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- salt & pepper to taste

Pesto Directions:

1. Blend all ingredients in a blender until smooth.
2. Serve and enjoy!

Resources For Students Experiencing Food Insecurity:

Project Bread:

Food assistance hotline:
1 (800) 645-8333

Fair Foods:

2 dollar produce bags (10 lbs produce).
fairfoods.org

Daily Table:

Non-profit grocery store with 50 percent discount on produce for SNAP/EBT users.
dailytable.org

The “Femininomenon” of Celebrity Culture

By **Alexandra Lee (I)**
& **Katie Hurley (II)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Sometimes it takes a decade to become an overnight success. Chappell Roan knows how that feels.

If you’ve been living under a rock, pop artist Chappell Roan rocketed to fame this past year with her hit song “Good Luck, Babe!” which drew attention to the artist’s debut album *The Rise and Fall of A Midwest Princess*. Roan gained traction and her crowds increased from hundreds to thousands in just a few months. In May, Roan performed for 45,000 people at Boston Calling.

But perhaps Roan hadn’t fully understood the complexities of celebrity life and the success she had worked ten years for.

In August, the “HOT TO GO” singer called out the “abuse, harassment and stalking” that she and many other celebrities experience. “I don’t care that this crazy type of behavior comes along with the job; the career field that I’ve chosen. That does not make it okay,” she said to her four million *TikTok* followers. Roan didn’t want to end up like many other celebrities such as Sandra Bullock or Kendall Jenner — both of whom had stalkers break into their homes with intentions to harm them.

Despite the prevalence of this infringement on celebrities’ privacy, many expressed anger at Roan’s response, deeming her “ungrateful” or “unappreciative.”

“I’ve heard that Chappell Roan is spoiled and unappreciative of her fanbase, which is exactly why I don’t listen to her music,” says Benedicte Pierre Louis (I).

Still, many fans remain loyal. Zinnia Davis (I), believes that although her actions may come off as abrasive or rude, Roan is standing up for herself in an industry where this treatment is brushed over.

“It always pisses me off when people are like, well, she signed up for this job. If you’re going to be an artist, you have to expect these things. [...] Why should people have to expect these things? And why should they have to just take it, you know?” expresses Davis. She also points out that Roan’s request was to members of the public who have stalked her family and behaved disrespectfully, not to her supporters.

It is not just fans who defend the artist’s request for privacy. Though Zev Ramey-Winikur (I) doesn’t listen to her music, he believes that “when it comes to somebody who’s so famous, we kind of throw their rights, we throw their privacy out the window, and we don’t regard them as human.”

It is also important to recognize that Roan has received a disproportionate amount of hate for her stance when other celebrities like Justin Bieber and Bad Bunny have spoken out in the same way and received significantly less backlash. A vocal advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, Roan often features drag queens as her openers. Her aesthetic — from her dra-



Gilbert Flores

Chappell Roan poses on the “Guts World Tour” Movie red carpet.

matic makeup and outfits to her performing style — is influenced by drag, and her music explores coming out and her identity as a lesbian.

Is it a coincidence that Roan has received so much backlash when compared to her straight male counterparts? “It’s [...] rooted in just a genuine misogyny and lesbophobia,” Davis says of the backlash, referencing the stereotype of the “mean lesbian.” Ironically, Roan has not only donated money to, but promoted many charity organizations such as the *Trevor Project*, *For the Gworlds and Glo*, which are all featured on her website, exhibiting be-

havior that contrasts the stereotype.

In light of the hate she has received, Chappell Roan abruptly canceled her performances at the “All Things Go” festivals in New York and Washington D.C., citing the need to prioritize her health. This only culminated in further backlash for the singer, as many fans purchased tickets from all over and traveled across the country to see her take the stage.

Ramey-Winikur puts it simply: “Celebrities are people too.” In a world with an increasing wealth gap and out of touch celebrity behavior, however, how do we step back and let our idols have privacy?

Banned Books Week: BLS’s Latest Success Story

By **Lauren Dong (III)**,
Sophia Fortuin (III)
& **Weian Xue (III)**

Contributing Writers

Whether you are a literary connoisseur or a new reader skimming through only what is required for your class, there is no denying the immense impact that books have had in shaping perspectives and changing lives. For this reason, unfortunately, books are often banned serving as a form of censorship and impeding the development of critical thinking skills.

