



THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE BOSTON LATIN SCHOOL

BLS Budget Balances Out

By **Weian Xue (III),**
Meilin Sha (IV)
& **Stephany Zhu (II)**
Staff Writers and Contributing Writer

For the 2026 fiscal year, Boston Latin School's budget will increase by approximately 240,000 dollars for a total of over 20 million dollars.

Of the 240,000-dollar budget increase, approximately 114,000 dollars will be used to cover the salary of a new social worker, increasing the number of social workers at the School from three to four. The remaining amount will be divided between contract adjustments and special education allocation. The budget also contained a negative balance of 27,000 dollars, which was taken from the substitutes, supplies and stipends account to obtain a zero balance.

The BLS budget covers the income of 174.5 positions for faculty members and substitute teachers, as well as stipends and contracts. The budget does not, however, cover expenses such as food services, transportation and custodians.

Updates to the budget were covered in a Student Council Town Hall meeting with Head of School Jason Gallagher on February 12, during which Gallagher emphasized the importance of providing more professionals to support students' mental health and expanding similar services.

Rayne Valentine (V), a student home-room representative and attendee of the

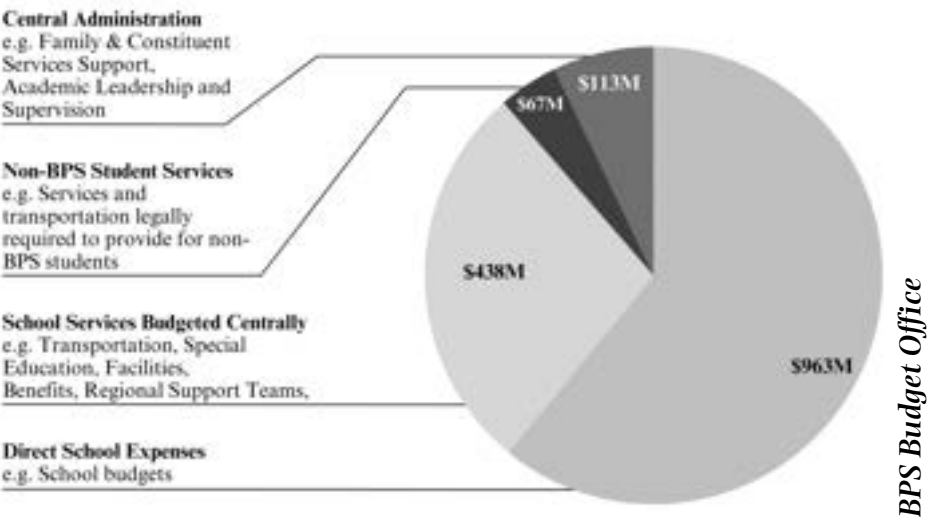
Town Hall, notes, "BLS is undeniably very high stress; the school is massive, often hard to navigate [and] has an incredible workload and a lot of students. Having an extra social worker for students to confide in not only benefits students, but might serve to reduce the workload of the other very busy members of the counseling team."

As a public school, BLS's annual budget is determined by federal funding on both the state and local scale. Each year, Boston Public Schools allocates a certain sum of money to schools in Boston. After this allocation is communicated with BLS and the School Site Council, the budget is approved and enacted.

The BLS budget is supplemented by funding from the Boston Latin School Association, an organization dedicated to fundraising for BLS students, largely through donations from alumni. Each year, the BLSA uses usually around 3 million dollars, to support BLS and its students. This includes funding programs such as the Athletics Department and Deitch Leadership Institute, in addition to various other expenses such as printers, books and certain faculty positions at BLS. BLSA president Peter G. Kelly '83 shares, "Every kid is touched by the BLSA every day in the School in some way."

The budget increase for BLS comes in conjunction with a district-wide budget increase of about 3.4 percent across Boston Public Schools. The increase also contrasts the budget cut of 900,000 dollars in the 2025 fiscal year after the loss of Elementary

2026 BPS Fiscal Year Budget



and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding from the COVID-19 pandemic and Title I federal funding given to schools with high poverty rates. The projected budget for BLS for the 2026 fiscal year, however, has become more stable since the loss of ESSER and Title I funding.

This year, the proposed budget for the Boston Public Schools hopes to continue providing for existing programs, especially those for special education students and English language learners. The budget also includes the closures of the Lilla G. Frederick Lilla Pilot Middle School and the West Zone Early Learning Center, the merger of the Philbrick and the Sumner schools and grade recon-

figurations at five other schools. Overall, the superintendent proposes to close a net of 22 classrooms across the city. More recently announced school closures or mergers, however, are not reflected in the 2026 budget, as these changes will be implemented in the 2027 fiscal year.

The education budget remains an important topic of conversation, especially with recent changes to the federal budget. Gallagher states, "We're always thinking: if we had more dollars, what would we do? And that's a tough question, right? [...] We're always thinking about every department. [...] We have to make sure we're meeting the needs of the students."

Federal Funding Faces Fluctuations



Hugo C. Chiasson

Protesters march against federal funding cuts for scientific research.

By **Weian Xue (III),**
Meilin Sha (IV)
& **Stephany Zhu (II)**
Staff Writers and Contributing Writer

On February 5, Boston Public Schools Superintendent Mary Skipper announced BPS's fiscal budget for 2026, with an increase of 52.1 million dollars from the 2025 fiscal year for a total of 1.58 billion dollars. This proposed budget, however, does not include cuts to the U.S. Department of Education, which would affect schools across the nation.

The federal budget is the government's annual plan for the U.S. federal government's spending and revenue. It is used to shape the

direction of the country's financial priorities across multiple sectors, including public education. To create the budget, the president submits a proposal to Congress, which then reviews and revises it before passing the legislation.

The budget is divided into mandatory and discretionary spending. Mandatory spending represents the largest portion of the budget, as the government is required by law to fund specific programs like Social Security and the Affordable Care Act. Discretionary spending is the portion of the federal budget that Congress is able to control, which includes funding for education, defense and infrastructure.

Since President Donald Trump took

office, there have been proposed cuts made to the Department of Education. These cuts may reduce funding for Title I, the largest federal aid program for public schools that aims to help low-income students, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which guarantees children with disabilities a free and appropriate public education while receiving special education and related services.

Assistant Head of School Steven Chen addresses the concerns that some have regarding the proposed cuts: "The biggest source of money for school is through local communities. For example, for schools in BPS, [...] only a small percentage of it [is] from the federal government. There is also funding from the state to support students like those with disabilities [to] provide the funding necessary."

Despite school budgets coming from local communities, cuts to federal programs may make it difficult for school districts that don't receive as much funding from their city or state to maintain the level of support that they have for students from underrepresented communities and students with disabilities. Many schools may also struggle to provide resources necessary for teachers and other programs for students as a consequence.

President Trump has already begun to make changes that directly impact schools, specifically his cuts to university research funding. Without this federal funding, universities across the nation have been forced to make decreases in their budget and lower the number of students that can be accepted into graduate school.

In addition to this, President Trump recently announced his intention to shut down the Department of Education. Under

Trump's proposal, the task of providing funding to schools throughout the U.S. would be delegated to various other departments. Although it is unclear whether these motions will pass, the potential effects would be disruptive to schools everywhere, especially to programs supporting historically underrepresented communities.

Students and teachers alike have rallied across Boston and other cities throughout the nation in strikes and unions to protest against these potential changes to government funding. Mayor Michelle Wu has also taken action in filing an *amicus curiae* brief against federal research funding cuts.

Rayne Valentine (V) states, "I commend those immediately affected by this discussion [...] for raising their voices and making sure their side of the debate is heard, regardless of the outcome. I really, really hope that the funds don't get cut, [...] because I do fear what it would mean for the education of other Boston students, as well as students around the country."

Boston Latin School's funding is controlled by BPS and the city and state-level regulations. The proposed federal budget cuts have not currently passed through Congress but may take away as much as 70 million dollars from BPS.

Head of School Jason Gallagher concludes, "Anytime you have a cut to a budget of that size, it hurts. [...] It's just not knowing, [which is] scarier than the actual things that are going on. [...] It's really important for us here at the school, to give the message [...] [that] when you come in, you know what to expect. Your teachers are going to be here. We're going to be here. [...] Hopefully the students can feel that."

EDITORS' NOTE



Dear loyal readers,

Happy March! We’ve missed you and we’re sure you have missed us back.

Although March is infamously the worst month of the school year, we Argonauts are incredibly grateful for higher temperatures and more hours of sunlight — it’s finally still light outside when we escape the shackles of Room 016 every day of Production Week. As we shed our puffer jackets, we can hopefully also lighten the load of sleepless, stress-induced nights.

To make this monster of a month a bit more bearable, we’ve compiled some of our editors’ favorite tunes:

- News Editor Ailin Sha: “Lady in Red” by Chris de Burgh
- Forum Editor Roan Wilcox: “Wasted Days and Wasted Nights” by Freddy Fender
- Arts & Entertainment Editor Lena Thai: “How Many Drinks?” by Miguel
- Sports Editor Liam Sullivan: “Don’t Look Back in Anger” by Oasis
- Copy Editor Vicky Su: “heart pt. 6” by Kendrick Lamar
- Photo Editor Ben Choi-Harris: “Drive” by The Weeknd
- Layout Editor Sam Parsi: “HBA” by Playboi Carti

We suggest listening to these beats as you flip through the pages of this month’s *Argo* to make this a more immersive experience.

Love,
Mannah

THE ARGO IS DIGITAL!

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



Argo

Boston Latin School

Ad Veritatem Petendam

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



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

Editorial Board

Hannah Stoll, I	Editor-in-Chief
Michelle Wang, I	Editor-in-Chief
Ailin Sha, I	News Editor
Ross Wilson, II	News Editor
Mary Deng, II	Asst. News Editor
Olivia Chen, III	Asst. News Editor
Mark Snekvik, I	Forum Editor
Roan Wilcox, I	Forum Editor
Ariel Mura, I	Asst. Forum Editor
Annie Dai, II	Asst. Forum Editor
Lena Thai, I	A&E Editor
Alice Li, III	A&E Editor
Anneliese Yu, IV	Asst. A&E Editor
Liam Sullivan, I	Sports Editor
Juliet McVay, II	Sports Editor
Rachel Li, II	Asst. Sports Editor
Dimitra Minasidis, II	Asst. Sports Editor
Andrew Zheng, I	Copy Editor
Meilin Sha, IV	Copy Editor
Vicky Su, II	Asst. Copy Editor
Sophia Fortuin, III	Layout Editor
Ashley Hur, III	Asst. Layout Editor
Sam Parsi, III	Asst. Layout Editor
Alan Zhao, III	Asst. Layout Editor
Alex Le, II	Photo Editor
Lauren Dong, III	Photo Editor
Ben Choi-Harris, I	Asst. Photo Editor

Copy Associates

Vera Pham, III	Kiran Rao, IV
Kelly Yang, III	Anna Feng, V
Harry Dinh, IV	Jun Ling Huang, V
Ellie Fung, IV	Xingtong Wu, V
Lana Nguyen, IV	

Layout Associates

Alex Le, II	Vincent Liang, III
Sophie Shepherd, II	Louis Liu, III
Lauren Dong, III	Constance Fang, IV
Orson Giblin, III	Alison Hur, IV
Jerry Li, III	Bella Zhao, IV

Photo Associates

Jaya Banda, II	Constance Fang, IV
Brigitte Currier, III	Alexis Kiley, IV
Isabella Endozo, III	Julianne Jiang, IV
Sophia Fortuin, III	Alicia Lay, VI
Anne Kashiwagi, III	Sarah Nie, VI
Sophia Knobel, III	

Faculty Advisor

Ms. Moon

Special Thanks to

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

Gospel Choir Celebrates Ms. Fernandes’s Legacy

By Ailin Sha (I),
Ross Wilson (II), Mary Deng (II)
& Olivia Chen (III)
Head and Assistant News Editors

On February 28, Boston Latin School Gospel Choir celebrated the life and legacy of Ms. Roseanna Fernandes, a beloved music teacher at BLS for 26 years and founder of the Choir in the 1980s.

The celebration took place in the auditorium, where the Gospel Choir’s program consisted of 11 songs, marking it as the most robust program they had rehearsed this year. The Choir also invited past alumni to sing with them at the celebration for the first time since the portrait unveiling ceremony of former Head of School Rachel Skeritt in November.

In preparation, the Choir first assembled individual recordings of all the planned songs and sent them to the students and alumni. Then, on the Saturday before the celebration, the alumni and students gathered for the first time to rehearse. The tight schedule required everyone to bring their best efforts.



BLS Gospel Choir sings in memory of Ms. Roseanna Fernandes.

Gospel Choir member Tony Zhang (I) reflects, “Since I joined this year, I have always been surprised by how enthusiastic and lively everyone is at rehearsals. [...] This time, we had practiced a total of 11 songs, which meant it was more stressful than usual, but I can tell [Ms. Lewis Bradford] always puts a lot of effort into maintaining a happy mood.”

Ms. Kristen George and Mr. Brian Simmons, both former Gospel Choir leaders at BLS, helped organize the event. Along with Ms. Korianan Lewis Bradford, the faculty advisor of Gospel Choir, they put together the program, created advertisements and decorated the auditorium to prepare for the cele-

bration.

The evening also featured a collaboration with the Rose Conservatory, which was founded by Ms. Fernandes’s son Greg Fernandes and provides musical access for members of the Brockton community. The conservatory students presented several performances, including drums, singing and a full orchestra, culminating in a grand finale of singing “Oh Happy Day” with the Gospel Choir.

Ms. George also conducted the song “Brighter Day” by Kirk Franklin, which the Choir performed with basic choreography,

including side-stepping and clapping. The performance used songs that included stories about the history of Gospel music and highlighted the influence of the music on many other popular genres, such as Rhythm & Blues and jazz.

Ms. Lewis Bradford comments, “Seeing three generations of people impacted by Ms. Fernandes’s legacy united to sing on one stage was incredibly moving.”

This event was a continuation of the first Gospel Fest, which BLS hosted in 2019. This program included other local gospel groups, members of the Boston Arts Academy and some choirs from local churches.

It was originally intended to be held every two years but was disrupted by the pandemic. However, the music department hopes to bring back the tradition and build community through gospel music.

In the next few months, Gospel Choir plans to perform at the Massachusetts Instrumental Choral and Conductors Association on April 4 and Music Night on May 1.

Program Director for the Visual and Performing Arts Department Ms. Margaret McKenna summarizes, “It was pure joy. [...] It wasn’t a somber memorial; it was all just celebratory and happiness and living life to your fullest and bringing it through song.”

Flight Accidents Cause Concern



Boston Logan Airport becomes a place of anxiety for passengers.

By Xintong Guo (II)
& Hashi Abdulle (II)
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On January 29, an American Airlines regional jet collided in midair with a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter over the Potomac River near Washington, D.C.

The accident resulted in the death of all 67 people on board, including the three crew members on the helicopter and the 64 passengers on the airliner, six of whom were members of the Skating Club of Boston.

Returning from a selective national figure skating camp, two athletes from the Skating Club of Boston, their mothers and two former world champions coaching at the club were among the 14 U.S. figure skater victims on the flight.

The loss of these individuals has deeply affected the skating community. “Everyone was like family,”

Cynthia Wang (II), a former skater at the Skating Club of Boston, shares. “Everyone skates with each other. Everyone grew up with each other. All the coaches knew each other. All the skaters knew the coaches. It is just a really, really tight-knit community.”

Investigations of American Airlines Flight 5342 by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) revealed that a message from the radio transmission could have been cut off, leaving the helicopter crew unaware of the approaching flight’s exact position.

NTSB investigation further confirmed that a single air traffic controller was overseeing air traffic and the helicopter operation simultaneously, a role normally assigned to two people.

“There are air traffic controllers to keep track of all the planes, but you also want well-trained people, and you want to have well-staffed people [...] you want them to have authority, and you want them to have clarity, if you want to have a safe air system,” AP Physics teacher Mr. Jesse Southwick explains.

Less than one month later, on February 25, a

Southwest Airlines flight encountered a close-call landing with a private business jet entering the runway at Chicago Midway International Airport. The pilot of Southwest Flight 2504 initiated a “go-around” and ascended safely back into the air to avoid the collision after the private jet had proceeded to the runway without authorization.

On the same day, a JetBlue flight from Westchester, New York to West Palm Beach, Florida, made a preventive diversion following an engine failure. The aircraft was able to successfully land without further damage to the plane or injury to the people onboard.

Despite the prevalence of news and social media coverage on these recent flight accidents, data from the NTSB shows consistent numbers of aviation accidents in 2025 with prior years. Since 2023, however, the nation’s understaffed air traffic control facilities have continued to impact aviation safety. The new presidential administration’s further layoffs of several Federal Aviation Administration employees has also negatively affected security.

