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Hello, my Name is: New Teacher (at BLA)

By Biruk Meyer, '26

In years past I've often found it difficult to include seventh and eighth graders in BLA. Especially as I got older I felt that the difference between my peers and sixies and 8th graders couldn't be more evident. As I've looked to the future and leaving the BLA community I've found that the diversity of age, people, and opinion is one of BLA's biggest strengths. Having such a hard working and committed group of students that also happen to be very different from one another in other ways creates a unique community of different people with shared goals. I had a sense of superiority purely because of my age and I felt that my classmates worked

harder than those in lower grades. While this might be true to an extent, I've never heard anyone compare the workload of eighth grade to that of a junior in high school. The stress of preparing for the SATs, managing more complex core classes, and taking on AP courses is simply incomparable. However, the desire to learn and succeed in their endeavors is equally strong at both stages. Judging and making an assessment of someone else purely based on a factor they can't control such as their age, showed my immaturity and inexperience in the real world.

While it unfortunately took me years to acknowledge the hard work of younger

students, the new faculty that I interviewed all cited the intelligence and hard work of students as one of their favorite things about Latin Academy. Mr. Santee entered the school at the end of last year as a Physics teacher and Mr. Callum is a new chemistry teacher this year. Ms. Jones is a new social worker that joined the BLA community as well. Mr. Callum specifically stated "...the desire to generally perform at one's best, the academic rigor and expectation that students have for themselves and the community. It's fun to teach when you have a student body that wants to learn." Similarly, Ms. Jones said that seeing the talent and hardwork that students

displayed were her favorite parts of the school. The strengths of BLA are clearly evident to the new faculty and the community that BLA fosters. These same qualities of diversity and hardwork and their willingness to praise students where they excelled differs strongly from where I struggle to see them when younger classmates were working hard.

The action of simply taking notice of when someone

is working hard and performing at their best and acknowledging that a healthier environment is fostered from mutual respect and a shared goal. I can now recognize and respect the achievements and work of students younger than myself because I also was once in their position. The new faculty members show an important lesson about both community and the relationship between teachers and students. Giving credit to the hard work and

intelligence of students fosters a better environment for learning because the students both feel validated in their hard work and effort and they appreciate their teachers for the support given to them by their teachers. This is a goal that I would like to work towards in my own interaction with lower classmen; I'd like to feel respectful enough to recognize their perseverance.

Newly Elected Trump on Whirlwind for the First 100 Days of his Second Term

By Genevieve Ndwiga, '28

The second inauguration of Donald J. Trump took place on January 20th 2025. Trump is only the second President so far to have two non-consecutive terms as the President of the United States, and the most important thing after winning the election is being sworn in in front of thousands of people. Every President goes through the process of swearing by their oath, just as their vice president and cabinet did. But what every President does after their inauguration differs significantly. In former President Biden's case he spent the first 100 days of his presidency reversing many of Trump's executive decisions, such as signing the American

Rescue Plan to improve the economy after the effects of COVID-19. In the first 100 days of Biden's Presidency he signed a total of 42 executive orders, in the 37 days Trump has been in office he has signed 73.

In the months that Trump has taken office, he's made it his priority to exclude intersex and transgender people from simply existing in America and as of January 20th he signed an executive order that forces transgender individuals to state their sex from birth on their passports instead of their preferred gender identity. The White House website states that the executive order is "Defending Women From Gender Ideology

Extremism And Restoring Biological Truth To The Federal Government", and goes on to say that men are trying to self identify as women to get into women-exclusive spaces, such as domestic shelters, bathrooms, and single-sex activities. The explanation of this executive order also says that transgender people are putting the dignity and safety of women at risk as well as "a corrosive impact not just on women but on the validity of the entire American system." This executive order is extremely harmful to transgender people in America, and to say that they invalidate the federal system is absurd, considering that only 1% of the U.S population identifies as

transgender. Trump has openly bragged about "stopping all government censorship" and bringing back free speech, but trans people in America cannot even express themselves freely without being at risk.