Around the world, communities come together annually to acknowledge their support for reading all books in a week-long celebration known as Banned Books Week (BBW), first introduced in 1989 by librarian and literary activist Judith Krug to raise awareness about banned books. Various organizations have supported the project, including the American Library Association and the National Book

Foundation. During this special week, people hold events to celebrate and raise awareness. Each year, people choose a new theme, never straying away from their core message against book banning.

This year, BBW was held from September 22 to September 28 with the theme “Freed Between the Lines.” According to the American Library Association, the theme demonstrates that “book bans don’t just restrict access to stories — they undermine our rights.”

In order to celebrate the universal freedom to read during BBW, Boston Latin School’s Keefe Library created a display showcasing commonly challenged books, as well as a “Banned Book of the Day” whiteboard, where students were given the opportunity to guess the banned book based on a passage from the text. Student praefects and the BLS chapter of Amnesty International, an organization focusing on human rights, also worked with the librarians.

BLS Amnesty International secre-

tary Steven Sahatjian (II) explains, “We did research on books that are being challenged globally not just in the U.S. but other countries, for challenging societal ideas or ideas that the government wants them to have.”

The display included popular books such as *All Boys Aren’t Blue*, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, *This Book Is Gay* and *The Fault in Our Stars*, many of these books being required reading throughout one’s BLS career.

People most commonly challenge books for containing offensive language, religious viewpoints, sexual content, LGBTQ+ content, racism or being unsuitable for certain age groups. In 2023, the top five most commonly challenged books were due to LGBTQ+ content and sexual content.

Commonly challenged books including Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, George Orwell’s *1984*, Maia Kobabe’s *Gender Queer* and Juno Dawson’s *This Book Is Gay* were all part of the nearly 70 books challenged in Massachusetts schools over the last five

years.

BLS Keefe Librarian Ms. Sofia Safran relates book censorship to current events, saying, “Looking at the relationship between the issues that are commonly talked about in political spheres and online, [there is] a pretty visible relationship between what issues are current and common and what people are [...] asking librarians to take off the shelves.”

Although the concept of banning books has been a tool to control people throughout history, only recently did celebrations like BBW and online discourse put this issue in the forefront of the media and the hands of the readers themselves.

BLS Keefe Librarian Ms. Deeth Ellis comments on why banning books is problematic: “The school library is a place for students to find a book they want to read. If you decide you want to read a book, and another parent or administrator [...] says, ‘We’re going to take that off the shelf,’ then they’re telling you you can’t read a book that you, in fact, may want to read.”

Anora: A Sour Spin on Cinderella

By **Shirlyn Wang (III)**
Contributing Writer

Anora, the predicted winner of Best Picture at the 2025 Oscars, burst onto the scene at its first viewing at the 77th Cannes Film Festival earlier this year, with its theatrical debut following on October 18. The film features the actress Mikey Madison in the titular role of Anora “Ani” Mikheeva, a sex worker from Brooklyn who works in a strip club, and Ivan “Vanya” Zakharov (Mark Eydelshteyn), a spoiled young playboy with a wealthy Russian family.

A whirlwind of romance mystifies the couple as Vanya proposes to Ani. His parents catch wind of this forbidden relationship and travel to America, upon which Vanya disappears. The clock ticks down to midnight while Ani and the others search for

him. There is no happy ending for the pair, unfortunately, as one of the family’s henchman, Igor (Yura Borisov), takes Ani back to her run-down home in Brooklyn. Vanya’s family coerces an annulment onto Ani, dismissing Ani and her attempts to join their family due to her occupation as a stripper.

Marketed as a comedy and drama, the R-rated film has already achieved the Palme d’Or, the highest honor awarded to a director at the Cannes Film Festival, to director Sean Baker upon its debut. In addition, *Anora* has been well received by critics of *Vanity Fair* and *The New Yorker*, and it has a 97 percent rating on the “Tomatometer” of *Rotten Tomatoes*.

The film is the subject of an ongoing and diverse discourse around feminism and sex work. Some viewers find that the movie is empowering for women, while others be-

lieve that the movie just reinforces the idea that a woman needs a man to be truly happy. In her article “Is *Anora* really a feminist masterpiece?” *Glamour* writer Meg Walters says, “*Anora* may seem to break down the *Pretty Woman* fantasy, but in its place, it presents us with a different version of the very same fantasy seen through the male gaze.”