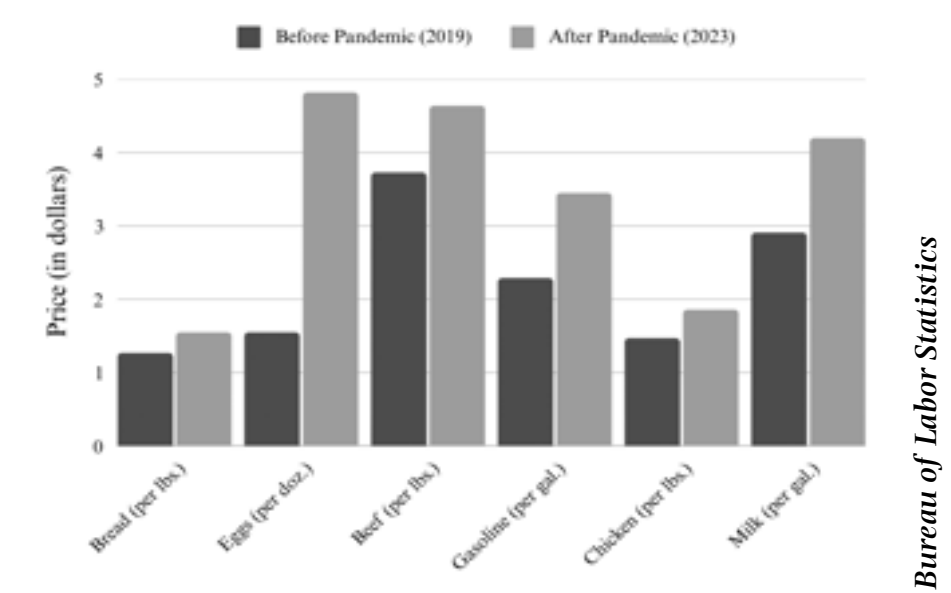
Most cases of aviation accidents have been blamed by the recent administration on unqualified air traffic controllers. Much of this rhetoric has initiated hiring pauses and mass firings that only exacerbate the risks of aviation errors.

Air traffic controllers play a vital role in moving airplanes in and out of airports and guiding pilots during takeoff and landing. Like prior accidents, many of the incidents were rooted in miscommunication between air traffic controllers and the pilots. Air traffic controllers have also been tasked with far more than they can handle, often resulting in a few individuals handling several vital tasks simultaneously.

Boston Latin School Aerospace & Astrophysics Club president Michael Glazkov (II) expresses his reaction to the recent series of aviation accidents, saying, “Failures often cannot be predicted with airplanes, [...] but people have to learn from patterns of the issues and fix them.”

Moving forward, aviation safety is dependent on the proper funding and staffing of trained air traffic controllers and regulators to ensure that both pilots and passengers can fly safely.

Avian Flu Eggs Up Prices



Bureau of Labor Statistics

**By Ryan Liu (V)
& Eric Zhang (V)**
Contributing Writers

In recent months, there has been a rise in egg prices due to an outbreak of avian flu. Inflation, the change in prices over a period of time, is measured by the Consumer Product Index, and it can be caused by a lack of supply, higher demand for a product or increased production costs. There has been inflation in the prices of several commodities, including eggs. Due to the avian flu, over 166 million chickens

have died, forcing egg prices to skyrocket to an all-time high of 4.95 dollars per dozen. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) states that egg prices could jump up 41 percent in 2025. Avian flu, also known as bird flu, is a type of influenza that is predominantly present in wild bird populations. Bird flu is caused by an infection from the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A (H5N1) virus, which leads to the subject contracting a highly infectious respiratory disease. This infection can be fatal for many birds, with 90 to 100 percent mortality rates recorded

in chickens. Boston Latin School AP Biology teacher Ms. Gina Castellanos Ellsworth explains, “There is a bird flu epidemic and a lot of chicken flocks have had to be killed as a result of being exposed or sick.” The USDA has announced steps to monitor and limit the spread of bird flu. Three billion dollars have already been allocated to help with the efforts to control bird flu. Government efforts to prevent the spread of bird flu include the testing of birds and workers in contact with poultry, along with the systematic killing and disposal of sick or dead birds. The USDA has implemented vaccines for chickens and mandated that farms go through biosecurity reviews. The department has done biosecurity reviews on more than 100 farms, with only one of the farms having an outbreak. The government will additionally help pay for 75 percent of the needed biosecurity improvements. The first cases of bird flu were detected in 1996 in China. This outbreak led to the death of roughly 1.4 million chickens and the hospitalization of 18 people. The H5N1 virus was first detected in wild bird populations in the United States and Canada in late 2021. Bird flu can spread through contact with infected birds. This can mean direct contact with the infected bird or with its re-

spiratory secretions and feces. Although the H5N1 virus can spread rapidly among bird populations, studies show that the virus does not travel well through air, limiting the possibility of a bird flu pandemic. Cases in humans are rare, with only 70 reported cases of bird flu in humans in the U.S. Most of the reported cases can be traced back to people who worked with poultry or dairy animals. When asked how higher egg prices have affected him or his family, Tri Thach (II) shares, “Inflation [causes] us to budget more. Egg-inflation wise, we can still afford eggs, but some families [who have] lower incomes might not.” Inflation hit seven percent in 2021, the highest change in inflation rate from year to year since 1982. Inflation has cooled down since the pandemic, but is still above the Federal Reserve’s goal of two percent inflation per year. BLS AP Economics teacher Mr. Patrick Boor reflects, “[Inflation] has been at its highest in the last three years coming out of the pandemic. After the pandemic started shutting down everything, the government instituted a lot of spending in order to get people’s jobs back.” As the prices of eggs continue to increase, the USDA will explore more options for increasing egg imports and decreasing exports to supplement the domestic supply.

Club Spotlight: SASMC Clothing Drive

**By Trinity Ngo (II)
& Stacy Jiang (V)**
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

This February, Students Advocating Solutions for Mass. and Cass (SASMC) partnered with Warm Up Boston to host a clothing drive dedicated to aiding the unsheltered people of Boston’s Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard, or Mass. and Cass. The clothing drive collected gloves, hats, thermal base layers, HotHands packets, new socks and underwear to help people facing homelessness get through the harsh New England winter. In return for each donation, students gained one community service hour in addition to an entry into a raffle for a 25-dollar Chipotle gift card. Warm Up Boston is a survival program that provides direct aid, harm reduc-

tion and advocacy for Boston’s unhoused community. In the past, the organization has held donation drives, fairs and other events advocating and educating on behalf of the city’s unhoused population. Their mission is to provide direct aid and promote harm reduction strategies to prevent deaths from overdoses or infectious diseases. Boston Latin School art teacher Ms. Elizabeth Walshak, who connected these groups to one another, comments, “It’s really inspiring to see young people who are mobilizing and organizing and doing these things. I think that we are learning that we can’t just sit back and do nothing and just expect things to resolve themselves.” SASMC was founded by club president Berkson, who lives near the intersection between Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard. Many of the unhoused people there deal with opioid addiction and

live in tents that serve as makeshift shelters. Thus, this area has attracted attention because of the serious public health concerns, with citizens conflicted about how to deal with the ongoing problem. The club’s goal is to create more direct and immediate solutions to the challenges that those living in Mass. and Cass face. SASMC believes that by looking at the issue through the unsheltered people’s perspective, students can effectively advocate for them and find better solutions to the challenges the community faces. Vice president Max Haskell (I) remarks, “[SASMC] thought that the people in Mass. and Cass needed someone in their corner, and we sort of thought that we had a unique perspective and platform as students.” Since the club was founded, SASMC has worked to understand the complexity of

the problems at Mass. and Cass. In the past, SASMC has hosted educational panels with guest speakers, participated in the Winter Walk to raise money to end the stigma surrounding homelessness and held clothing drives for groups like the Woods-Mullen Women’s Shelter. Looking ahead, they have also met with State Representative John Moran to advocate for safe-consumption sites and City Counselor Julia Mejia to discuss potential partnerships. They are also preparing to get their club Narcan-certified, which would allow them to administer the drug naloxone and possibly save a life in the case of an opioid overdose. Jadon Berkson (I) shares a message to his fellow students: “It’s really easy to see [the unhoused people] as others, or even lesser, but really, they’re just like you and me, and it could happen to anybody.”

Black History Month at BLS

By Thomas Blanchet (II)
Contributing Writer

Over the course of Black History Month, which is February, Boston Latin School Black Leaders Aspiring for Change and Knowledge (B.L.A.C.K.) led BLS in celebrating the accomplishments of many Black Americans by hosting multiple events. Included in these events were the annual Poetry Cafe and daily announcements that highlight outstanding members of the Black community. Both allowed individuals to learn more about lesser-known aspects and people in Black history. On February 7, BLS B.L.A.C.K. hosted their annual Poetry Cafe. Students were invited to share pieces they composed themselves or found interesting, with most relating to race. Others focused more on love, with Valentine’s Day being just a week later. The reading or singing of these pieces allowed students to express their identities and love for the written word while also engaging in an important celebration of Black culture. Along with Poetry Cafe, BLS B.L.A.C.K. also led their annual spirit week during Black History Month, though with additional changes.

BLS B.L.A.C.K. vice president Donnell Davis (III) highlighted the significance of promoting inclusivity in the club’s celebrations, as the club focused on “having our events [so that] African American students and really just students of color at BLS know that they’re not alone, that there’s always a community, because BLS is majority white.” In another effort to spread awareness about Black influence in America, Brianna Hampton (VI) was tasked with highlighting members of the Black community during homeroom announcements. For example, on the day of a gospel choir celebration, she focused on the Clark sisters, a vocal group made up of five Black American women. Despite all the success in their celebration of Black History Month, BLS B.L.A.C.K. encountered some difficulties. With the club’s faculty advisor, Ms. Cheryl Pinchem, as well as many club members absent for over a week on the AP African American Studies trip to Ghana, the remaining students had to continue their work with limited guidance. Hampton describes one of the struggles, explaining, “It was sort of tough for me because I didn’t have that support and I didn’t have the [...] sort of guidance to do the



Zaken Lowe (II)

BLS celebrates Black History Month with spirit week outfits.

announcements.” Hampton would usually have checked in with Ms. Pinchem to make sure the people highlighted were good fits. Challenges aside, BLS B.L.A.C.K. felt it was able to accomplish its main goals of teaching Black history while inspiring

students of all backgrounds to learn more about Black culture and continue fighting for a more equal world. Ms. Pinchem concludes, “I hate to sound cliché, but Black history is everyone’s history.”

BLS Travels Abroad!

By **Amanda Ajdini (I) & Adnan Sayeed (VI)**
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer



France

To learn more about French culture, a group of 28 students and four chaperones embarked on a trip to France, where they immersed themselves in the French culture and the famous monuments.

Boston Latin School History teacher and chaperone Mr. Andy Zou states, “We really got to learn more about French culture through all their arts and their history and food and the language. [...] We start[ed] in Paris and then eventually [went] into the French Alps to the city of Grenoble, where all [BLS] students exchange[d] language and culture with French students.”

Exploring the French school system was one way that the students learned about French culture. During courses at the French school, students were able to go to the top of the Eiffel Tower and the Palace of Versailles, which both play significant roles in French history.

Students were also able to participate in activities that helped them bond and exchange culture with the French students at the school.

According to Mr. Zou, “The most memorable moment was really when we actually started to leave as it was bittersweet that our students were no longer going to see the French students that they have bonded with and connected with culturally during our stay, but some of them return in October 2025 to be our students again when we host them.”



Ghana

Over February break, a group of 25 students and four chaperones embarked on a trip to Ghana, where they explored the history, culture and resilience of the country and its people.

The trip was centered around visiting historical sites connected to the Transatlantic Slave Trade, in addition to learning about the culture and experiencing the hospitality of the Ghanaian people. Students traveled to the capital city of Accra, as well as surrounding areas and examined how the country was able to recover despite their difficult past.

One of the highlights of the trip was visiting the Cape Coast Castle in Accra. This castle was one of many in Ghana that held enslaved people until they embarked for the Americas. It is even included on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage List.

Beyond historical exploration, students visited local schools, where they were able to connect with the local youth by donating supplies such as notebooks, calculators and pencils. Isabella Campbell (I) states, “[The] moment was so heartwarming [...] as they did not see you as a stranger, but rather as another friend or family member.” This trip ultimately not only served as an educational experience, but also as an opportunity for cultural exchange and understanding.



Puerto Rico

This February break, Boston Latin School Science Program Director Ms. Kathleen Bateman led a group of 30 students in classes IV through II on a week-long trip to Puerto Rico, during which they immersed themselves in both the culture and nature of the island.

The trip focused on exploring the biodiversity of Puerto Rico, along with understanding its history. According to Annabelle Ahearn (II), students who take AP Environmental Science saw an overlap between what is taught in class and the knowledge gained throughout the trip.

Exploration of El Yunque National Forest was one way in which students were able to learn about wildlife and various ecosystems in the area.

Students were also able to walk around Old San Juan to learn about the history of the country. They also visited multiple historical sites and museums.

Ahearn comments, “The most memorable moment of the trip was when we did a day of sustainable farming and we got to learn about all the time and effort that goes into that.” As students participated in sustainable farming practices, they also learned about certain plant species such as Mangrove trees that serve as protectors of the island from hurricanes and tropical storms.

Multicultural Potluck Eats

By **Constance Fang (IV)**
& Amy Dai (V)
Contributing Writers

On February 26, Boston Latin School families and faculty participated in the annual Families for Equity and Diversity (FEqD) Potluck.

FEqD is a parent-led group focused on education and advocacy within the school community. Since 2017, they have hosted the potluck every year organizing rounds of trivia for attendees to participate in, with the winner receiving a gift card to Park 54, a soul food restaurant. This year’s event includes a spectrum of dishes — from Brazilian chicken to Indian sour chickpeas to Portuguese kale soup. BLS Gospel Choir, led by Ms. Korianan Lewis Bradford, serenaded the attendees with their moving performance of “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”

“FEqD was one of the few ways I found to meet other parents, and the potluck was such a welcoming event during a very stressful time,” remarks co-chair Ms. Anna V. Q. Ross P’25, P’28. Not only was the potluck a great opportunity for attendees to experience food from BLS’s diverse cultures, it was also a way for families to connect and strengthen bonds.



Students enjoy food from all around the world!

The careful planning began before the holiday season with co-chairs Ms. Ross and Ms. Ekaette Dumel P’25 tackling the main issue of securing a date for an open dining hall, as well as availability for all members. After much coordination, the group decided on a day in February, due to the importance of Black History Month.

The chairs decided to invite some of the performers from the Martin Luther King Jr. celebration after hearing about how won-

derful they were. Ms. Lewis Bradford and a few members of the Gospel Choir joined them for the dinner. Once the internal details were settled, they contacted administrators to advertise the event in the Daily Bulletin and the Timely Updates from Head of School Jason Gallagher.

The potluck has been an enduring tradition at BLS. During the pandemic, the group persevered and upheld this tradition by hosting the potluck online and organizing smaller potlucks in various neighborhoods

rather than a single event in the dining hall. During another year, they assembled a recipe book for others to share and enjoy each other’s food at home.

This experience resonates with many. Ms. Rania Mekary, the parent of a BLS student, shares, “Connecting with other parents at the event and exchanging information about our child [was memorable] because it is rare to network with parents at BLS.”

In the future, FEqD hopes to have

more members join them as they contribute to positive changes within the school community and beyond. They look forward to incorporating more cultural performances, cuisines and faculty representation at the potluck itself. Their goal is ultimately for all to unite at the table — whether beside an old friend or a complete stranger. As a parent, Dumel says, “I hope attendees get to taste how good the BLS community is [...] and bring alive the affirmations [we] need to thrive.”

Spice Up Senior Superlatives!



Today’s superlatives look nothing like the ones from 2000.