On the topic of censorship under the Trump administration, the President requested that Associated Press (AP) reporters be removed from the Oval Office because they refused to recognize the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America. The vice president of the AP stated "As a global news agency that disseminates news around the world, the AP must ensure that place names and geography are easily recognizable to all audiences," as justification for reporters not using the Gulf of Mexico's new name, but Trump was offended by this and kicked the AP's reporters out of presidential briefings that took place in the Oval Office. As a result, the AP sued 3 White House officials for blocking their access to the Oval Office, stating that it was an infringement of their First Amendment right of freedom and speech and Fifth Amendment rights to due process. In addition to this the Trump administration is attempting to wipe images from military branches that are

deemed as supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Among the flagged photos is an image of the Enola Gay plane that dropped the first atomic bomb on Japan in World War II. It's very likely that this image was flagged as DEI because of the word "gay" that is printed on the front of the aircraft. Many of the flagged images also include Black and Hispanic men and women who were involved in the military. This just goes to show that Trump will continue to censor things that he disagrees with, including minority groups that he believes to be inferior.

Trump is also costing many Americans their jobs, and has issued executive orders that encourage mass firing of federal employees. His reasoning; he believes a smaller federal government will hold more accountability towards Americans, and that there are several thousand unnecessary jobs that must be eliminated. The White House website announced that the following government agencies will be eliminated: the Presidio Trust, the Inter-American Foundation, the United States African Development Foundation, and the United States Institute of Peace. All of these entities have important jobs but the most

notable one is the United States African Development Foundation, which donates to African countries and provides foreign aid. It has been active since 1980 and since then has invested 265 million dollars in grants to growing African enterprises, while also helping keep the peace between countries in Africa and the U.S. On March 6th the Department of Government Efficiency, better known as DOGE, which is run by Trump's new right hand man Elon Musk, attempted to break into the USADF building. They tried this on two separate days, on the first day they were escorted out by U.S marshals but on the second they entered the building and attempted to gain access to the foundation's computer systems and files. On top of Trump deciding that certain government entities aren't needed, he has also deemed it necessary to place extreme budget cuts on USAID. USAID's main focus is to eliminate global poverty and provide foreign aid. Forty percent of funding provided by USAID goes to family planning programs in over 30 countries. These funds supply contraceptives and medical services to over 47 million women, and have prevented

high-risk abortions and unplanned pregnancies. The withdrawal of these funds could result in increased maternal deaths as well as increased poverty due to the expenses of an unwanted child. All these budget cuts will ultimately have a negative impact on America's relationship with other countries, and also put people who rely on this funding at risk.

Yet another of Trump's beliefs is that placing reciprocal tariffs on imports from other countries will make Americans more wealthy, and increase productions in the U.S. This however, is not the case because tariffs on imports from places like China, Canada, and Mexico will make things more expensive for consumers in the country. Canada is responsible for a large amount of oil imports to the U.S, and with tariffs placed on Canada, gas prices will rise because it will cost more for Canada to export the oil. Many cheaper items that are imported to the U.S are from China, which Trump recently placed an additional 34% tariff on top of two 10% tariffs that were placed in February and March. This only means higher prices for the average American, which some might not be able to afford with their current salary. Trump has

placed tariffs on 90 countries so far. As well as the European Union, and a majority of countries in East Asia, which take up a significant percentage in U.S imports. The cost of automobiles will also go up, as cars from well known brands such as Hyundai and Toyota are exported from East Asia. Tariffs have also affected Global Stocks, which have dropped a considerable amount since Trump's inauguration.

Donald Trump's belief that the Department of Education isn't necessary for schools nationwide is damaging to the country. On March 20th Trump issued an executive order that is focused on "Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities" where he states that the funding given to schools from the Department of Education has "plainly failed our children, our teachers, and our families". He has since pulled around 42 million dollars in COVID relief funds from schools in Michigan that were being saved for pre-approved projects that intended to improve air quality and enforce safety protocols following the pandemic. As for the effects on schools in Massachusetts, Senator Elizabeth Warren is

starting a "Save Our Schools" campaign, working with parents, students, and teachers to spread awareness about the potential consequences that could come from the abolishment of the Department of Education. Warren has also stated that she will work with lawyers to file lawsuits against the Trump administration in order to defend public schools. Despite Elizabeth Warren's efforts, harm will still come to funding that is given to our school, as Trump declared that he is closing the Department of Education and returning authority to the states. The issue with Trump's executive decision to let the states take on more responsibility in their respective schools is that the majority of public schools nation-wide rely on government funding. For private schools the Department of Education does not provide any funding, but it's very costly to attend a private school every year. The average tuition per year for a private school in the United States is around \$12,000, which is unaffordable for many families. Public schools are significantly more accessible for all children, especially those who live in a below average salary household, but without the funds that the Department of

Education provides it will be a struggle to give students an adequate education.