The movie’s theme on feminism has divided the online community. Some Boston Latin School students disagree with Walters’s view, remaining united in believing that the movie is feminist.

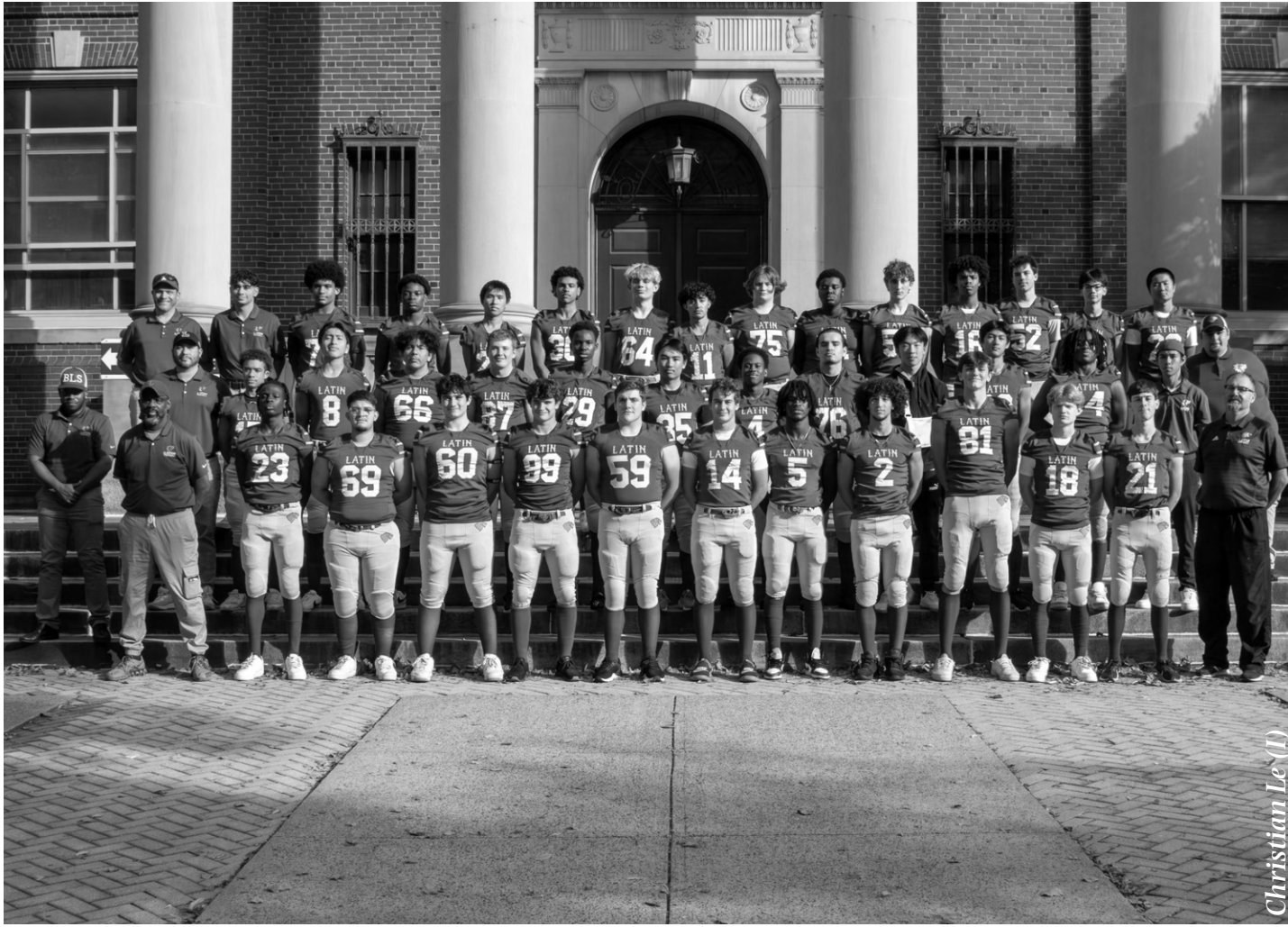
Regarding the question on if the ending of *Anora* showing Ani crying in the lap of a man was detrimental to the idea of *Anora* being feminist, Meya Splaine (III), a member of BLS theatre, says, “Actually, surprisingly no, [...] sex workers go through a lot and sometimes are seen as centered around

men, but that is normal [...] [although it] does defeat a little bit of the purpose.”