**By Fathia Shodeyi (III)
& Anita Mei (III)**
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

“Best Pick-Up Lines.” “Most Likely to Win *Survivor*.” “Most Likely to Laugh at the Worst Possible Moment.” As seniors conclude their time in Boston Latin School, the yearbook serves as a final farewell gift to our graduating class, so it should be as captivating as possible. The recent removal of superlatives like “Worst

Case of Senioritis?” or “Cutest Couple That Never Was,” however, decrease the excitement of the yearbook — a trend that is long overdue for a reversal. First, there needs to be more comedic, student-specific nominations such as “Best Bromance” and “Most Complicated Starbucks Order.” The yearbook is not made for teachers and adults — it is made for students to feel connected to their graduating class. Through silly and specific categories, they will be able to look back and appreciate the time they spent at BLS,

as each name and superlative triggers a specific memory, as opposed to a general personality trait that could apply to many. Yearbook committee member Becky Nguyen (I) adds, “Senior year is about making memories and boring superlatives are a bit of a buzzkill.” Basic nominations make the yearbook forgettable, whereas more unique ones promote feelings of nostalgia, which is what the yearbook is all about. Especially considering that other sections, such as student quotes, are restricted to famous

people, the nominations section must remain a chance to display funny and BLS-specific humor. As for why controversial superlatives were cut in the first place, BLS English teacher and yearbook advisor Mx. Dana Amico says that superlatives like “Least Studious” or “Most Likely to Fall Asleep in Class” often get cut because it “does not sound fitting for BLS. We want to honor excellence. You never know *why* a student may not be excelling academically.” This marks a departure from the past, when the administration took a more hands-off approach to regulating superlatives. Back then, the yearbook had been known to include inappropriate superlatives like the 1989 yearbook’s “Best Body” and “Best Rear View.” While moves to prevent school bullying and judgment from peers are worthy, it is important not to over-edit superlatives, thereby manufacturing a sanitized version of the high school experience. Ruby Dai (I) adds, “I do believe there is a way of being unique and funny without [...] being inappropriate.” There are also concerns about cancel culture, and the fear that BLS would risk getting backlash for including “risky” superlatives. The school wants to uphold its image as an elite, reputable institution — an understandable goal — by showing only the best, most polished sides of our community. It is just as important to let students express themselves, however, especially in *their* yearbook. It is understandable that some ethical standards should be placed when deciding nominations for students, but these cuts should be sparing. BLS students have a right to express their wit and have their best, or funniest, traits be spotlighted. So, embrace bold superlatives as a chance to reminisce on the fun and humorous parts about BLS, and celebrate each student’s individuality and spark!

Spanish or Vanish: Use *Duolingo*!

**By David Wang (IV)
& Bella Zhao (V)**
Contributing Writers

Let’s be honest — learning a new language is hard. Traditional methods involve expensive classes, dense textbooks and hours of memorization with flashcards. In the past few years, however, one app has changed the game: *Duolingo*. Launched as a fun and accessible way to learn new languages, it has now become a staple in some of our very own Boston Latin School classrooms. Whether you are learning Korean to keep up with your K-drama obsession or French so you can confidently order a croissant at that little café you love, *Duolingo* makes language-learning feel like an addictive game, all while helping you establish the basics. One of *Duolingo*’s greatest strengths is its accessibility. As we progress into the technological age, platforms like *Khan Academy*, *Coursera* and virtual college programs are making education more accessible than ever. *Duolingo* is a prime example of this shift. Unlike traditional language learning, *Duolingo* is completely free and available to anyone with an internet connection. The website and app allow it to be used on a variety of devices, ranging from a Chromebook to Google’s augmented reality glasses. The platform’s lessons are short enough to complete in minutes. Benjamin Southwick (IV) explains, “I use *Duolingo* to aid the learning that I’m

doing in my [Chinese] class, usually before bed.” That kind of flexibility is something classrooms cannot always provide, especially for students around the world facing barriers to obtaining a formal education. But *Duolingo*’s charm is not limited to its accessibility: it also lies in how it keeps people coming back. The secret? Gamification. That is, making learning a language like a game through in-app streaks, points, competition and rewards. These features motivate users to stay engaged and consistent. Every time you complete a lesson, you earn points and extend your streak. Enough experience points make you rank higher on a leaderboard inside a “league,” stimulating competitive spirits. The streak also plays a major factor. Ada Jiang (V) shares, “Personally, [...] the streaks encourage me to work. But [also] the friend streaks — it’s super embarrassing if you ruin a friend streak. It’s like ruining a [Snapchat] streak.” The dopamine hit of seeing your streak grow promotes returns to the platform. This is the same reason we constantly check social media or play video games: we are motivated by rewards and progress. Rather than resorting to social media scrolling to get a dopamine rush, *Duolingo* wields that psychological desire to promote engaged and consistent language learning in a way that textbooks cannot. *Duolingo* has no shortage of critics. Lucas Rapaport Liang (V) argues, “*Duolingo* with a lot of effort can [only] bring you



Duolingo is a fun way to learn new languages!

as far as a beginner textbook when learning a language. [...] It never teaches you to properly implement your skills, and it also gives a very limited view of languages.” That is a fair point. *Duolingo* has limited opportunity for interaction with other language learners or teachers. The purpose of *Duolingo*, however, is not to teach every nuance of grammar or every skill needed to learn language; its purpose is to provide basic learning skills to help you communicate with locals when you go abroad — that is ultimately what language is all about. BLS Modern Language Program Director Ms. Christine Kelley adds, “You may

have trouble trying to put all of the pieces together, but it’s good to help you identify individual pieces.” *Duolingo*’s curriculum covers the essentials, giving learners a strong foundation and putting them on the path towards fluency. After all, you cannot tackle the fancy stuff if you have not mastered the basics. It is accessible, engaging and, yes, a little pushy with its green personal-trainer-owl mascot who will not take “I’m busy” for an answer. Some of the app’s phrases are admittedly bizarre, but their absurdity sticks with you, making vocabulary and grammar feel less like a chore and more like a game.

It’s Still the Gulf of Mexico

By **Angelina Tang (II)**
Contributing Writer

So, it’s official: courtesy of President Donald Trump’s Executive Order 14172, when you look up ‘Gulf of Mexico’ on *Google*, ‘Gulf of America’ will come up instead. What has changed to warrant this? Has the United States gained any more power or become any more renowned by its neighbors? Not really — in fact, although the name change may seem like a promotion of American greatness, this political stunt simply undermines the country’s status by deteriorating foreign relations and threatening the U.S. economy.

By swapping out ‘Mexico’ for ‘America,’ the U.S. is deliberately stroking its own ego at Mexico’s expense. Tensions between the U.S. and Mexico are already high for a multitude of reasons. It is nothing new for America to claim that other countries’ territories belong to them to push anti-immigration and American imperialist rhetoric.

Ita Berg (I) agrees that this name change has larger imperialist implications. “It represents President Trump’s dangerous policy of imperialism and aggression,” Berg argues. “Renaming the gulf the Gulf of America is claiming it as American territory, even though it is officially considered international waters, which sets a dangerous precedent, especially considering the fact that Trump has proudly announced plans to annex Greenland and the Canal Zone.” As Berg suggests, this name change is the first domino in a long line of imperialist plans which are problematic as they lead to violence and suppression of other sovereign nations and people. One only had to look to America’s violent annexation of Hawaii for a reason to resist any suggestion of expanding our borders.

Additionally, although Trump may call the country “very dangerous” and “in a lot of trouble,” Mexico is still our biggest trade partner and one of our greatest oil suppliers. America cannot afford to lose Mexico, but right now it is doing just that. America, in fact, is pushing Mexico into the arms of ... China? Yes, even though it seems so far-fetched, our greatest competitor’s influence in Latin America has been growing fast, becoming South America’s greatest trading partner at the turn of the century. The U.S.’ stubborn insistence on calling it ‘Gulf of America’ may be a catalyst for Latin America to break ties with it entirely and join the opposition.

It is not just Latin America: this name change will leave a bad taste in other countries’ mouths, making the U.S. a less palatable ally. To change the name of a location in the U.S.’ own favor does not make it seem any more heroic or powerful — it makes the U.S. look petty and weak. The U.S. may seem like a threat, but not the dangerous or respected kind. The name change has instead made it seem avoidant and untrustworthy. Why should other nations believe that the U.S. wants to help anyone but itself? This misfire will only further isolate it from the rest of the world and contribute to its cutoff from the circulation of trade.

Amidst this geopolitical conflict, companies are getting caught in the crossfire because they have to decide whether or not to adopt the new name. What they call it does matter — big tech companies like *Google* are more than just regurgitators of information. Their voices have actual leverage and influence, so people will form opinions of them based on what they say.

Even though *Google*’s swift transition from ‘Mexico’ to ‘America’ may have had more to do with not wanting to violate a pres-



President Trump speaks about renaming the Gulf of Mexico.

ident’s order than its actual political stance on the matter, it is very easy for the public to assume that it will continue to vehemently follow whatever Trump has to say, souring its reception with millions of non-Trump supporters. “The fact that powerful people and organizations in the United States are complying without question suggests that they will accept future imperialist measures that are more violent and disruptive than this,” Berg adds, illustrating how companies who abided by this name to avoid being censored by the government will continue to obey whatever the government obeys, even if it strays into violence.

So, if America is losing Mexico’s partnership and unnecessarily forcing corporations to politicize themselves, what exactly are the American people getting in return? Nothing. At the end of the day, people will not actually call it the ‘Gulf of America.’ Certainly not anyone outside of America, since the name change only applies in the U.S., and all other nations can call it whatever they want. Then what about the American populus? It is difficult for the government to rebrand something that has been called the same thing for the past four centuries on a whim and expect everyone else to keep up. “It’s kind of like *Twitter*,” Emily Yu (I) comments. “When it changed to ‘X’, people were still calling it *Twitter*.”

It is not worth burning our bridges with our most important allies and jeopardizing our economy just for a shiny new name on a digital map.

Democracy, Not Kleptocracy: End Media Censorship



White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt speaks to news outlets.

By **Harry Dinh (IV)**
& **Shefali Hurwitz (IV)**
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

“Breaking News: Another News Anchor Fired.” Since President Donald Trump took office for the second time, headlines like these have proliferated in the media, foreshadowing an alarming shift toward the suppression of free speech.

President Trump now controls the White House’s press pool rather than the independent White House Correspondents’ Association, which previously headed the task. Trump plans to handpick news outlets, likely favoring more conservative ones, to report on the White House. This initiative will invariably push a glorified depiction of the president instead of reporting from multiple perspectives.

News should not support one specific narrative

but rather provide a holistic view of current events. In addition, it should help citizens discern their opinions and concerns on ongoing issues. “If neutral or critical news outlets are not allowed to cover the president, that impacts the ability of the people to know [...] and make informed judgments,” says Boston Latin School AP United States Government teacher Ms. Meredith Elliott.

There has also been the erasure of words considered “woke” in government departments under the current administration, specifically those related to diversity, LGBTQ+, race and public health. Through this, the government controls what information people can access. This censorship violates people’s freedom of expression and undermines the administration’s alleged claim of restoring free speech.

Censorship in the media is also a violation of freedom of the press, especially when it comes to firing TV hosts. While these firings are mostly from private organizations who have the right to fire whomever they

want, the media faces indirect pressure from the government in the form of potential cuts to federal funding.

Billionaires also affect media censorship, especially those like Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg who own newspapers or social media platforms. These billionaires are able to push certain algorithms and standards and suppress content that opposes their view. In the 2024 presidential election, for example, Musk boosted pro-Trump content on X, while Bezos has promised not to publish opinion pieces which go against “personal liberties and free markets.” Ms. Elliott adds, “What information people see on social media has a huge influence on the information [they] have, [...] so that’s a way that Zuckerberg and Musk can impact public opinion.”

Musk, Bezos and Zuckerberg are now forming what some call a “broligarchy” with President Trump, because they are the most influential people in the “attention economy” and have influence over media platforms. Musk has already been involved in the current administration, firing federal workers and hollowing out agencies. Billionaires should not have this much influence in the government. The fact that three of the wealthiest people on the planet now have access to government power is indicative of a dangerous shift to suppressing the voices of the common people.

Everyone’s idea of the truth will be different in this country, meaning that there isn’t a neutral truth to be revealed. Aliah Rosa (III) explains, “Everybody puts their own bias in the news so that they can tell people what they want them to hear.” Biases in the media make it necessary for people to participate in “lateral reading,” or drawing news from a variety of sources to verify the validity of the original information. People should seek to get news from radio, podcasts and multiple news outlets to obtain a holistic view of current events and form their own opinions.

Censorship in the U.S. is growing because people refuse to see issues from other perspectives. BLS Latin teacher Mr. Alan Chavero adds, “[People should] accept that others can have different different views and that it’s okay to not listen to them.” Healthy disagreement between people drives a functioning democracy, but if disagreement gets to a point where one side is being silenced, it starts a path to suppression.

Dress for Success: BLS Needs a Formal Dress Code



Students should not wear sweats to school!

By Elaine Lin (IV)
Contributing Writer

The hallowed halls of Boston Latin School, once adorned with blazers, skirts and dress shoes, have now been replaced with athleisure, sweats and pajamas. BLS has long been recognized for its rigorous academics and classical traditions. As time has progressed, so has the informality of school attire. Although many students appreciate the freedom to express themselves through fashion, implementing a formal dress code would significantly benefit the school environment.

First, students’ learning would be enhanced, because in addition to learning academic subjects, they would learn

discipline and respect for institutions by dressing formally for school. Such respect is not only noticed by teachers, but by fellow students. Hudson Urasaki (IV) notes “I just feel like when people put in that little bit of effort to present themselves, it is much more impressive to me, and it makes them stand out.” As Urasaki’s comment reveals, dressing more formally improves students’ opinions of one another, leading to more mutual respect.

Another advantage of formal dress codes is that they have positive psychological impacts on students. Dressing for success influences performance on activities and boosts general mood. A paper published in *Social Psychology and Personality Science* showed that those wearing formal business attire demon-

strated more abstract thinking. Students will also feel more confident and ready to meet their day if they have to wear more formal clothes. “I like to look put together,” Juna Yatsu (V) explains when asked about dressing for school. They add that they do not want to look like “a mess, as if [they] had just rolled out of bed and left.” When students wear formal clothing, they will be more confident when participating in academic activities, while still having the freedom to curate their outfits that a full-blown uniform does not afford.

A formal dress code would also equip students with important fashion skills for their futures, where many jobs require their employees to dress professionally. Actions such as tying a tie or ironing a wrinkled dress — key to professional attire — can be daunting for many young people. Having to dress formally daily, however, would instill these habits so that post graduation, they are second nature. A formal dress code would ensure that students present themselves neatly and reduce the distractions of overly casual or unkept appearances, encouraging students to take their studies more seriously.

Another benefit of a formal dress code is that it promotes equality. With a loose dress code, students may feel obligated to keep up with the current trends and feel inferior if they cannot afford, or are not allowed to purchase, new clothing. Unlike a full uniform, however, students can maintain their sense of individuality within this equality because not all students will look identical. A shared set of rules for dressing may also help students feel closer and more sim-

ilar to their peers, reducing the stress some students may face regarding clothing.

Formal dress codes, if properly implemented, could also combat the spread of fast fashion. When students are given the ability to make their own fashion decisions, many turn to fast fashion options, which are cheaply made, mass-produced and harmful to the environment. Under a formal dress code, students would instead purchase a small amount of high quality, long-lasting items such as suits and dresses.

Despite the many benefits of a formal dress code, critics argue that it would hinder student individuality. Sareen Sean (IV) notes, “A formal dress code would limit students’ ability to express themselves, as almost nobody feels like themselves in formal dress if it’s not their style.” Despite valid feelings of not being oneself in formal clothing, there is still a lot of room to display one’s personality with it through fun colors and patterns. Unlike a uniform, a formal dress code preserves a good balance of freedom of expression and professionalism. Being confined in clothing would also teach students how to express themselves in areas beyond dress such as personality, speech and ideas.

Enforcing a stricter, more formal dress code at BLS would ultimately be beneficial to students and faculty. This would foster a sense of professionalism and preparation conducive for learning, motivating students to approach their studies with a greater sense of responsibility and pride in their education. So, the next time you are choosing between sweatpants and a suit, choose the suit.

Will a Celebrity Crush Your Relationship?

By Brandon Flores (II)
Staff Writer

How many would kill for the chance to meet Timothée Chalamet or Jenna Ortega? People often idolize their favorite actors and actresses and develop a celebrity crush — for good reason; they are incredibly attractive people, and it is harmless to dream. Concerns about celebrity crushes in high school relationships are overstated and a sign of insecurity, not emotional connection.

In a healthy relationship, a deep connection far exceeds what a distant celebrity fantasy offers. Appreciating the looks and apparent personalities of Harry Styles or Tyla does not pose a danger to an interpersonal relationship, since a true and loving connection exceeds superficiality.

For those who may still be concerned, take comfort in the fact that your significant other likely does not have the charisma or audacity to meet their celebrity crush, let alone score a date behind your back. Allison Geronimo (III) echoes this sentiment, noting, “The person probably knows they never have a chance.”

From the get-go, the idea of a celebrity crush is not too serious, and it should be treated as such. If a partner is concerned about something as trivial as their boyfriend or girlfriend finding someone on television attractive, the relationship is already insecure and has bigger problems to deal with. Katelyn Le (I) adds, “It’s a question of how secure the relationship is. It’s almost like asking, ‘do you think your partner should be able to go out to party or have friends of the opposite gender?’”

View celebrity crushes as a litmus test: if you cannot handle your partner finding another human attractive, you need to have a serious conversation about the expectations in your relationship. It is much better to figure this out in the dating stage during high school than in the “real world,” where shared rents and legally-binding marriages get involved.