The Trump administration's executive orders so far are extremely harmful to a large majority of Americans, from censorship and discrimination to mass budget cuts. It's clear that the country is on a downward spiral due to the extreme executive decisions that Trump has made. People all over the country are unhappy with Trump's actions, and many

protests have broken out in many different states. On April 5th there was a nationwide protest that pulled large crowds that disapproved of Trump, and the crowd of protesters at the Boston Common neared 100,000 people. Several Republicans are against the decisions Trump is making and the Senate passed a bill to revoke the tariffs on Canada. However, even if people are opposing Trump, there still needs to be a real change in

how conservative politics has gotten in recent years. Americans need progressive ideas in the government, which is the complete opposite of Trump's agenda. All of the executive actions he is trying to enforce are only taking our country back in time.

Josiah Quincy School Changes Impact BLA?

By Jacob Krass, '30

About a year ago, the Josiah Quincy upper school, (JQUS) revealed its plans to change the location of the school, moving a few blocks down the street into a different building in Chinatown, located at 885 Washington St. at first, there didn't really appear to be a purpose. The original JQUS building was still in good condition. The project had taken almost 10 years to actually put into effect, and required 193 million dollars of funding to execute. And this was all to move the school a few blocks away, where it would be right by the Massachusetts turnpike. This in turn would mean enhanced risk of air pollution via cars. But what a lot of people didn't realize was that

those two blocks made a huge difference for the school.

For one, this building was constructed for one purpose, and that purpose was to hold a school. Previous JQUS buildings were former office buildings or other facilities. This meant that they weren't built with the purpose of having a school in them, so they didn't contain a lot of features that a school benefited from. It limited the school from putting in things they needed, due to size restrictions. But since the construction of the new building was beginning completely from scratch, they could put in things they needed for the school like rooftop gardens. JQUS implemented rooftop gardens to maintain a connection with

nature. Such a feature probably was not possible to create in most of their other learning facilities. Instead of having to adapt to new constraints from a new building, and eventually knowing that the building is only temporary, this new project allowed them to make the school exactly as they wanted it.

Plus, it opened up a lot more opportunities for space. The previous building was relatively small and old. It was aging, and it was slowly starting to deteriorate. Even in prior buildings, the JQUS always faced this problem. For one, the heat. A former JQUS student stated, referring to the classrooms, "Some were cold, some were very hot". It was a complete imbalance, one that

the new building aims to fix. With the reveal of a new, modern facility with renewed and enhanced air filtration and heating technology, this is no longer an issue. Staff hope that the new space will only cause the school's popularity to grow, and that inference would be pretty accurate. Since the time of the renovation and switch, many people have noted that the JQUS is one of the schools that they would most want to go to.

Furthermore, the JQUS has begun to function very similarly to an exam school. While not one of the 3 exam schools of Boston, it has the unique characteristic of being one of under 20 pilot schools in Boston. It possesses characteristics that set it apart from other types of schools, including the Exam Schools. Pilot schools are a specific type of school which have flexibility around much of their curriculum and budget. This feature allows them to be able to adapt to changes by bending their spending and education plan, giving pilot schools the ability to deal with unexpected challenges by adjusting. Also, JQUS offers an International Baccalaureate program (IB) which students are automatically enrolled in. This is a rigorous program lasting 2

years, designed to prepare students for college by giving them more challenging work and curriculum. The IB program has a lot of similarities to the exam school policy. It intends to give students preparation for their college by challenging them, similar to BLA's plan of challenging students to give them college-readiness. JQUS has a flexible curriculum and a college preparation course similar to BLA. These features make it a competitor to BLA. Plus, the JQUS has one of the newest and most modern school buildings, with many other utilities that the exam schools lack. This factor shines light onto the features that might compete with BLA, such as the IB program. With the construction added to the IB program and status as a pilot school, this could definitely make it a contestant to the other exam schools, including BLA, as its unique structure and technology stand apart from the OB, BLA, and BLS. Certainly, the complete move and reconstruction project for the JQUS is not only going to affect the school itself, but rather will have a resonating impact on the surrounding schools, such as BLA in many ways.