In addition, Anita Mei (III), a member of the BLS Ladies Collective, believes that the film provides a view of women different from that of typical depictions: “The ending shows that women shouldn’t have to be shown as objects and have experiences, [and the ending] just shows that society is corrupted.”

Anora is genuinely witty with its incorporation of unexpected humor, and it brings the viewer along on a rollercoaster of emotions through Ani’s experiences and relationship. The film is currently only in theaters, though it is predicted to be on streaming services at the end of the year. Neon, the production company of the film, has an exclusive streaming deal with *Hulu*, so be on the lookout!

City Versus Suburbs: Let's Even the Playing Field



Athletes and coaches of the BLS varsity football team line up before a game.

By Eliza Knight Bairstow (II)

Contributing Writer

Private and regional schools have long displayed their dominance in competitive high school sports, often startlingly outperforming public schools and city leagues. While their success is commendable, it raises questions about fairness and whether systemic advantages contribute to their dominance.

Boston Latin School sports teams compete in the Dual County League (DCL), where the majority of schools are suburban public schools. DCL schools,

however, benefit from possessing more readily available space for facilities. Furthermore, the majority of BLS teams also often compete in out-of-league games against prominent private schools.

One factor that contributes to the athletic performance of high schools is access to superior resources. Massachusetts suburbs oftentimes have large high schools that encompass students from entire regions or towns, leading to a shocking surplus of funding. Private schools similarly boast state-of-the-art facilities, creating an athletically focused environment and directly contrib-

uting to better success on the field.

Abigale Burns, a soccer player at Notre Dame Academy in Hingham, says that she sees the difference between opponent public schools immediately. She states, “[P]rivate schools can attract more people and get more funding.”

In regards to funding, public schools are often undervalued. BLS football and baseball Coach Timothy McQuade comments, “Schools like Saint Sebastian’s have more donors and probably can pull from those funds for a lot of stuff. Even with the Boston Latin School Association, we do not have any

facilities just like the rest of Boston Public Schools.”

Recruitment also plays a significant role in athletic achievements. Private schools market their stellar athletics with the goal of obtaining student-athletes that will eventually go on to play college sports. This means that public schools are naturally disadvantaged, especially schools similar to BLS that are more academically focused.

Gus Millon, a sophomore at Boston College High School and member of the tennis and ski teams, adds, “While I believe the main difference is the undeniable level of college recruiting seen at private schools compared to public schools, one would also see a difference in intensity during training, games and championships.”

Student-athletes experience the connection that opposing players have on the court, field and rink firsthand. With the majority of the players accustomed to high intensity training sessions, private school sports environments often help build chemistry and camaraderie, ultimately creating greater success.

Public schools, especially BPS, have trouble creating powerful and competitive sports programs. The BLS football team’s home field was moved to Clemente this year with the renovation of their usual field at White Stadium. Coach McQuade describes the players’ excitement surrounding their new home field, saying, “[A] lot of kids really liked playing near the School because it truly felt like a real home game.”

The disparities between availability of resources, funding and recruitment opportunities highlights the athletic imbalance between different types of schools. The inequalities between public and private or regional schools, nevertheless, is not a testament to how hard student-athletes work both in the classroom and in their sports.

New Season, New Stadium

**By Elizabeth Noronha (II)
& Mariam Abdulle (IV)**

Contributing Writers

The controversial construction project on White Stadium, located within Boston’s Franklin Park, has been on the minds of many in the Greater Boston area. Predicted to be finished in March 2026, the project would offer an extended 15 hours of practice for the public, but currently Boston Public Schools sports teams have to work around the loss of their home stadium.

White Stadium was originally built in 1949 to be used as a facility for vibrant community gatherings and the venue for BPS student athletics. After a fire in the late ‘90s, part of the stadium seating area became unusable, and following years of neglect, the stadium’s team locker rooms and showers were deemed useless. Redevelopment was desperately needed in order to maintain the stadium’s vital role in BPS sports.