Celebrity crushes, moreover, can be a source of bonding instead of division, if handled correctly. If you feel confident in your relationship, you can watch movies or enjoy music from artists that both parties find appealing, making everybody happy. If one of you has a crush on Margot Robbie and the other likes Ryan Gosling, try firing up *Barbie* and some popcorn — you are



Zuhur Sharif (IV) poses with artist Lyn Lapid!

sure to have a good time.

Some people, however, are admittedly misguided and take their crushes too far. Boston Latin School science teacher Mr. Conor Fearon defines the point where this obsession becomes unhealthy: “If you’re starting to miss out on other things for this person you don’t even know, then that’s going too far.” This situation, however, is not as common, especially in a committed relationship.

To avoid this, make sure that you have an active, loving relationship where neither party gets distracted by celebrities. This demonstrates the importance of celebrity crushes: if you find yourself thinking about them too much, it is a sign that you should reflect on what is going on in your life that leads you to think about far-

away strangers more than people beside you everyday.

Also, make sure to establish clear boundaries for your relationship from the beginning to avoid any miscommunication. A celebrity crush should be something both of you can share as an icebreaker or on a first date while sipping on some Starbucks iced coffee.

Far from disrupting otherwise meaningful relationships, celebrity crushes serve as an invaluable tool for gauging insecurities and setting boundaries while dating in high school. Celebrity crushes are harmless in 99.9 percent of situations, since they do not represent a genuine relationship. If your relationship is ingenuine, you may have a problem — but it is better to figure that out sooner rather than later. So be patient, have empathy and indulge in your celebrity crushes in a healthy way!

AP Overload: More is Not Always Better

By **Angelina Wei (II)**
& **Atticus Scovel (II)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

The College Board recently announced their new program, AP Career Kickstart, designed to accelerate students' journey to professional careers. Beginning with AP Business Principles/Personal Finance and AP Cybersecurity, high schoolers will now be able to enroll in courses that promise worthwhile and applicable knowledge. As other schools shift their curriculum to adopt these classes, Boston Latin School faces a choice: to follow this trend and expand its AP selection, or to maintain its commitment to a classical education by omitting new AP courses. In the modern era, it is essential to foster productive, well-rounded students who are eager to learn more than their interests to adapt to the ever-changing demands of higher education and professional careers. BLS thus should not offer these "real-world" AP classes.

BLS already offers 27 AP courses, spanning Statistics to French to Comparative Government and to African American studies. According to the College Board website, only 33 percent of U.S. public high schools offered ten or more AP courses in the 2023 to 2024 school year, far fewer than BLS. The existing AP courses are more than sufficient to introduce a range of academic subjects to students.

The logistics of instituting more APs at BLS will likely prove more troublesome than worthwhile, since teachers only have so much space in their schedules. By adding more AP courses, BLS would be spreading teachers thin, requiring them to teach new curricula to fewer sections.

Some might suggest that with BLS's large endowment, it could simply hire more teachers to teach additional APs. BLS History Program Director Mr. Thomas Kennelly

explains, however, "We're limited as to the number of teachers we have based on our enrollment. We can't just say, 'oh, we're [going to] hire ten more teachers.'" BLS lacks the resources to maintain the quality and effectiveness of additional AP courses. Mr. Kennelly adds, with the limited number of teachers at BLS, that increasing more niche APs is "a little bit of a zero-sum game where if you continue to add electives, eventually, you're gonna have to subtract some."

BLS prides itself in "[grounding] its students in a contemporary classical education as preparation for successful college studies, responsible and engaged citizenship and a rewarding life." The current AP selection emphasizes math, science, English, history and foreign languages, which are core subjects to develop essential critical thinking and analytical skills as well as intellectual curiosity. Adding new, niche APs will cause students to take higher level, more complex courses without the proper prerequisites.

The vast majority of U.S. universities, such as Columbia University and the University of Chicago, require a core curriculum. By maintaining a classical education, BLS will be able to preserve the integrity of its mission: to prioritize students' overall development, and prepare them for the future where they will have to learn something outside of their interests.

Although high school is a time meant for broadening horizons and discovering new interests and passions, it is not a period where students should be prematurely selecting their careers. Maya Koreth (I), who has taken the maximum number of APs, adds, "I see more merit in keeping the classical system because, while AP Cybersecurity and other niche APs could be helpful, those are more areas which you should explore in college."

Some students believe that they are certain about a specific major, although according to the Student Research Group, about



Mr. Jim Levesque

BLS DECA offers an education similar to AP Business Principles.

80 percent of college students switch their majors at least once. It is unrealistic for high schoolers to believe that they will always have a clear, unchanging vision of their careers. They should instead build strong foundational knowledge that can support a variety of paths in college and beyond.

The introduction of new, niche APs and a general shift toward career-oriented education could also have larger-scale repercussions on society. BLS guidance counselor Mr. Samson Luu adds these courses' prioritization of real-world skills, such as "time management, critical thinking, [and] problem-solving," fail to recognize the need for multifaceted workers, citizens and people. For one to be an engaged citizen in democracy, they must have a base knowledge in history, civics, literature, world language and more.

In the real world, niche knowledge is not prioritized; the ability to learn and adapt is valued instead. Employers want to hire ap-

plicants who can learn and think quickly on their feet, solve problems and work in teams — all skills that a well-rounded classical education teaches.

BLS must continue to stay rooted in its classical education in order to cultivate leaders who are not only prepared for college, but will make meaningful contributions to society. Many alumni have become influential scholars in their respective fields — a testament to the effectiveness of our broad, rigorous curriculum. For instance, Dr. Cornelius Taabazuing has become an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at the University of Pennsylvania, Ms. Hilary Krieger has become the Deputy Ideas and Opinions Editor for *U.S. News and World Report* and Ms. Robyn Casper is an attorney at WilmerHale LLP. By preserving its commitment to a foundational education, BLS can continue to produce graduates who excel in a wide range of domains.

Hold Our Officials Accountable!



Julia Memaree Niklison

The Justice Department urges courts to drop charges against Adams.

By **Ellie Fung (IV)**
& **Hiba El Fathi (III)**

Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

New York City Mayor Eric Adams has dominated the news after the Justice Department urged courts to drop the charges of corruption against him. President Donald Trump was convicted of 34 counts of felony in May, only to receive an unconditional discharge of his sentence. Both of these officials are high-ranking and high-profile, and if anything, they should be punished more harshly to discourage politicians from committing crimes. It seems, however, that wealthier officials with high status are often held less accountable for their actions.

The justice system's role is in its name: administering justice. But this becomes hard to believe when high-profile officials are held to double standards. Citizens elect officials

with the expectation that they will do what is best for their constituents and be held accountable if they commit crimes. When they cannot trust the officials they have elected to serve and protect their best interests, citizens lose trust in the government and justice system. If the system does not serve justice for officials, there is no guarantee that it will serve justice for anyone else.

Boston Latin School Voices of the Empowered co-president Alexa Schmitt (I) comments, "I think we put our trust in politicians, [...] therefore they're giving an even stronger promise." Schmitt argues that politicians should be thinking, "'I'm going to hold myself accountable, I'm going to do the right thing,' because they're not just worried about themselves in that moment; they're worried about the whole citizen body."

When people lose trust in the government, it can jeopardize their health and safety. The government provides many import-

ant services and resources like healthcare, emergency services and education. If citizens believe their leaders are corrupt or untrustworthy, they might hesitate to rely on these systems, which can have negative impacts on their health and wellbeing. For instance, skepticism towards the government during the COVID-19 pandemic led to some people choosing not to get vaccinated, worsening an already terrible crisis.

This lack of trust also causes citizens' needs to be unfulfilled. People may feel unheard by their own government, which can cause disengagement: they could stop participating in elections or relying on government assistance, further weakening the systems designed to help and protect them.

Officials' lack of accountability contributes heavily to citizens' distrust of the police force. In law enforcement, officers rarely face consequences for misconduct in their jobs. Because of this, many people lose faith in the police after witnessing cases of racial violence or corruption where law enforcement is not held accountable for its actions.

When police forces are exempt from consequences, the public feels more unsafe than protected. People could feel hesitant to report crimes or cooperate in legal investigations, creating unsafe communities. Police serve the public, but without accountability, their authority contributes to a broken system favoring those in power and neglecting the needs of ordinary civilians.

High-profile officials often have more wealth or influence, leading their experiences to be more prevalent in people's minds and featured in the media. When these officials are not punished strongly enough, the public therefore tends to lose greater trust in the government than if a normal citizen is let off the hook. Michael Besson (I) argues that their

immense influence and power should lead high-profile officials to be treated more harshly by the justice system: "Our current justice system is ineffective since public officials can buy their way out of jail. Their status should make sure they are given harsher sentences to prevent them from abusing their power."

Lax punishment for officials sets a dangerous precedent. Leniency shown towards corruption by the justice system encourages other officials to act in similar ways. Rather than doing what is best for their constituents, officials may focus on gaining personal power, increasing the lack of public trust. People will be unsure if officials are actually working for their interests or if they are more interested in obtaining prestige and reduced crime sentences.

While this may seem like a national issue, it also matters for students. BLS history teacher Ms. Ashley Balbian explains, "Students should be concerned as they are about to be citizens with full responsibilities [like voting]." In a few years, current students will vote for officials and trust them to act in good faith. It is important for students to be aware of current cases of corrupt officials being treated too leniently, so that they will critique unjust decisions in the future.

This is also important for the city of Boston. Tania Fernandez Anderson, a Boston City Council member, is currently accused of a kickback scheme. While her trial is yet to conclude, her constituents are left to wonder whether or not justice will be served. From Councilor Chuck Turner, who was involved in a bribery case, to officers in the Karen Read investigation, who have been accused of misconduct, Massachusetts has seen many officials both accused and convicted of the greatest crime: betraying citizens' trust. Right now, justice seems more important than ever.

Kendrick Lamar and the Great American Game



Kendrick Lamar stands among dancers in the formation of the American flag.

By **Kenneth Cacho-Bermudez (II)**
Staff Writer

On February 5, Kendrick Lamar graced the Super Bowl LIX with his Apple Music halftime show, becoming the first solo rapper to lead a Super Bowl show. It was the most watched Super Bowl halftime performance of all time, followed by Michael Jackson’s performance in 1993. This also marks Lamar’s second time performing at the Super Bowl, having performed with Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Mary J. Blige, Eminem and 50 Cent in 2022.

Before the performance begins, the camera pans out to reveal lights in the audience that load until 100 percent, eventually spelling out the word “START,” establishing a video-game theme. The audience then receives a visit from Uncle Sam, played by decorated actor Samuel L. Jackson, who introduces the show as the “Great American game.”

“Generally in U.S. History, Uncle Sam represents the U.S. government and [their] agenda,” explains Boston Latin School AP U.S. History teacher Ms. Ashley Balbian. “And Uncle Sam had a disapproving tone and symbolized what people ‘think’ [Kendrick] should be doing.”

This Uncle Sam character returns

throughout the performance, usually arguing with Lamar and calling his songs “too ghetto.” He says that the rapper bringing out his “homeboys” is the “old culture cheat code.” Toward the end of the performance, however, Uncle Sam praises Lamar for playing his more popular hits (coincidentally ones that are less conscious and political). The character, however, walks off in exasperation when “Not Like Us,” a track that honors Lamar’s Compton roots, begins to play.

Some viewers believe that these belittling criticisms aimed toward Lamar are meant to represent America’s criticism of Black people and their culture. Others interpreted Uncle Sam’s character to symbolize the government’s past and its current at appeasing “white America” while stifling black voices.

“It spoke to me. I think it spoke to every single Black person who watched that show,” remarks Olurimi Alofe (I).

This symbolism continues in Charm LaDonna’s choreography, which was praised for its thought-provoking messaging. While on stage, the dancers donned either red, white or blue outfits, correlating to the colors of the American flag, which ties into Lamar’s ongoing theme of American history. A notable example of Lamar’s consistent symbolism and storytelling is through his 2018

performance of “HUMBLE,” where backup dancers form the image of the American flag and Lamar is found at the center. Fans speculate this portrayed how America was built off “the backs” of Black men but America seems to forget Black culture and Black contributions.

“Du Bois called it ‘double consciousness.’ The experience of being Black in America is to know everything about African American culture, but also mainstream American culture, which we largely [recall] as white American culture,” explains BLS AP African American Studies teacher Mr. Brian Smith.

In his performance, Lamar further highlights America’s mistreatments of Black Americans with several nods to African American history in his presentation of GNX’s *squabble up*. He announces that “the revolution’s about to be televised, you picked the right time but the wrong guy.” This is a reference to a song by prominent activist and poet Gil Scott Heron, promptly titled, “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised.”

Mr. Smith explains: “The reason why it won’t be televised is because it’s happening inside [...] his literal quote was that the revolution first has to happen in our minds.” He also believes that Lamar positions himself as consciousness and asks America if they’re

ready for what he brings to the table.

Those who are well-versed in American history, or are avid fans of Lamar’s 2015 album *To Pimp a Butterfly*, may have perked up during Lamar’s tease of “Not Like Us,” where he said, “40 acres and a mule, this is bigger than the music.” This is a reference to the period of Reconstruction after the American Civil War which promised formerly enslaved Black people 40 acres of land taken from the Confederacy and a mule. President Andrew Johnson, however, reversed this order, and it has since become a symbol of empty promises that America gave to Black Americans.

In addition to the history Lamar brought to the stage, the performance fueled the fire of the infamous Kendrick v. Drake feud. While the crowd chanting “A-minor,” must’ve struck a nerve, Lamar also brought out other notable figures from Drake’s dating history.

During diss track “Not Like Us,” Serena Williams, Drake’s ex-girlfriend, was smoothly and care-freely crip walking, a dance commonly associated with the Crips street gang in Los Angeles County, which holds Lamar and Williams’s hometown of Compton, California. This is also a jab at America attempting to dissolve Black culture, as in the past, Williams faced immense backlash for C-walking after her victory at the 2012 Wimbledon tournament.

“I think for Serena Williams, such a prominent figure in sports history and a black woman as well, to be doing that [...] on a global platform, I think is really empowering,” comments Alofe.

Lamar also brought out SZA, who dated Drake in 2008. Drake and SZA’s short-lived reconciliation is marked by hit songs “Slime You Out” and “Rich Baby Daddy,” before falling out again due to SZA’s “OVO mole” accusations. This Top Dawg duo elegantly performed their 2018 hit song “All The Stars” and their most recent collaboration “Luther.” They will embark on their highly anticipated “Grand National Tour” beginning mid-April this year.

Although gaining 133 million viewers the night of the Super Bowl, Lamar’s success only continued to grow. 48 hours after the Super Bowl, Lamar broke the record for most streamed rapper on *Spotify*, a position previously held by Drake, with a whopping 88.8 million monthly listeners. Additionally, with the widespread discourse of the performance’s symbolism and Conan O’Brien alluding to Lamar’s performance at the 97th Academy Awards, Lamar solidified the immense influence his artistry and talent brought to both the Superbowl and the music industry.

The Grammys Fashion Review

By **Ben Choi-Harris (I)**
Fashion Consultant

Jaden Smith - 2/10



Taking risks is definitely admirable, but that doesn’t mean it’s always pretty. This outfit is evidence of that. I respect the effort, and the fact that he didn’t just wear a suit like every other boring man, but he’s only one ugly castle-hat away from that.

Gracie Abrams - 4/10



It’s ... chic. Honestly, it’s cute, but she looks like she should be in church, not the Grammys. I’m not sure how I feel about the rise of conservative fashion, but it does suit her, kind of. Still too preachy for my taste. Don’t @ me.

Chappell Roan - 8/10



She’s colorful, she’s unique, she’s never been done before. I love her attention to detail. Nobody’s quite like her. The only problem I have with it is the 2010s-esque high-low skirt.

Doechii - 10/10



She’s taking the old and making it new. It’s fun, it’s cute, it’s classy, it’s creative ... basically every famous person should be taking notes to try and reach her level (even though they never will).

Life Imitates Art: *Conclave* and American Politics

By Alexandra Lee (I)
Staff Writer

If anyone has ever watched Stanley Tucci in *The Hunger Games* and thought: “this, but more Catholic,” *Conclave* is the perfect film to watch. A political thriller starring Tucci alongside Ralph Fiennes and Isabella Rossellini, it is based on the 2016 novel of the same name by Robert Harris.

The film follows Cardinal Lawrence as he leads the College of Cardinals in electing a successor for the late pope. Four candidates with vastly different social, religious and political views emerge as frontrunners. As the College struggles to settle on one individual, scandal erupts, and the pool grows smaller. The film examines human ambition and desire for power as each character struggles to retain commitment to morality and religious faith in their quest to fulfill a belief system.

Aspiring film major Eleonora Ricciarini (I) says it was “extremely well shot,” noting the emphasis on color and ornamental Catholic traditions. Though she enjoyed how the dialogue sounded real and the conflicts were complex, she admits to being slightly disappointed by the ending: “I thought it was less exciting than the middle portion.”