Fewer Students in BPS Does Not Mean Less Care and Communication **By Biruk Meyer, '26**

The 2025-26 school year will see the planned shutdown of four BPS schools Excel High School (South Boston), Community Academy in JP, the Mary Lyon Pilot High School in Allston/Brighton, and the Dever Elementary School located in Dorchester. According to Boston Indicators: the number of enrolled students in BPS has decreased every decade for the last 80 years. While the enrollment numbers seems to have stabilized between 2000 to 2019 the pandemic seemed to send the trend continuing downward by several thousand enrolled students (Ciurczak 2024). The most logical decision seems to downsize the school system to be able to funnel time, money, and resources into few places at a time but that does not mean that the decision will be implemented smoothly.

Along with the shutdowns there are plans to merge schools together such as the plan to merge Winthrop and Clap elementary with the Frederick Middle School. NBC Boston writes that the decision to dissolve the Dever school and merge it with Frederick

Middle School has left many people who have connections to the school understandably upset as they feel that the community and neighborhood will not feel the same with the lack of school in the area (Palumbo 2025). Issues of getting kids to and from school are another major reason that many people feel that the school shutdowns and merging will negatively affect them. Parents and children will need to reevaluate how to get to and from school as well as bus pick up times changing the schedules that families already have in place when it comes to sports and other activities.

The school shutdowns could have longer term effects on the areas where they were originally located. Such as neighborhoods becoming less attractive to families with young children, this could lead to shifts in community characteristics, especially the overall age of neighborhoods and perceptions of areas as to whether they are considered intended for families are not. As schools close or move, social bonds can weaken due to increased travel distances and the loss of school-based events that once brought people together. Students might feel more disconnected from their community where they live as

they commute further to other neighborhoods to attend school.

NBC writes that these school shutdowns and mergers will affect about 1,300 students, disproportionately affecting multilingual students (Palumbo 2025). The plan must account for this and hopefully provide resources in order for these students to continue thriving in whatever environment they are in. While this plan was put in place in order to address the shrinking enrollment and the ineffective distribution of resources the school district still needs to be intentional about not focusing on funding and focusing on large wealthy schools over smaller schools in lower income neighborhoods otherwise the issue of inequality will not change at all. For this plan to have a positive impact on communities and the city as a whole the underlying issues of inequality need to be tackled while using this reshaping of the school system as a way to reset the current trend that the school system is following, and re-evaluate the plan for the future a future with fewer students in BPS.

Farewell to the Class of 2025!
By Erich Mueller, Faculty Advisor

It happens every year: you think somewhere in, say, November or March that the school year could never end. Then you look up, and it's almost June and you're writing another farewell message to your departing staff at *Dragon Tales*. The 2024-25 edition of *Dragon Tales* was led with care by senior Ella Verinder, who brought with her a passion for writing and considerable know-how from her copious experience at *Teens in Print*. Ella, thank you for your role-modeling and contributions over the past two years. I would be remiss to not also shout out fellow seniors Betty Nguyen,

Burdensky Precois, and Megan Tran for their energy and ideas. All of our departing seniors are bound to achieve magnificently in the future, and the entire *Dragon Tales* newsroom wishes you all the best!

While school year endings are indeed sad affairs, they are far from final. *Dragon Tales* is a BLA institution and it needs YOU to continue to report on all the important matters to our community. In that light, I would like to invite you to a meeting for all prospective writers, web developers, gossips, and rabble-rousers on **Wednesday, May 28th in room 321 from 1:50-2:30 PM** to learn more about this club and get a

jump-start on next year's newspaper.

To conclude, I would like to thank my colleagues, the school administration, families, and the student body for their continued support of the work we do at *Dragon Tales*. This paper is for you, so thank you!



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