Although the closure impacts all BPS athletes, Boston Latin School and Boston Latin Academy (BLA) have been hit especially hard because White Stadium was their home field. Both schools have had to cancel or postpone sporting events due to the stadium’s closure. Varsity football captain Charlie Hauck (I) looks at the bright side of playing in a new stadium, stating, “The loss of White Stadium has

not been too much of a challenge for the BLS football team.” The temporary replacement field, Clemente, is considerably closer to BLS and makes travel much easier, allowing more students to attend games, causing coaches and players alike to feel that Clemente is a real home field.

Regardless of the convenience, Ethan Sardina (I), a member of the varsity football team, says, “The atmosphere just is not as good.” Many Wolfpack players comment on the usually crowded BLS versus BLA game and believe that it didn’t receive as much turnout due to the closure. The game took place at the West Roxbury Education Complex’s field on a Saturday — abnormal for a football game — which could have affected attendance. For other games, however, game attendance has not drastically changed.

Despite many senior athletes no longer being able to take their final lap around White Stadium to signify their last time playing for BLS, Clemente Field’s usage has made the change less drastic for day-to-day sports activities.

Looking to the future, the coming improvements of the stadium include many new amenities, such as study spaces for student-athletes to get ahead on homework, which would relieve some of the stress from BLS students and other BPS student athletes. An increased eight-lane track for cross country will also be added, providing a better space for practices



Fan’s gather to watch BLS football team play at their home field.

and giving the BPS teams a home field to compete at.

The stadium will also be made accessible for handicapped users, since the grandstands have remained inaccessible for many viewers. Mayor Michelle Wu promises free public Wi-Fi for the entire stadium and a Boston Unity Mentorship Program for BPS students.

A huge benefit to the construction is that over 30 million dollars of the costs will be covered by the Boston Unity Soccer Partners, lessening the impact on Boston’s finances and tax-

es. The group has also pledged to pay the cost of maintenance for the stadium.

Some residents in the area remain concerned about potential traffic and parking issues around Franklin Park, but Mayor Wu hopes that public transportation will be utilized instead of private vehicles.

The pros of this project outweigh the cons — although sports teams will have to deal with the change from a new field, they will benefit from the renewed stadium’s new amenities and increased size.

Is Winning Everything in High School Sports?

Yes, Winning is Everything in High School Sports

No, Winning is Not Everything in High School Sports

By Simon Hay-Sutton (II)

Staff Writer

Winning isn't just the score of your game on Senior Night; it's a platform for life ahead.

The benefit of winning is clear: top athletes get recruited to colleges and earn athletic merit-based admissions and financial scholarships. Winning provides high school athletes with visibility amidst hundreds of other high school athletes. College coaches, scouts and recruiters notice players who demonstrate how they thrive under pressure and propel their teams to victory.

Winning is one aspect of this ability, a way to visualize these achievements and statistics. Girls' varsity soccer captain Lily Murphy (I) explains, "My sport has given me the opportunity to continue my career in college in Division III. I will be playing for St. Lawrence University next year, who compete in the Liberty League." The girls' soccer team qualified for the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association State Tournament. They made it to the round of 32 for the second year in a row, helping Murphy continue her athletic and academic careers at the collegiate level.

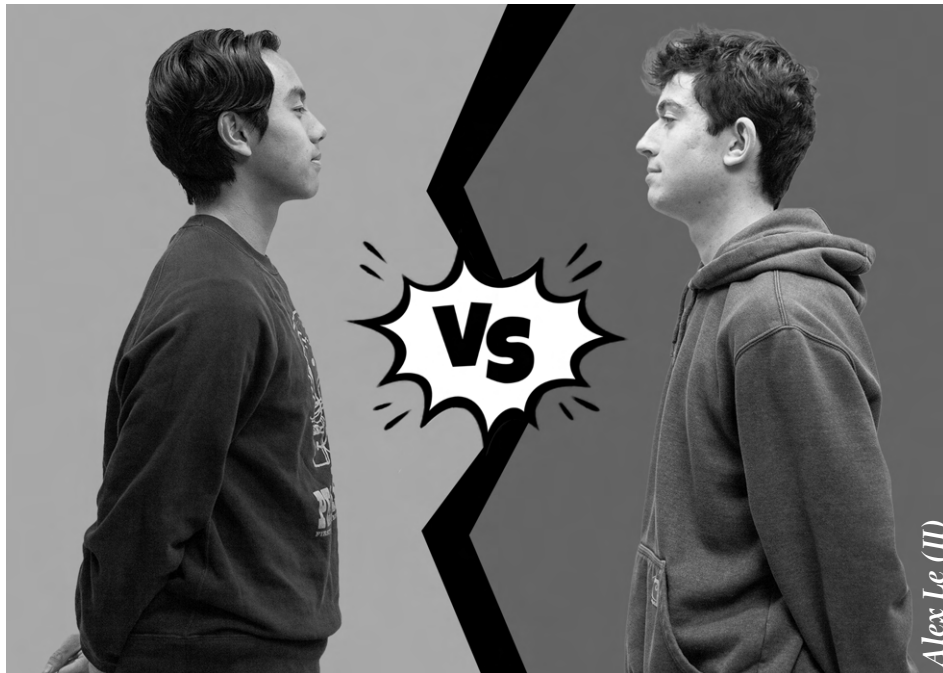
But aside from college and the future beyond, what psychological benefits does winning impose? Winning isn't just about accolades; it can impact an athlete's mental state and development. Boys' varsity soccer captain Markelos Papa (I) states, "Winning games certainly increases self-confidence, discipline and resilience. Especially after an extended period of winning games in a season, self-confidence might reach the sky." This epitomizes how success fosters a sense of self-assurance that can extend to other areas of life, such as academics or relationships. Celebrating and fighting for every little win, whether a two-yard gain or a free throw, brings a team closer together in collaboration and camaraderie.