With a *Rotten Tomatoes* rating of 93 percent, eight Oscar nominations and six Golden Globe nominations, the film has been received well by audiences and critics alike. The National Board of Review and the American Film Institute named it one of the top ten films of 2024.

For Katarina Taylor (I), the movie stuck out not only for its cinematography and acting but for

its discussion of issues personal to her. “[I have] found my own faith challenged because of people using religion as a weapon,” she says. “*Conclave* reaffirmed to me that religion is about growing together and embracing the uncertainty in life rather than always searching for what is true or ‘right’.”

As with everything, however, the political element has caused polarization, especially among the Catholic media. While the progressive *National Catholic Reporter* praised the film and its “ecclesial call for a renewed spiritual stewardship,” the conservative *Our Sunday Visitor* called it a “manipulative” production, where “the deck is predictably stacked in favor of those who advocate change.”

This division is unsurprising because the film contains overt political themes that most Americans cannot ignore. The resemblance of American politics to those of the Catholic Church are glaring, especially in light of the recent presidential election. At times, the movie’s scarlet hats mirror a different red baseball cap in America and the stairwell arguments become reminiscent of those on the debate stage.

“If Tedesco becomes Pope, he will undo 60 years of progress,” the progressive character Bellini declares at one point, decrying his opponent. The conservative Tedesco, meanwhile, condemns the “doctrine of relativism so dear to our liberal brothers,” and it feels a bit as if our nation’s leaders swapped their suits and ties for the movie’s red mozzetta cloaks.

“Is this what we are reduced to? Considering the ‘least worst’ option?” These words, uttered by Lawrence as he struggles to back a candidate amid



growing suspicions, could be taken verbatim from a conversation about American politics, as could much of this film. These paralleling themes relate to every American, wanted or not, which makes this film a worthwhile watch.

The Battle of Wojtek: *The Happy Warrior*



BLS theatre takes their audience state-wide at drama festival.

By Bridget Blair (III)
Staff Writer

The cast of Boston Latin School theatre’s *Wojtek: The Happy Warrior* took their final bow at the Massachusetts High School Drama Festival on March 9. The students performed alongside over 100 other plays, all vying for a spot at the semifinals.

The Massachusetts High School Drama Festival is a competition in which students perform and are judged upon a short — no more than 40 minute — play in order to determine if they will move on to the next level of competition. There are three levels: preliminary, semifinal and state finals, with the top

two state finalists representing Massachusetts at the New England Drama Festival.

When discussing the differences between shows for the festival and other shows BLS theatre presents throughout the year, crew member Meya Splaine (III) elaborates that “the [festival] shows are sometimes more serious and they spend time researching and learning about the topic and it leaves more of an impact.”

BLS theatre has competed at the festival for several years. The most recent shows include *PLEASE LEAVE (a message)* in 2024 and *Grumpets* in 2023. This year, the cast brought new life to the stage with the dynamic and surprisingly true story of *Wojtek: The Happy Warrior*.

The play follows the life of a bear named Wojtek during World War II. When his mother is killed by hunters, a group of Polish soldiers from the 2nd Polish Corps take the bear in, treating him as one of their own. When the time comes for the soldiers to go on a campaign in Italy, they are faced with the issue of not being allowed to bring any “pets” on board their boat. Unwilling to leave Wojtek behind, the Polish army decided to “enlist” him. And so, Private Wojtek of the 22nd Artillery Supply Company set out to Italy. After Wojtek survived the campaign and World War II ended, he lives out his remaining years at a zoo.

BLS theatre seamlessly blended the

silly prospect of a bear in the army with the serious matter of the occupation of Poland in World War II. The production stood out in its dynamic combination of speaking, singing and playing instruments. The resourceful use of props, such as long sticks to convey a train and boat, and the metal buckets and mulch to show battle on the front lines, was an insightful use of conceptual and interpretive theatre. The students also had excellent physicality, demonstrated through their individual portrayals of the bear Wojtek. Even with minimal costumes, the performers enhanced the show and immersed the audience.

The festival itself came with some restrictions on the technical aspects of the show. The actors and crew only had five minutes before and after the show to put up and take down all sets. Since the crew was performing in an unfamiliar theater, they had to adapt the lighting design on competition day. BLS theatre nevertheless rose to the challenge, winning awards for their excellence in set, acting and sound.

“I think my favorite moment of [the festival] was the five minutes of setup, like it was really stressful, but it was super exhilarating,” explains BLS theatre actor and Head of Props Tobias Martin (II).

Although *Wojtek: The Happy Warrior* did not move on to the semifinals competition, BLS theatre still brought an interesting and conceptual piece of artwork to the stage that impacted audiences despite their minimal sets and costumes. Furthermore, actors, crew members and students in the audience alike enjoyed supporting the show and seeing the work of several other schools on the day of the competition.

When discussing what makes the Massachusetts High School Drama Festival special, BLS theatre director Kayla Campbell (I) explains, “We know nothing about other schools, but getting to see their theatre program is probably one of my favorite parts of [the festival].”

Spring into these Book Recommendations!

By Lauren Dong (III)
& Weian Xue (III)
Head Literary Critics

For those interested in video games, friendship, love and life...

Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow by Gabrielle Zevin

Set in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Venice Beach, California, *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* follows the journey of two game designers, Sadie and Sam, as they navigate success, love, jealousy and friendship over the span of 30 years. And, let’s not forget about our favorite character, Marx, Sadie and Sam’s best friend. Collectively, we cried about five times. Whenever someone asks for a book recommendation, this is the one we give.

Recommended for grades nine and up.

For science fiction fans...

Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir
Schoolteacher Ryland Grace wakes up in a mysterious spacecraft with no companions and no memories of his past, but unbeknownst to him, he is on a mission to save Earth from an apocalypse. When we first read this book, we were immediately fascinated by the world-building and scientific ac-

curacy. In addition to the amazing plot, the book explores deeper topics such as morality and survival, making it the perfect sci-fi read.

For those looking for a feel-good romance...

Funny Story by Emily Henry
A girl gets dumped by her fiancé for his girl best “friend,” who also dumps her fiancé ... and the two heart-broken people are forced to live together. Not only is this such a fun concept, but the characters and conflict are given incredible depth. This book was a great mix of humor, romance and some more serious topics such as identity and trust.

Recommended for grades ten and up.

For those interested in Greek mythology...

The Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller
A retelling of the Trojan War, *The Song of Achilles* is a modern take on Homer’s *Iliad* from Patroclus’s perspective. Although books on mythology can seem intimidating (especially if you’re not a “JCLer”), Miller’s writing is captivating and beautiful, so you won’t get bored! This is the type of book that we love to heavily annotate, as it’s truly unforgettable.

Recommended for grades nine and up.

For those interested in emotional memoirs...

I’m Glad My Mom Died by Jennette McCurdy

Writer, director and former child actress Jennette McCurdy unpacks her traumatic experiences with child acting and her abusive mother in this emotional and moving memoir. We highly recommend listening to this on the audiobook version — Jennette McCurdy’s voice is raw and real. While celebrity memoirs tend to suck, this one was amazing, even though we weren’t Disney kids.

Recommended for grades ten and up.

For those looking to reflect on the world around them...

Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro

The narrator, an adult Kathy H., reflects on her experiences growing up at Hailsham, a mysterious boarding school that is isolated from the rest of the world. Although it may not seem like it at first, this story is set in a dystopian world, the details of which are slowly and masterfully revealed by Ishiguro over time. This book is such an amazing study on morality, identity and memories and is definitely the perfect read for the philosophers out there.

Yay! Caprese!



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

Culinary Consultants

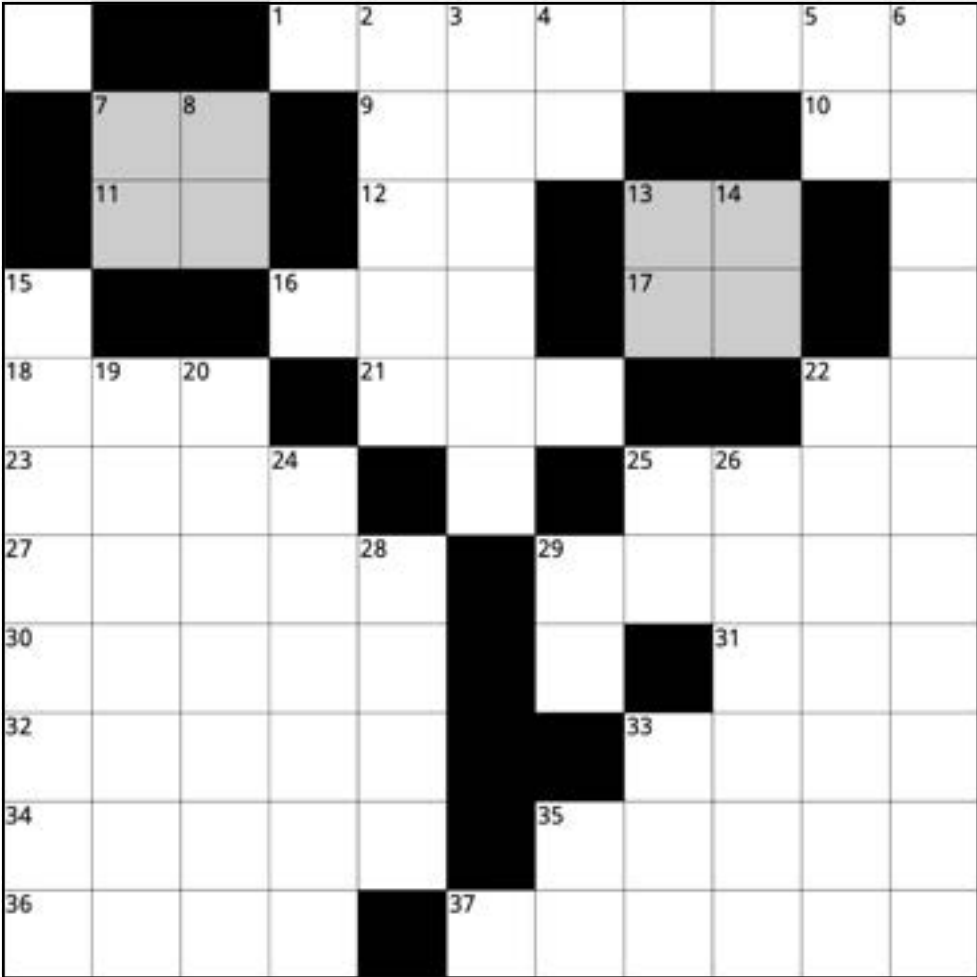
Caprese Salad:

Ingredients:

- ☐ 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- ☐ 1 small mozzarella ball (or shredded mozzarella)
- ☐ Fresh basil leaves (or dried basil if you don’t have fresh), if you want to make it heartier, you could add a handful of arugula or spinach.
- ☐ 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ☐ Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

- Combine cherry tomatoes and mozzarella in a bowl.
- Tear fresh basil leaves and sprinkle over the top.
- Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Mix and enjoy!



March Crossword

By Alex Le (II)
Head Cruciverbalist

Across:

- St. _____ Day
- Chief law enforcement officer abbr.
- To Kill a Mockingbird* author
- Original poster
- X repost abbr.
- Undergraduate degree for arts and humanities
- General medical care position abbr.
- What lines Ave. Louis Pasteur at 2:15 P.M.
- By your side from day one
- How energy is stored in a cell
- NYC Gala Museum
- Tower in Toronto
- “Take ____!”
- Online journal
- Like some verbs
- Shaggy’s pal, to Shaggy
- ____ be tied (annoyed)
- Blue and yellow flag; abbr.
- Related to a hipbone
- Scotch ____
- African antelope
- Salami type
- Six-time Emmy winner Tyne
- Men in Black* role

Down:

- ____ of the Year (Grammy category)
- Movie trailer, e.g.
- Email response
- Knockout
- What we count down to in April
- Haiti’s neighbor
- Courtney Mulkerrin’s job description abbr.
- Opposite of stop
- ____ -13 movie rating
- Approved government laws
- Manila fight nickname
- Incomplete
- Camper’s food warmer
- Condition caused by abnormal calcium levels
- Jesuit college
- Gomer Pyle’s girlfriend
- Found at the end of the rainbow
- Ghost social media abbr.
- Golf peg
- What people say after a game



Sunny Jokes to Brighten up Your Day!



What do you call a bear that got caught in a spring shower? A drizzly bear.

Why couldn’t the flower ride its bike?
It lost its petals.

What is a rabbit’s favorite kind of music?
Hip hop.

How does the sun manage its money?
Daylight savings.

What kind of shoes do breadsticks wear?
Loafers.

Where do cucumbers go on date night?
The salad bar.

What do pirates read?
The *Arrrgo*.

Why is April always clean?
Because April showers.

Why did the frog take the bus to work?
His car got toad.

Spring Wordsearch!

I P O L L E N G S Z
J O R T S A L I U L
B M A Q W H L S N M
R B I R D S V M I A
A F L O W E R S V Y
I M Y G V S Z U J L
N A A P R I L E Q P
F R D C L S I L Z Q
C C V U R A U G J I
C H U T L W C K S O

Word Bank:

April
Birds
Flowers
Jorts
March

May
Pollen
Sun
Rain



ASK H.I.M.



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

How do I build my self confidence?

I: When it comes to confidence, there is wisdom in the cliché “fake it till you make it.” Faking it means a number of things — walk with purpose, have good posture and don’t mumble your words. You’ll find that the more you portray yourself as confident, the more confident you’ll actually feel. Just be careful not to overdo it; sometimes people talk too much in an effort to appear confident, but there is just as much value in listening as there is in speaking.

I feel like my best friend and I are growing apart, how do I save the friendship?

M: If you want to save things, try talking to them about how you’ve been feeling, and if they’re receptive, be okay with creating a new path in your friendship. The worst thing you can do is fall back into old habits, because then neither of you will ever grow. Remember, if they’re not receptive, you can’t force anyone to be your friend — and if you can, they’re a pushover, and you don’t want to be friends with them anyway!!

How do i find huzz

M: R u srs rn bro? Ts pmo. U askn a schl newsppr how to gt da huzz? Be so fr rn bro. U need 2 focus on da schl bro not da huzz. Negative aura.

Is sliding in the dms objectively weird?

I: It depends ... consider your circumstances. These are a few important qualifications you should meet before sending that message:

1. Can someone tell who you are and what you look like from your page? If your profile picture is you as a baby, or if you have no posts AND no tagged posts, then people are likely to not reply to your DM because they have no idea who you are.
2. Are you attractive? If not, consider meeting someone organically, so that your charming personality can be the focus of attention.
3. Will this look good in a screenshot? Before you write that DM, consider how it will look in a screenshot sent to someone’s groupchat.

Everyone is getting into relationships in these last few months ... is it worth it? What’s the word on breaking up for college?

M: IMO, if you’re in a relationship with someone you love and can see yourselves lasting — there’s not really a need to consider a breakup. Of course, distance is hard, and there are sacrifices you will have to make, but if this is someone you have committed yourself to, you will eventually find ways to fall into routine. If, however, you want to prioritize independence and finding yourself in college, a relationship might be something to consider. I just think you need to look within yourself and analyze both you and your partner’s needs before making a decision.

Since college decisions are coming out soon, how do I cope with rejections?

I: Seek out content along the lines of “Everything I hate about [insert school that rejected you].” Block the school and their commits page on *Instagram*. Remember that you can succeed at different places. Allow yourself some time to grieve, but focus on getting excited about the options you do have. Rejection is redirection.

M: Or watch videos of students suffering at that school!! Misery loves company.

How do I know if I like someone or if I just like their validation?

H: While you might feel harsh about it, validation is a loop that’s easy to become addicted to; at the end of the day, who wouldn’t want their feeling reflected back at them like a perfectly-created highlight reel? Liking the way someone makes you feel is not synonymous with the feeling of liking them. The easiest question to ask yourself is: “If this person stopped giving me attention, would I still care about them?” If you find that you’d still be curious about the person without their compliments or attention, you might be enjoying them as a person rather than purely seeking their validation. The surefire method, however, has to do with your set of intrinsic values: What is it that you like about yourself? What characteristics, physical or psychological, make you happy with yourself? What do you want and not want for yourself? Asking these questions lets you separate things that make you happy and unhappy in a person, allowing you to seek out a person who values things similar to yourself.

How do I tell my friend she’s being delusional?

H: The age-old issue of how to tell your friend she’s in fantasy land without demolishing your friendship ... Your friend is already convinced that they are right, so you must approach the situation like you’re walking on eggshells. I’ve had the best experience by being humorous while planting a seed of doubt. Humor always does its job — it lightens the load of a message, and by no means do you have to make her fully realize her ignorance. Let her know that you want the best for her, but allow her to doubt decisions on her own. This will only make your message hit closer to home and allow you to tell your friend “I told you so.”