Another aspect of winning is an effect on social status. Often, success can elevate a student's social standing within their school and around other communities. Athletes who are part of winning teams are frequently noticed by their peers and feel more visible in their community. Papa explains, "Everyone likes winning, so consequently, everyone likes those who win [...] It is not fun telling people that you managed an 'impressive' two wins and 13 losses in a season, but on the other hand, saying that your team made states is a statement that you make with pride." Winning comes with prestige and respect, as students even beyond the School recognize players' reputations, which boosts their confidence.

Moreover, winning prepares students for college and a world of competition. In high-stakes environments, students who have experienced athletic success are more likely to remain composed and perform efficiently like they did in their high school games. Varsity football captain Augie Groh (I) states, "We live in a very competitive world [...] People have the opportunity to compete for what they want and don't have to let the circumstances they were given at birth control their future." Sports often reward hard work and performance, preparing students for a world where effort and results directly lead to increased opportunities.

While some people argue that the process and learning are more important than actually winning, success is an integral part of the process because it provides benchmarks of athletes' improvement.

In high school sports, winning is more than just the scoreboard; it is a stimulant for personal growth and opportunity, propelling student-athletes to be the best versions of themselves: confident, disciplined and hard-working individuals ready to face any challenge.



By Joseph Day (II)

Contributing Writer

For high school student-athletes, playing sports is more than just the wins and losses: it is a unique and invaluable space for teenagers to develop not only as athletes, but as humans.

Whether it is a team sport or an individual event, athletics in schools allow students to socialize, have fun and be part of a bigger group working towards a common goal. The most valuable aspect of the game is the journey and the time spent working hard. The process, the sweat and the fight are what counts, not a win.

A season consists of countless bus rides and practices where athletes go every day to compete with one another and improve. Athletes suffer, succeed and fail together. Whatever the activity

is, the team does it as one unit. At the end of the day, this is what high school sports are all about: a committed community of student-athletes who share similar interests and have fun together. James Sullivan (II), member of the Division II State Champion boys' hockey team remarks, "Some of the most meaningful memories came from things like getting food before practice or listening to music in the locker room before games." The bond between teammates is special and connects the athletes in their seasons more than winning a game can.

Although the feeling of winning a state championship is undeniably tremendous, it's the idea of shared camaraderie that drives that victorious feeling. A key aspect of high school sports is the leadership skills that students develop. Every team has captains, but it takes more than just a few individuals to power the team. Leadership comes in many forms and it takes courage to speak up, give advice and point out directions. A true leader has to guide the team through both wins and losses, which can test athletes and hold them accountable.

Boston Latin School boys' junior varsity soccer Head Coach Aaron Osowiecki comments, "When you step on the field, you immediately start working as a unit, and you can forget about everything else for a while." As a forty-year soccer player and longtime coach, Mr. Osowiecki knows what it means to win and lose, but also what it means to just go out there and play, and how there are a lot of other factors involved. Sports allow for young people to develop relationships both with each other and with adults outside of the classroom, regardless of the game's final score.

For many athletes, the field is a safe and welcoming place where they can take a step back from their busy lives and just have fun. Whatever level students are playing at, athletics provides a much-needed break from school, homework, clubs and other stressful aspects of their lives. Boys' varsity basketball player and soccer captain Jadon Berkson (I) shares, "There is absolutely nothing that beats the environment of everyone giving their all for the team, which I think is something that is very specific to high school sports." Sports offer athletes the ability to immerse themselves in what they love and get away from aspects of students' lives that are clouded by omnipresent stress.

Many people grow up playing sports from a very young age, and for a lot of them, their careers culminate at the high school level. Such a massive part of their lives can end so abruptly on the field, but doing it with teammates, friends and classmates in as special an atmosphere as this makes it mean so much more.

Lights, Camera, Action (Shot)

**By Trevor Gracombe (II)
& Ladan Mohamed (IV)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Sports photos capture iconic moments, emotions and the drama of the game. Oftentimes, however, viewers only see the final product, overshadowing the steps photographers take to achieve that "perfect picture."

People can use photos as a tool to remember events in our lives. Whether it be a sunset, a family gathering or an outing with friends, a photo captures a singular moment, creating a tangible memory that can transport us back to special moments. Sports photos, in particular, preserve memories and achievements, creating a record of individual or team moments.

When discussing what makes the best sports photos, Elisa Walker (IV), a varsity girls' soccer play-

er, states, "What's captured in the heat of the game really brings sports photos to life. Looking at pictures afterwards reminds me that we're one team." In team-focused sports, photos give players an opportunity to reflect on moments where the team is playing a sport they love and celebrate their bonding and accomplishments.

Boys' varsity soccer photographer Eric Sutton comments on how he uses photography to capture the high intensity nature of sports: "Sports photos are no different than other photos, in that the really great ones capture emotions. Emotions are high in every game."

In sports, it can be hard to find the right moment. Whether it is the emotions in the middle of the action, a full sprint before scoring a touchdown or the silence in the arena while shooting an all-important free throw, photographers strive to capture a mo-

ment that encompasses all emotions in the game. Boys' varsity basketball player Michael Tran (II) says, "I think the best moments are after a big play, when players are showing emotion [...] My favorite photos are ones that are either in action, like me dribbling or going for a layup, or one with me in front of the crowd."

It is one thing to relive exciting moments through photography, but it is another to capture them. Sutton describes how he attempts to capture the perfect picture, saying, "I like to take soccer photos from a low angle. It makes everything look more heroic, and you're more likely to see the player's eyes." The low angle Sutton uses makes the viewer feel as though they are in the moment, connecting with the players on the field. He adds, "I also like to move around and experiment to capture the feel of that game and place. Sometimes, shooting into

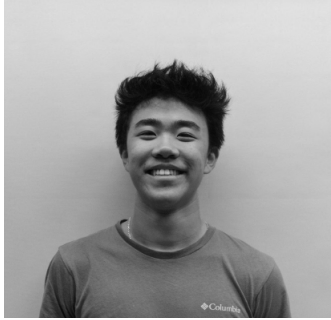
the sun just looks cool." Being experimental is important to create the best product in sports photos.

Sutton, however, hopes to go beyond the individual images. He says, "My ultimate goal is to build community around the team. There's something magical about letting people see the action in a way that feels like they are on the field."

What is just as important as playing the sport are the memories the photos create. Tran claims, "When I am looking back at old photos, I see how much I have changed."

Photos not only serve as measurements of progress, but they can also share the moment to players and people who are not able to see the games in person. Athletes commit their time to competing in the sports they love, and it is vital to document their amazing achievements and capture moments of joy.

Ice in Their Veins: Wolfpack Winter Captains



**Boys' Fencing
Steven Miall (I)**

"I'm looking forward to my final year as a Boston Latin School fencer and captain; it's really bitter-sweet but I know the team will be in good hands. We have a ton of young fencers that love and enjoy the sport of fencing and will continue the dominant legacy of BLS fencing. Last year ended not in the way we wanted especially after winning states the year before that. We're looking to get our mens' team back on track and working to win this year. *Sumus primi!*"



**Boys' Basketball
Jackson Prinn (I)**

"I think that over the summer and over the fall, our team has built such great chemistry. We have even more depth this year; playing a summer and fall league. We've just grown to be more of a team. I am super excited for what we can bring and hope to make a run in the [state] tournament again."