Rice Guys Finish Last



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

Sweet Soy Rice Bowl:

Ingredients:

- ☐ Cooked rice (you can buy precooked and just heat it in the microwave)
- ☐ Ground meat of choice or crumbled tofu
- ☐ Frozen mixed veggies
- ☐ Sweet soy marinade:
 - ☐ 3 tbsp soy sauce
 - ☐ 2 tbsp honey, maple syrup, or sugar
 - ☐ 1 tbsp rice vinegar or apple cider vinegar
 - ☐ 1 tsp garlic powder
 - ☐ 1/2 tsp ginger powder or 1 tsp ginger paste (you can buy this frozen in cubes, in a tube in the produce section or in a jar in the international section)

Directions:

1. If your rice is not precooked, cook your rice following the package instructions.
2. Mix all of your sauce ingredients, add enough water to create 1/2 cup total and set aside.
3. Use a frying pan.
4. If your meat is not frozen or you are cooking tofu, you can skip this step. If you are cooking ground meat from frozen, add a few spoonfuls of water and cover with a lid until the meat has thawed enough to break up, and then let the water evaporate.
5. Add a bit of vegetable oil and brown your protein. Leave the heat on medium and don’t move your protein around too much at the beginning, this will help you get good color.
6. When your protein is about 90 percent cooked through, add your frozen veggie mix and your soy marinade and cover. Turn heat down to low and cook for 5 to 10 minutes.
7. Uncover, the marinade should be mostly absorbed by the protein and veggies. If it still looks wet, let the excess water cook off.
8. Serve over rice.
9. For extra protein you can serve this with a fried or scrambled egg.

Resources For Students Experiencing Food Insecurity:

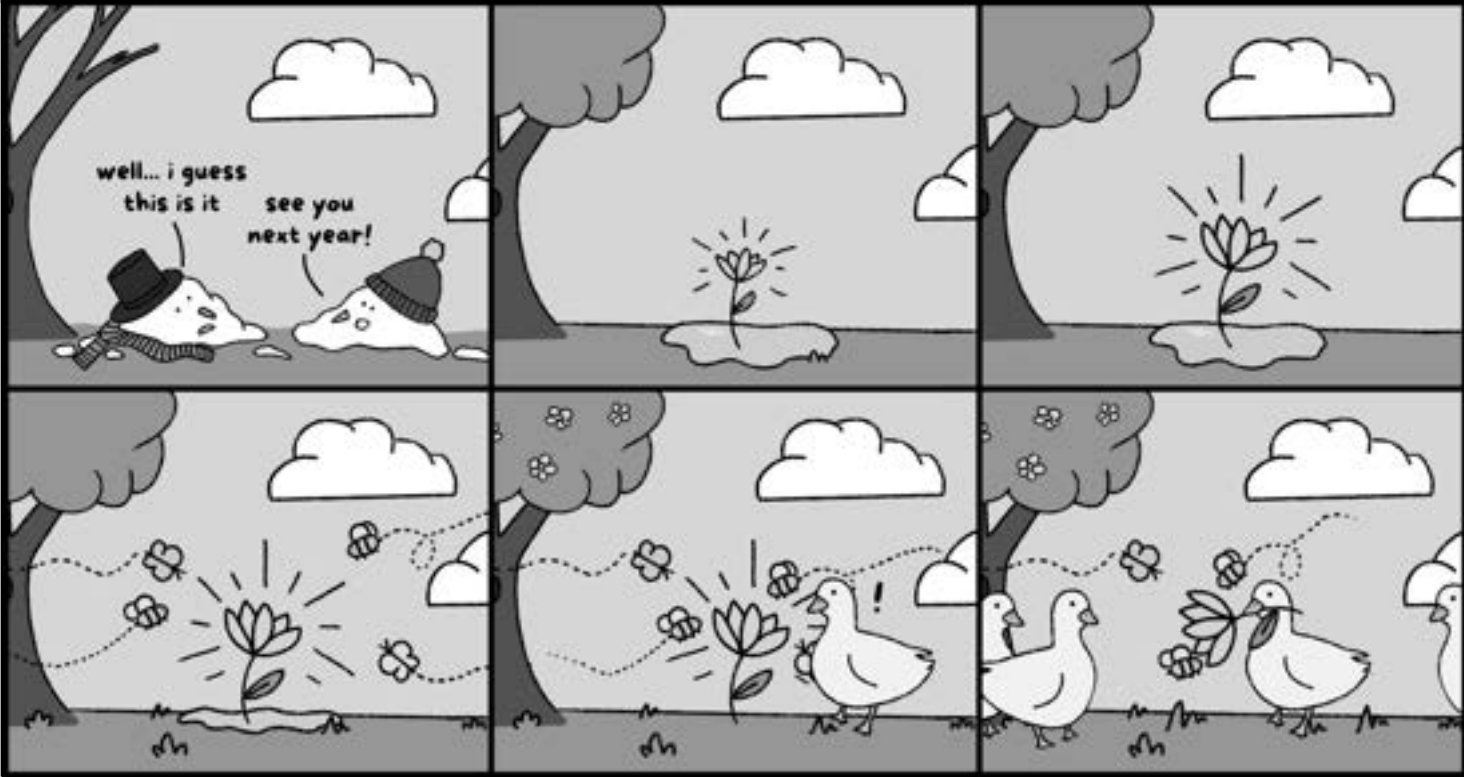
Project Bread:
Food assistance hotline:
+1 (800) 645-8333

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/EBTusers.
dailytable.org

March Comic: Spring Has Sprung!

By Lauren Dong (III)
Comic Artist



Big Band Delivers at Mingus



BLS Big Band smiles before their Mingus competition performance.

**By Sophia Knobel (III)
& Kaya Ertan (IV)**
Contributing Writers

The Charles Mingus Festival and High School Competition, named after legendary jazz bassist and composer Charles Mingus, is one of the most prestigious competitions in the country.

It draws top high school jazz ensembles from across the United States, all vying for the chance to showcase their musicianship among the best young players in the country. Under the direction of Mr. Paul Pitts and Mr. Sean Lee, Boston Latin School’s Big Band is no exception, traveling to New York City at the start of February break to compete — an opportunity that put them on one of the biggest stages of high school jazz.

The application process is simple, but highly competitive. High school bands submit recordings of their best playing, hoping to impress the judges with their technique, musical expression and ability to capture the essence of Mingus’s distinctive style, ranging

from advanced bebop to avant-garde jazz. Only a handful of groups make it to the final round, where they spend an immersive weekend in New York City rehearsing, attending workshops with professional jazz musicians and ultimately performing in front of a panel of esteemed judges. Of all the bands that auditioned in the Big Band category, only four were selected to play in the city.

Before heading to New York City, BLS Big Band demonstrated their talent closer to home, earning a gold medal at the Massachusetts Association for Jazz Education Cape Cod Jazz Festival.

Pianist Carina Szocik (I) shares, “The judges there really loved our performance.” Their playing was not just well-received — it was flawless, securing a perfect score from all three judges.

The Charles Mingus Competition weekend began on Friday, February 14, with a special opportunity: high school ensembles were invited to sit in on an open rehearsal of the Grammy-winning Mingus Big Band, one of three Mingus repertory groups.

Unlike a traditional rehearsal,

this session was more conversational and spontaneous, offering a glimpse into the ensemble’s dynamic approach. Mr. Pitts remarks, “They don’t have a conductor, so it was a lot of guys talking about what they were doing. It was pretty funny, actually.”

On Saturday, February 15, the event was packed with activities: students participated in instrumental clinics and workshops, and they attended lectures, films and a performance by Mingus Dynasty, another repertory group. In the evening, high school students played in Mingus jam sessions, which was a highlight of the trip for many.

On Sunday, February 16, anticipation peaked as various bands took the stage for concert performances at the Tishman Auditorium. For many Big Band members, the weight of this moment was undeniable.

Owen Higgs (III), the band’s bass trombonist, reflects on the intensity leading up to their performance: “There were definitely nerves for pretty much everyone because Mr. Lee and Mr. Pitts had drilled us so much.”

While BLS Big Band didn’t leave the competition with an award, individual players received medals: Outstanding Musicianship Awards went to Cynthia Francis (II) on alto saxophone, Justin Gao (I) on trombone and Carina Szocik (I) on piano. Scozik also won the Outstanding Soloist Award for Division I.

While appreciating their successes, many of them noted that there are some improvements to be made before the state finals, which take place on March 22.

Although the William H. Hall High School Concert Jazz Band from Connecticut took home the win, the season has not ended. BLS Big Band still has many imminent events, including the aforementioned state finals and BLS’s own Porchfest in early June, which Mr. Pitts encourages all to attend.

L’album, Album, Album, Zhuanji, Álbum?!

By Thomas Germain (I)
Contributing Writer

French:
Artist: Stromae
Album: *Multitude*



Well known from his 2013 hit song “Papaoutai,” Belgian singer Stromae made his return to releasing albums in 2022 after a nine-year hiatus. This work mixes influences from various cultures, as it was inspired by the trips he would go on with his mother. Highlights from the album include “*Santé*” (Cheers), “*L’enfer*” (Hell), “*C’est que du bonheur*” (It’s Just Happiness), “*Mon amour*” (My Love) and “*Bonne journée*” (Good Day).

German:
Artist: Abor & Tynna
Album: *Bittersüß*



The debut of a brother and sister duo from Austria, with Tynna providing vocals and Abor playing instruments, this album is full of pop, electronic and hip-hop songs that sound sleek and modern. The duo is set to represent Germany in the Eurovision Song Contest with the first fully German song in almost 30 years. Highlights from the album include “*Coco Taxi*,” “*Seifenblasen*” (Soap Bubbles), “*Babylon*,” “*Mona Lisa*” and “*Baller*” (Shoot).

Italian:
Artist: Joan Thiele
Album: *Joanita*



Joanita brilliantly blends modern influences with sounds from the ‘60s to create something truly unique. Thiele, a rising star in Italy, is from Desenzano del Garda in Lombardy, but her father is Swiss-Colombian — so the album contains several international influences that reflect her background. Notable highlights from the album are “*Veleno*” (Poison), “*Acqua blu*” (Blue Water), “*Eco*” (Echo), “*Cruz*” and “*XX L.A.*”

Mandarin:
Artist: ERIKA
Album: *Dare To*



ERIKA is a singer-songwriter from Southern California who based her career in Taiwan. Her album is hopeful in tone and seamlessly mixes pop and Rhythm and Blues sounds in a unique way. Highlights include “*Tian e shuo*” (Swan Story), “*Gan ai jiu lai*” (Dare To Love), “*Di er ci xin sui*” (Second Heartbreak), “*Na bian liang kuai na bian dai*” (Take It Easy) and “*It’s You.*”

Spanish:
Artist: Francisco Victoria
Album: *Herida*



Francisco Victoria has made a name for himself in the music scene of his home country, Chile, and neighboring countries Argentina and Peru, as a brilliant pop singer-songwriter and producer. This album is well-produced and the songs are very catchy, with many of them having ‘80s and traditional Latin influences. Highlights: “*Tu puedes ir, amor*” (You Can Go, Love), “*Mi corazón me dice la verdad*” (My Heart Tells Me the Truth), “*Perder la vida*” (Lose Life), “*Tírame al fondo del mar*” (Throw Me to the Bottom of the Sea) and “*Herida*” (Wound).

Spotlight on... Carina Szocik (I)



**By Sophia Knobel (III)
& Kaya Ertan (IV)**
Contributing Writers

For many high school jazz musicians, simply performing at the Charles Mingus Festival and High School Competition is an honor. For Carina Scozik (I), this year’s event took an exhilarating turn — one that placed her at the piano alongside the Charles Mingus Big Band at Joe’s Pub in New York City.

Though now an accomplished jazz pianist, Scozik’s musical roots began in a different genre. “I had [taken] classical piano lessons for about ten years before ever hearing about Big Band,” she recalls. It wasn’t until her sophomore year, when she stumbled into a rehearsal for BLS’s Jazz Standards, that she was encouraged to join. By the end of the year, she auditioned for Big Band, BLS’s most competitive jazz ensemble and quickly became a key player.

At this year’s Charles Mingus Competition, Scozik was awarded the Outstanding Soloist Award for Division I, which recognized her exceptional musicianship and improvisational skill. This distinction came with an even greater opportunity: an invitation to perform with the Mingus Big Band, a Grammy-winning ensemble dedicated to the legacy of jazz legend Charles Mingus.

The night of the performance, Scozik arrived at Joe’s Pub, a packed jazz club with tunes and a buzzing atmosphere. One of the Mingus Big Band members handed her the chord chart. With no rehearsal, no set plan and no conductor, she was forced to improvise.

“I [said to myself], ‘what is happening?’ And so, then we all just started playing, and that was fine. And then I was like, ‘I’m not sure when I’m supposed to solo, because nobody ever discussed this.’ But then they all just kind of looked at me at once. So I was like, ‘Okay, it’s my turn.’” Reflecting on the experience, Scozik admits that this “was the most terrifying thing I’ve done in my life. I’ve played at Carnegie Hall, but [this] was scarier.”

For a musician who once hesitated to join jazz, sharing a stage with some of the greatest jazz players in the world demonstrates just how far Scozik has come. The young musician concludes: “Playing with the Mingus band was terrifying but I’m really glad that I did it because it’s the coolest opportunity ever and I was at a sold out show in New York City.”

Currently Running on Consani

By Michael Nguyen (III)
Contributing Writer

From swirling a glass of cucumber water to “Lifestyle” by Rich Gang to walking for iconic designers such as Chanel and Marc Jacobs, the most recent recipient of the Fashion Awards’s “Model of the Year” award, Alex Consani, has swept the fashion industry off its feet — and taken over TikTok “For You” pages. Consani, or “Miss Mawma,” became the youngest transgender model at age 12 and later signed with International Management Group Models at age 16. Racking up over 4.6 million followers on her TikTok account, *@captin-crook*, Consani captivates viewers with her comedic and chaotic videos, providing a tease into the life of a model.

In 2020, Consani debuted her TikTok account, full of raw, unfiltered videos, defined by her witty, authentic Generation Z humor. Whether it was freestyling to random YouTube beats or voguing down a New York City train, Consani dominated quarantine TikTok feeds. This colorful personality translates into her unique interview responses, where she is anything but shy from showing her true personality openly — a rarity in the fashion industry.

Katie Baide (III) shares, “I think Alex is a really fun person to stan because of how young she is, which really allows people to relate to her more [because] she’s young like us, and her humor really brings us together. She just became an icon.”

Consani’s influence stretches beyond her social media presence. In October 2024, Consani and Valentina Sampaio, a fellow trans model, walked for Victoria’s

Secret together, making them the first openly trans models to walk for the show. Consani continues to impact pop culture with over 20 shows, including Ferragamo and Diesel, features in Hailey Bieber’s Rhode skincare line and a cameo in Charli XCX’s “360” music video under her belt.

In the almost 40-year history of the British Fashion Award’s “Model of the Year,” Consani was the first trans model to win the award. While accepting this prestigious award, Consani openly expresses her gratitude towards the Black transgender community: “I’m the first trans woman to win this award. I can’t accept it without thanking the females who came before me, and specifically the Black trans community that really fought for the space.”

Amid the political state of the U.S., where far right lawmakers gather to diminish the existence of transgender people and youth through legislation, voices like Consani’s have become increasingly vital. More recently, in states like Alabama, Virginia and Oklahoma, a number of anti-trans bills have passed, infringing on transgender youths’ access to healthcare, education and gender expression.

“I think Alex Consani’s presence in fashion and runway is [not only] more important because of our current political climate, but also because of the fashion industry’s inherently restrictive and exclusionary nature. [...] Only recently have we seen the breaking of size barriers and the presence of transgender models in fashion, and Alex Consani as a trans woman being so successful is very inspiring and very telling of the direction of fashion,” Abe Coumbassa (I) concludes.



Tet Fesssstival: Year of the Snake



VSS officers celebrate after another amazing Tet Festival!

By Shirlyn Wang (III)
Contributing Writer

On February 14, Boston Latin School Vietnamese Student Society (VSS) celebrated the Year of the Snake with their highly anticipated Tet Festival.

The Lunar New Year celebration

is “the event [they] plan for, [their] trademark,” according to co-president Ava Vu (I). It consisted of many moving parts, starting in the Dining Hall with a lion dance from Kwong Kow Athletics. Attendees then played games where participants earned stamps, and upon completion, they could trade in their stamped slip for

a variety of prizes. Attendees also enjoyed karaoke, a watermelon-eating contest and photo shoot opportunities.

Following the Dining Hall portion of the event was the performance portion in the auditorium, featuring powerful dances from BLS Dance Club, BLS KOREO and BLS Breakers

and soothing vocals from bands Zebra Therapy and Freshies.