**Girls' Fencing
Celena Nguyen (II)**

"I am excited because I get to play the sport I love with the people I love. We've been practicing since October, ready to win as state champions this year. Our saber, epee and foil squad are very determined to perform well."



**Girls' Basketball
Ellie Ring (I)**

"We have been preparing for the season with captains' practices over the past couple of weeks, and the girls in our program have been working hard to get ready for tryouts. It has been awesome to see the work everyone has been putting in throughout the off-season, and we are optimistic about what our team will accomplish this season."



**Boys' Track & Field
Bilal Elhaji (I)**

"We have some big goals for the upcoming indoor season. We've won the conference championship for a few years in a row now, but we're looking for something a little bigger this year and everyone's excited for it."



**Boys' Swim
Cal Hale (I)**

"The team is very excited for the season and looking to win a lot this year. As a senior, I am looking forward to winning states and hopefully building up a strong team for the future. The seniors are very excited for our last year and we will help build the team for the future. Hopefully in the process, we can also win a lot."



**Cheer
Ashley Beard (I)**

"We are looking forward to the winter season approaching so quickly. The team shows up to each practice ready to work and get stuff done. Everyone is committed and strives to get better, and I know this will continue in the winter. Watching the growth of so many athletes over this season has been so rewarding and inspiring, and I can't wait to see what our program accomplishes."



**Wrestling
Jonah Roy (I)**

"I think our lineup is going to be great. Our team is pretty dedicated and I've seen a lot of kids doing off season. I think it will be fun to captain the younger members and show them what wrestling is about, since the sport has taught me a lot. Coach Gibbons always tells us to "have fun, be great," so that's what we plan on doing."



**Boys' Hockey
Shane Dunning (I)**

"I am excited for this year's hockey season because it is my last year with the Boston Latin School program, and I have made a lot of memories with my teammates over the years. I am excited to see what we can do on the ice this season after a big win last year."



**Girls' Hockey
Ava Enright (I)**

"This season we're moving up from the Dual County League [DCL] small to the highly competitive DCL large. We are excited for the tougher competition, as it will challenge us and ideally put us in a stronger position heading into the state tournament."

Celebrating a Successful Season

**By Alice Fragasso (II)
& Caleb Beigbeder (VI)**

Contributing Writers

From two Dual County League (DCL) wins to several Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) state championship qualifications, there is no question that the fall season has been a successful one for many Boston Latin School teams this year.

The BLS football team won the DCL after their victorious game against Cambridge Rindge and Latin, beating them 54-27.

Off the field, the girls' varsity volleyball team also had a successful sea-

son; they won the DCL small and made it to the round of 16 in the MIAA state championship tournament. Varsity athlete Georgia Stavros (II) shares, "We went into the season knowing this was a big year [...] we relied on each other every single game." The team felt a lot of pressure to succeed, but they were able to achieve an impressive record of 11-6, beating many high-ranking high schools such as Newton South (No. 12) and powerhouse Acton-Boxborough (No. 6).

Stavros attributes this success to the athletes' resilient attitude and team effort. She expresses, "In volleyball, attitude is everything, we really relied on our energy when it came to big moments [...] We always played best when we played to-

gether as a team and trusted each other."

For the second year in a row, the girls' varsity soccer team made it to the second round of the MIAA state championship. Varsity soccer co-captain Sophia Ginsburg (I) reveals, "I wasn't sure if we were going to be able to make up for the losses [of graduated players], but we definitely did. We kept the score close in almost all of our games and never stopped fighting until the 80th minute."

This persistent attitude supported the team throughout their season up until it's last minutes. During their final game in the MIAA state playoffs, they held the fourth-ranked team in the state, Bishop Feehan, at a tie until a penalty kick in the last 15 minutes of the game

unfortunately ended their season.

The boys' varsity soccer team also made the MIAA state tournament, qualifying after a match against Dearborn STEM Academy where the Wolfpack came back from being down 3-1 to beat Dearborn 4-3 in the game's last minutes. Varsity soccer player Owen Evans (I), regarding his joy during the game, states, "When [Sebastian Munera (II)] scored that last goal, it didn't feel real. Soccer is by far my best memory of playing any sport, cementing BLS soccer into my memory forever."

BLS has won many accolades for their athletic triumphs over the years, but this season stands out for its successes across many sports teams.