The event culminated in a large dinner in the Dining Hall, which was provided by officers and local Vietnamese restaurants.

Considerable attention also went into the displays of dancing skill on the part of the clubs, showcasing their talents at Tet. KOREO officer and performer Natalie Nguyen (III) shares, “We had meetings for maybe like an hour and a half every week every Wednesday, [and we] started preparing around November.”

Though it is an annual festival, the event constantly evolves over the years. VSS officer Tiana Nguyen (III), who served on the games committee, explains the process: “We [will] borrow [games] from previous years [and] we take a lot of [inspirations] from old [ones].”

Tet Festival is not the only major event for the VSS, though, with Cà Phê Day also being a well-known tradition. Held in the Dining Hall, this is when the club sells traditional Vietnamese coffee. The money from this event helps fund Tet, and the cycle is continued into the next year’s events.

The celebration of Tet is a fixture of the BLS community’s pride and joy and will continue to be a staple event at the School, having already been held here for over 20 years. With the debriefing for this year’s Tet already having been held, the planning process will start to repeat itself next school year. VSS is already looking forward to next year’s events and participants, new or returning. Be sure to keep a lookout for VSS’s traditional fan dance performance with BLS South East Asian Leaders on Asian Night!

Girls’ Fencing Stays ‘En Garde’ and Wins States



BLS girls’ fencing team smiles after winning the state title!

By **Ashley Alvarez-Tompson (IV)**
& **Julianne Jang (IV)**
Contributing Writers

A prestigious school such as Boston Latin School offers a plethora of rigorous sport programs. The BLS girls’ fencing team is an excellent example: they have won state championships two years in a row - the first in 2024 and now in 2025.

Fencing is a combat sport involving sword fighting. There are three different types of fencing — foil, épée and saber — and each has its own rules and type of blade. Each match consists of two fencers whose objective is to hit their opponent with their blade. The first to 5 touches wins the match,

or “bout.”

To win the state championships, the girls’ fencing team needed to secure 14 total wins against each school. BLS took the win against Bishop Feehan High School in the quarterfinals, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School in the semifinals and Lexington High School in the finals.

This was a very proud moment for the girls’ fencing team. Celena Nguyen (II) shares, “It felt pretty good; I was really happy to see the hard work we’ve all been putting into practice pay off, and [I’m] proud of us as a team for carrying on the legacy [that] the previous years had left.”

The process of winning gold required not only dedication but also perseverance. For one, the team had to consistently attend

their practices to work on improving their skills. Additionally, the players had to stay mentally stable during multiple challenging bouts.

Emily Jing (I) specifically recalls their final competitor, Lexington High School, to be a tough opponent: “They are a very strong team, [and] we were nervous to go up against them.” A strong opponent can be intimidating, but the BLS girls’ fencing team was able to persevere and amass many contributing wins.

With previous championship wins came additional challenges like the amount of pressure the team felt, since after winning last year they felt more pressure to defend the title.

Besides staying confident, maintain-

ing physical strength is also important. Staying energized, however, can be difficult during such a rigorous, lengthy and hectic tournament. Nguyen explains, “A big challenge was just staying energized throughout the day. The venue was packed with over 20 different teams, and it got pretty overwhelming with all the noise and fencing going on around you.”

During these challenging moments, a supportive team proved to be crucial. A major aspect to the team’s ability to excel was the team effort — a strong team and supportive teammates can either make or break their success.

Fei Li (II) highlights the power they have when together and shares how her team is her motivation: “We cheered each other on through every single bout and coached each other when one of us was down a touch or two.” The championship is due to a collective of 14 wins. Without the contribution of all the players, it would not have been possible.

In addition to an upholding team, the players stay motivated by remembering their love for the sport. When asked how they stay calm before a bout, Nguyen responds, “Before competitions, I usually just remind myself that I fence because I love it.” While fencers face challenges at times, the players’ genuine interest in fencing keeps them eager to work harder and improve.

Many of the girls’ fencing team members have future plans for fencing, whether it be continuing in college or keeping it as a hobby. Jing will be continuing to represent the United States at the national and international levels in fencing, and she will compete in the National Collegiate Athletic Association over the next four years for Harvard University.

Wherever the members of the team end up, they can remember that they have had another great season to be proud of.

Sports Analytics Conference Hits Boston

By **Trevor Gracombe (II)**
& **Joseph Day (II)**
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

On March 8, the National High School Sports Analytics Summit took place at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center.

High school students Jayan Gandhi and Jai Malhotra, from Buckingham Browne and Nichols School and Milton Academy respectively, founded the National High School Sports Analytics Association (NHSSAA) in 2024.

Guests at this year’s summit included former National Basketball Association (NBA) player Shane Battier, author Michael Lewis, New England Revolution data analysts Simon Fisher and Will Johnson, Football Outsiders creator Aaron Schatz and Philadelphia 76ers President of Basketball Operations Daryl Morey.

The event opened with National Collegiate Athletic Association champion and two-time NBA champion Shane Battier, who shared a shocking statistic: he only touched the ball two percent of the time he was on the court. His coach, nonetheless, still trusted him to play in the fourth quarter of tight games alongside the legendary LeBron James and Dwyane Wade. To stand out, Battier tirelessly studied his opponents, memorizing their poor plays and weakest areas of the court. He also valued every microplay, such as getting back on defense, setting a pick or boxing out. Despite only averaging eight points per game, he was in the 97th percentile of the all-time plus-minus statistic, which measures points gained for team minus points lost for team in the NBA.

The idea of modern sports analytics, however, was pioneered in baseball —

not basketball — by the Oakland Athletics during their 2002 season. Under general manager Billy Beane, the Athletics were able to use data science and analytics to field a highly competitive team with a low budget, posting an impressive 103 wins. Michael Lewis, a speaker at the NHSSAA conference, documented the season in a book, which was later made into the 2011 blockbuster film *Moneyball*.

When asked about the importance of *Moneyball*, Lewis states, “The heart of the book was that [The A’s] were picking up players who the market didn’t value. These players were being misvalued and overlooked, but then they were able to show their true talent. This applies for every person, in sports and out of sports.” Analytics allows for value to be found in what is normally overlooked, a concept Lewis believes isn’t just true for sports, but nearly anything in life.

In the world of sports today, there is a growing divide between traditional thinkers and pioneers. Fans and analysts alike have pointed out the lack of competition “small market teams” have against much larger and wealthier teams, with many believing the most affluent team will always win. Big market teams such as the New York Yankees have historically dominated much smaller teams, like the Oakland Athletics, forcing the underdog team to take risks and make cutting-edge decisions when recruiting. It has become vital for small teams to adapt advanced analytics, which have become a necessity in modern baseball.

Boston Latin School baseball player Lucas Evans (II) gives his insight on analytics in Major League Baseball: “I think these numbers should be looked at and taken into account but should not be the sole reason in starting or benching a player.”



High schoolers learn from sport and athlete specialists.

More matters about a player than their showiest plays; sometimes a solid player that doesn’t shine in the numbers should be placed over their flashy counterparts. Nevertheless, there are added benefits to using analytics to make important decisions, but they shouldn’t be the only factor.

Evans also shares that he himself uses analytics even at the high-school level to improve his game: “My strength coach uses analytics from the use of force plates, along with rotational movements [...] He builds my program based on what the numbers say, and knows what is needed separate me from other players.”

Analytics play a role in other sports as well. Another aspect that analytics provide is knowing when you are doing too much exercise. Information like this can be particularly valuable in a sport like track where you are putting a large amount of stress on your

body.

BLS track and field runner Bilal Elhaji (I) shares, “If you want to improve, you should be paying attention to your heart rate and cadence because the little things matter,” adding on that “you don’t want to overwork and end up doing work that isn’t benefiting you.”

Though many athletes have shared that using analytics improves their game, many high school students still find it difficult to implement analytics into their games due to a lack of access to high-level technology.

Battier, however, adds, “What works for the NBA will work for high school: avoid fouling and putting players at the line, no easy layups [or] dunks, no free throws etc. Even with limited data, the principles are the same.” The concept of analytics in sports is still relatively new, but it is constantly changing the playing field for athletes on all levels.

Pack the Den!

By Sameena Ballal (III)
& Mariam Abdulle (IV)
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Whipped cream splotches on the shiny gym floor from the teacher pie-ing, barely-hanging posters pasted on the wall, pieces of confetti crushed on the cheer mats, echoes of the stomps from the step squad, the running feet of the football players, the hoots and hollers of a rowdy crowd — these are the remnants of the annual pep rally.

An exciting spirit week leads up to this day, filled with enthusiasm and school pride. The all-inclusive pep rally boasts activities ranging from student-teacher dance combos, musical chairs and the best-dressed contest to the sea of purple beaded necklaces and cheers for upperclassmen; everyone contributes to creating this buzzing environment.

“Pack the Den!” If you have ever been to a Boston Latin School sports game, then you have heard this saying before. It is used to encourage students to support and watch their peers at games, and filling the stands shows support for the athletes. Encouraging cheers carry importance amongst players because it builds morale and excitement, which gives motivation for the players to do their very best. BLS oozes with school pride, and it is an honor to wear purple.

Assistant Head of School Danielle Murray notes, “First thing that comes to mind when thinking about school spirit is the amazing communities that we have here; students support each other across so many differ-

ent activities.”

The energy and atmosphere of the games are determined by how we show up for each other. If passionate students fill the section, the game experience becomes even more engaging. Unity is formed when unforgettable memories are made together.

This becomes even more relevant during Senior Nights. For the athletes, it is their last time on the home court. They have represented BLS for years, and this night is a celebration of their time donning the purple-and-white jersey. Abigail Rosenfield (I), a graduating member of the girls’ basketball team, discusses how her senior night made her feel, saying, “Walking onto my home court one last time, surrounded by those who have been part of my journey, made me realize how much this experience has shaped me. It wasn’t just a night of recognition; it was a reminder of the friendships and memories that will stay with me long after the final game.” Family and friends in the stands, posters strewn across the walls and a decorated home court mark an unforgettable night that student-athletes always feel proud to end with.

Our very own BLS step squad and cheerleading team are also key factors to building the atmosphere during home games. Even if they are not playing on the court, the members of these groups bring excitement to the players through their dedicated dancing, engaging moves and an enthusiastic presence.

Step squad member Ava Phan (III) talks about the hard work of the steppers: “We create our own new



Seventh and eighth graders cheer at the annual pep rally.

routines and steps every single year so it’s really exciting and fun for everyone to see what we have in store.” Not only do the step and cheerleading teams create unforgettable performances, they also never fail to ignite the crowd.

Spirit Week also increases student participation and brings them closer together. Whether it be Wacky Wednesday or Halloween, collectively dressing in a fashion with classmates encourages school pride.

As Assistant Head of School Murray claims, “The [Spirit Weeks] bring community, and people love to participate in them; it brings fun and comedy to school, and brings out creativity.”

These Spirit Days are times when students can feel a part of something that includes not just them, but the whole community. Spirit Weeks can also bring awareness to various clubs and cultures, including BLS Black Leaders Aspiring for Change and Knowledge and BLS Asian Students in Action. With fun themes, many are able to learn, experience and embrace the diverse cultures that make up BLS.

BLS school spirit is an essential part of creating a supportive and encouraging community, so it is important that we all join in, whether it be showing up at big games or even just wearing pajamas during Spirit Week. Everything we do builds a more welcoming community for everyone.

Ductus Exemplo: Teachers in the BLSA Hall of Fame



Ms. Foley shows off a trophy from her high school hockey career.

By Elizabeth Noronha (II)
& Ladan Mohamed (IV)
Contributing Writers

The Athletic Hall of Fame is a great honor awarded to graduated student-athletes and coaches by the Boston Latin School Association (BLSA). This year, the BLSA Athletic Hall of Fame ceremony will take place on March 15 at 6:00 P.M.

To be considered, recipients must be positive role models and have a good win-loss record, either as a coach or previous student-athlete. This year’s awardees are wrestling Head Coach Jeffrey Gibbons and former BLS girls’ hockey player Ms. Catherine Foley, for coach and student-athlete, respectively.

Ms. Foley started playing hockey at only four years old. Her mother, who grew up skating on frozen ponds and playing

field hockey, was on the inaugural team at Providence University. Ms. Foley says, “[My] home away from home was the Murphy Rink near Castle Island in Southie, where I grew up.” She mostly played with boys but skated with the South Boston Angel girls’ program, which her mother started.

Ms. Foley wasn’t a natural at first, but she learned a lot from Coach Mike Sullivan, who now coaches the Pittsburgh Penguins. Ms. Foley was partially inspired to play hockey by the 1998 U.S. Olympic women’s team, which won the Olympics in Nagano, Japan, the first time the sport was in the Olympics. She joined the BLS girls’ hockey team in her sixth year, which was the team’s first season as an official sports team instead of a competitive club.

The award came as a surprise to Ms. Foley, who opened a general BLSA email to find out. This honor was well-deserved; she

helped win the Division II states against Arlington, winning with a score of 5-4 when there were only seven minutes left. Ms. Foley netted two goals with five minutes remaining, giving the Wolfpack the edge. While on the team, she was honored every year at the sports banquet from 9th to 12th grade, receiving three MVP awards and being recognized as the team’s outstanding performer.

She went on to play collegiate hockey and played on the inaugural team for Boston University for two years. One of her personal achievements was scoring in her last game against Northeastern University, as her team was always considered the underdogs. Ms. Foley enjoyed having her own rink at Boston University and playing in the famous Beanpot tournament featuring games against Harvard University, Boston College and Northeastern.

Ms. Foley believes that her time playing sports was formative in her life. She adds, however, that “sports are temporary, classics are forever.” She wants all athletes to have balance and channel the same energy they put into their sports into their academics or other interests.

Head Coach Gibbons, nominated for the coach’s award, began his wrestling career in 1989 at Boston College High School.

After working at an office job in California, he had a change of heart and decided to move to Massachusetts to become an educator and coach. Gibbons credits both his teaching and coaching job to former BLS Athletic Director John McDonough, who asked him to meet the Head of School for Brockton High School before accepting a head coach position there.

After coaching at BLS for years,

Gibbons’s students have come to realize just how deserving his award is. Manager of the wrestling team Alexis Kiley (IV) says, “I’m proud to be able to say a coach of mine is being placed in the BLSA Athletic Hall of Fame.” For the last couple of months, she has seen Gibbons as a remarkable leader and mentor. Even though Kiley has only worked with the team for the latest season, she and other members believe it to be a well-deserved award for Gibbons.

Throughout his life, Gibbons has admired Ray Berry, his assistant head coach and former high school coach. His high school head coach, Ron Brown, is similarly in the Massachusetts chapter of the National Hall of Fame. Ed Smith, the first BLS wrestling coach and a Boston Police officer, was one of the first people he called after winning the Dual County League.

Gibbons himself was surprised and honored to hear about his award. It was so important for him that “one of [his] first thoughts was, ‘do I need to give a speech?’” His father was also extremely proud to hear the news, having played football when he was a student at BLS.

Appreciation for this Hall-of-Famer goes far beyond his family. Gibbons has been both a rock and role model for his team, supporting many athletes’ journeys to becoming great wrestlers.

Captain of the wrestling team Quinn Bowles (I) sees Gibbons as someone who is always dedicated to his work and makes sure that every athlete gives it their all. Bowles remarks, “[Coach Gibbons] has supported me and hundreds of other wrestlers from day one, and his dedication shaped us into the people we are today.” Both he and the team were incredibly appreciative that Gibbons received the award and recognition for his hard work.

Red Bull Gives You Spins



Spectators eagerly watch Zeb Powell at Red Bull Heavy Metal.

By Christina Luo (III)
& Isabelle O'Donnell (III)
Contributing Writer

On February 22, around 20,000 people gathered at the heart of downtown Boston on the steps of City Hall Plaza to witness the Red Bull Heavy Metal, a single-day snowboarding contest featuring 38 of the world’s most talented and renowned rail riders. It has been almost a decade since the competition was held in Boston and competitors were greeted with thousands of cheering fans in Bruins and Celtics jerseys who had come to watch. The Red Bull Heavy Metal competition began in 2002 in north of Buffalo, New York at Niagara Falls. Riders who were considered modern-day street riding talents battled it out on snowboarding rails and creepers. The

sophomore year of the Red Bull Heavy Metal took place in Portland, Oregon, and in the following year took place in Salt Lake City. At both, the rails had to be brought in and other obstacles such as downbars were only placed temporarily. In 2022, the legendary competition was held again in Minnesota for people to witness. To set up this event in downtown Boston, the event team brought in the terrain crew from Loon Mountain in New Hampshire to ensure that the competition went smoothly. They brought over three hundred tons of snow to cover the three zones surrounding City Hall Plaza. The team set up various obstacles such as lips, drops and caps on the handrails. The event began at 2:30 P.M. and each of the three zones featured two different heats, or rounds. The entirety of the competition consisted of a 40 foot

downbar and a stair set, a jump and wall ride, and the last and arguably the most challenging and historic zone, a 68 foot kink rail on top over 40-plus stairs. While each zone was equally intriguing, Bryce Johnson (II) found the second portion with the wall to be his favorite. Johnson admires the way they were able to “ride on the wall and get lots of air from the jumps,” remarking that their talent with performing tricks was “unreal.” The competition featured crowd favorites such as Zeb Powell, gold medal winner in the Knuckle Huck event at the 2020 Winter X Games. Powell was the first ever Black American gold medalist in the Winter X Games, and adding to his accomplishments, he won Zone 1, which focuses mainly on jumps. It also featured some new faces such as 15-year-old Jess Perlmutter from Vermont, who blew out her competitors and took home the overall top spot for women. When speaking with some of the spectators, John Harvey (II) described the environment as “extremely energetic and quite chaotic but in a good way,” emphasizing the enthusiasm of the crowd. He further explained that as a snowboarding enthusiast, opportunities to see such incredible skill are not extremely common and quite inspiring, particularly because living in a city can be limiting for snowboarding. This event was motivating to snowboarders looking to elevate their skills by showing them the immense talent of the most advanced level of snowboarding, and what they could perhaps one day become. Max Williams (II), who also spectated this event, shares, “The event

was amazing to go to; the crowd energy combined with the talented snowboarders made it a great time.” Snowboarding has a flourishing social media presence, with accounts like *Snowboarder Magazine* having 1.6 million followers. It’s no wonder how students have been hearing of these snowboarding events. Interested students, additionally, who were unable to attend this competition are easily able to find highlights online, allowing them to pursue this interest while simultaneously enabling the world of snowboarding to expand. With such incredible access, it’s remarkably easy and convenient to watch any of the upcoming events in snowboarding. One such event could include the last stop of the United States Revolution Tour at Mammoth Mountain in California. This tour includes freeski and snowboarding events that take place from March 16 to March 26. For some more patient snowboarding fans, Milan, Italy will host the Winter Olympics in February of 2026. Snowboarding wasn’t added to the Olympics until 1998, but since then, it has grown exponentially. While Olympic snowboarding originally only consisted of the giant slalom, a downhill event later modified and renamed the parallel giant slalom, and the half pipe, an event focused on tricks, by 2006, a third event was added: the snowboard cross, a snowboarding race through obstacles. It wasn’t until 2018, however, that the big air event was added. The Red Bull Heavy Metal Snowboarding event thus was not only an opportunity to showcase snowboarding skills that would otherwise be near impossible to see in the city, but also a landmark for how far

Spring Sports Preview

By Maya Lanfer (III)
& Chelsea Bateman (III)
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

Baseball

The boys’ baseball team has already started heavily-attended captains’ practices in preparation for the spring season, and tryouts are scheduled for the upcoming weeks. Last season, the team had a strong work ethic, making it to the playoffs but unfortunately getting knocked out in the first round. Already reflected in their pre-season practices, the team’s hard work is likely to continue this spring. This year, many players look forward to games and ending the season on a more successful note than the last.

Crew

After a rigorous indoor winter season, the Boston Latin School crew teams is ready to hit the water this spring. The team has been hard at work inside, lifting, erging and getting in shape for races this spring while the Charles River was frozen over. Boys’ varsity captain Khaya Dryden-Peterson (I) says, “[The team has] been working hard indoors this winter and [is] beyond excited to be back on the Charles River.” Now that the warmer temperatures have thawed the river’s ice, the teams will put boats in the water mid-March. After a few weeks of practice, they will begin racing on April 6. Among many team goals, they hope to return to the U.S. Rowing Youth Nationals this year, where the girls’ team placed 30th last season.

Lacrosse

The BLS lacrosse program, founded in 2014, experienced a lot of success last year, and hopes to continue their hard work to make states this year. Although the boys’ varsity team did not achieve the state competition last year, they did the year before and look forward to an even more successful spring season. The BLS varsity girls’ lacrosse team won the vast majority of its games last season and reached the state tournament. Overall, the girls look forward to both the season and practicing after school as the weather gets warmer.

Powerlifting

BLS’s powerlifting team has been hard at work this past season as they gear up for big competitions ahead. This year, the powerlifting team is not stopping at the state level or even the national level. Previously, the team has sent competitors to the World Cup for powerlifting, coming back with personal bests and a world record. After preparing throughout the winter by lifting and competing, the BLS powerlifting team has prepared themselves for the spring season, and they can’t wait to see what they can do.

Track

The track and field team takes their talents outside this spring to start what many hope will be a successful outdoor season. Track and field offers many opportunities for BLS athletes of all ages to compete in a variety of events throughout much of the year. Since track and field’s seasons flow into

each other, the team sets consistent goals to strive for all year. The team has also added several new coaches this year, which will make it more accessible to a larger number of athletes this spring. They are looking to be competitive again at both the state and national level, while continuing to set new records and win more races.

Tennis

The BLS tennis teams return this year on the back of a successful 2024 season. After making it all the way to the state tournament finals last year, the teams are ready to hit the courts again. Boys’ varsity captain Ethan Tran (II) explains, “We had players out so we got out early.” While matches are fought either independently or in doubles, teams win from their combined score, making BLS tennis a team sport. The girls’ team came in second last year at states, after finishing the regular season with an impressive 13-2 team record. This year, they hope to reach the finals again and hopefully come back with some hardware after all the hard work put into the off-season.

Sailing

As spring approaches and the Charles River warms up, the BLS co-ed sailing team prepares for another successful season. Having experienced impressive outcomes last season after winning the Massachusetts Bay Sailing League, the team is looking forward to competing again this year with the same intensity. Elio Kohn (III), a member of the sailing team, says, “Last year

we won the league, and we definitely look forward to defending our title.” BLS is excited to hear about upcoming regattas, as well as how the team performs compared to its success last year.

Softball

The BLS softball team is also looking forward to the spring season and practicing with the warmer weather. Many athletes echoes the positive and friendly environment that everyone brings to practice. Although they did not have a strong record last year, they look forward to the spring season with a positive and determined attitude. They hope that softball will have success and continue to have the positive team environment that makes the sport so enjoyable for its current team members.

Boys’ Volleyball

The boys’ volleyball team is looking forward to a successful season this year, with many players being seniors who have many years of varsity volleyball under their belt. Many other team members have felt excitement because last season was so fun and the team consists of so many great players. The team has great chemistry and is looking forward to another year together, even if it is the last for many players. Sign-ups have indicated that many younger players will be trying out for the team, which creates excitement for the next generation of players. Looking forward, the team’s first game is at home on April 2 against John D. O’Bryant High School, and they will hopefully have a full student section for support.

A Slam Dunk NBA Trade Deadline

By Alice Fragasso (II)
& Benjamin Ahumada (V)
Contributing Writers

This past February, the National Basketball Association (NBA) faced exciting and shocking trades: Dallas Mavericks star Luka Doncic was traded to the Los Angeles Lakers, and Miami Heat frontman Jimmy Butler was traded to the Golden State Warriors.

Both players have had major successes in their NBA careers so far, boasting titles given to the league's best players, such as conference finals MVP or Rookie of the Year. In addition to these impressive titles, however, they have both made a huge impact on the sport, making their trades especially significant.

Doncic, for example, has played for the Dallas Mavericks since the start of his NBA career in 2018 and has also been a part of the Slovenian National Basketball team (ranked No. 11 in the International Basketball Federation) since the age of 18. Having made it to the NBA Finals last year, while averaging almost 30 points per game, Doncic's impact is undeniable as he has made himself one of the faces of the NBA. His success in the league has brought many new Slovenian fans, who were previously unfamiliar with the Mavericks.

Because of his role as such a key player for the Dallas Mavericks and his large contract that was signed just a couple years earlier, many were shocked and confused as to why the Mavericks gave up Doncic. Some pointed fingers at Mavericks General Manager Nico Harrison for the trade, with fans believing that his frustration towards the Mavericks' lackluster defense led to the trade. Fans, however, began to speculate that Doncic's unruly behavior off the court led to the two parting ways, with many believing that the team had become concerned about Doncic's poor habits.

When asked about what caused this trade to happen, boys' varsity



Jimmy Butler (left) and Luka Doncic (right) play with their new teams after the trades.

basketball coach Jerry Etienne shares his thoughts: "The Mavericks were betting that Luka's body would break down and his career would be less strong."

Luka Doncic, however, is only 26 years old, so they will undoubtedly miss out on some of his prime years. Plus, it is a huge bet considering that Anthony Davis, received by the Mavericks, might be on his way out, as he is past his prime and on the other side of 30.

After switching teams to the Lakers, it is apparent that they pulled off an all-time heist. Sina Siddiqi (V) shares, "Luka Doncic's future [on the Lakers] is incredibly bright, especially with LeBron James and other stars by his side."

Surrounded by some of the best players in the NBA, Doncic will undoubtedly rise to even more success than he's had in the past few years.

Coach Etienne predicts that because of this trade, "the Lakers will definitely win another championship before the Mavericks."

Jimmy Butler's trade, on the other hand, did not come as much of a surprise to most fans. It was known that he had wanted to leave Miami for a while, so when the news broke that he had been traded to the Golden State Warriors, it had already been anticipated for some time.

Regarding the Butler trade, boys' varsity basketball athlete Will White (III) remarks, "I expected Jimmy Butler to get traded, so I was not very surprised to hear about his trade. I had heard things about Butler wanting to be traded before the trade took place."

Although the effects of this trade will assuredly be less impactful than those of Doncic's trade, many believe that the Warriors "won" this trade.

Siddiqi comments that the War-

riors "have clearly benefited, securing a star that was bound to leave Miami after December. It was a smart move for both Butler and the Warriors."

This trade is sure to have an impact on future seasons, since the Warriors have benefitted more than the Miami Heat as they have needed another player to work with superstar Steph Curry.

As for the Miami Heat, who received Andrew Wiggins as a part of the trade for Butler, White speculates that Wiggins "will have a [more] positive impact on the team [than Jimmy Butler]," especially because Butler had expressed his desire to leave the Heat after a while.

With three more weeks until the NBA Playoffs, Doncic and Butler will be key assets to each of their respective teams, with millions of fans on the edge of their seats watching the effects of the recent trades play out.

A Rivalry Frozen in Time



Team Canada celebrates their historic win!

By Simon Hay-Sutton (II)
& Aurora McLaughlin (III)
Staff Writer and Contributing Writer

The 2025 4 Nations Face-Off took place from February 12 to February 20, showcasing displays of national pride featuring hockey's biggest international rivalries. With packed crowds at Boston's TD Garden and Montreal's Centre Bell, the best hockey players from the

U.S., Canada, Finland and Sweden faced off with high energy, creating one of the most unforgettable tournaments in hockey history.

The event kicked off with a group stage before the top two teams advanced to the championship match. Most anticipated was the match between the U.S. and Canada, a rivalry that has reigned supreme in international hockey for decades. As girls' varsity hockey goaltender Kelly McKenna (I) puts it, "I think

that the U.S. versus Canada rivalry is one of the greatest rivalries in sports. Both rosters are stacked with some of the best players in the world, making every game winnable for both teams. It's really just a battle of pride."

From the drop of the puck in the opening U.S. versus Canada match, fans from both nations were buzzing with excitement as three fights broke out within the first nine seconds, setting the tone for the rest of the tournament.

Boys' varsity hockey captain Billy Cunniffe (I) notes, "My most memorable moment was [the] three fights in the first ten seconds of the game. The fights in my opinion are the reason the games got so much attention and started to appeal to a new audience that did not know hockey before."

The player's physicality and passion not only captured the rivalry, but also helped draw in a wider audience to the sport.

The tournament saw standout performances from some of hockey's biggest stars. Boys' varsity hockey center James Heath (I) comments, "Some players that stood out were Sidney Crosby [from] Canada who cemented his impact and Hall of Fame ability, in addition to the Tkachuk brothers who weren't afraid to use their body and

score some goals."

Another notable player for Canada was Connor McDavid, who led Canada to a championship victory in overtime. On the opposing side, Connor Hellebuyck's outstanding goaltending gave the U.S. a chance in every game, while defenseman Zach Werenski led the tournament with six points.

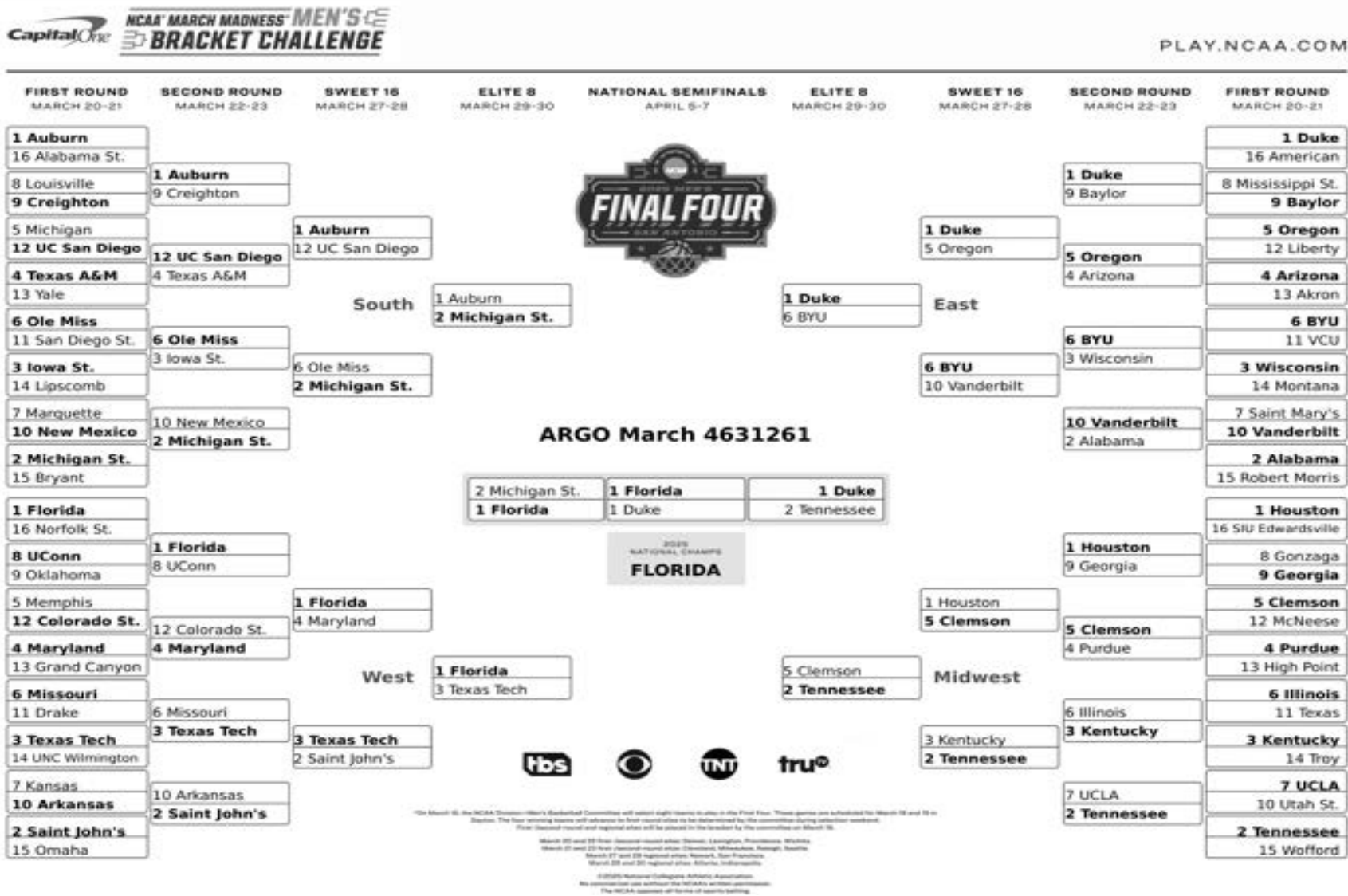
The 4 Nations Face-Off went beyond hockey, as it was the first time that National Hockey League players were allowed to compete internationally since the World Cup of Hockey competition in 2016. Coaches and hockey stars were ecstatic to represent their nation on an international stage, and the matchups brought up discussions about the importance of international hockey. It was an emotional rollercoaster for the fans, starting with U.S. victory and ultimately ending in Canadian glory. For the players, it was a chance to prove themselves and to become legends of the game.

When McDavid's overtime goal secured Canada's victory, it went far beyond a win or a trophy — it created a moment that captured hockey's power to unite and inspire passion across borders. By the end of the tournament, one thing remained clear: the U.S.-Canada rivalry remains one of the fiercest in sports.

Sullivan's NCAA Women's Basketball Bracket



Sullivan's NCAA Men's Basketball Bracket



**Join Men's Bracket at
bit.ly/___?**