

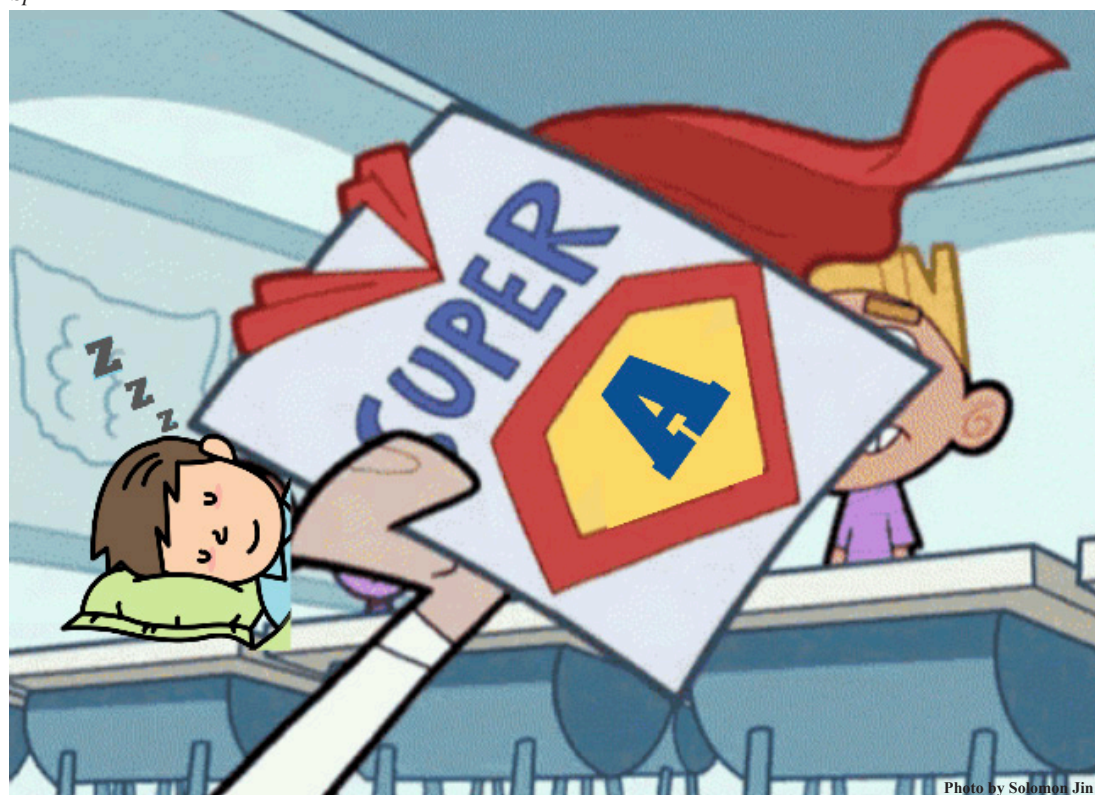
THE “BAD” FORD

WELLESLEY HIGH SCHOOL'S NEWS PUBLICATION SINCE 1944

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The academic arms race leaves sleep behind

By Solomon Jin '27
Sports Editor



Breadkey Alexlarper (left) catches up on sleep while Warrior proudly displays her “Super A” achievement.

After Apia Warrior '27 went five days without sleeping to study for her challenging classes, she was diagnosed with chronic insomnia.

Warrior is taking ten Advanced Placement (AP) courses this year, and she is aiming to hit all fives on these exams, including AP United States History, AP Chemistry, AP Physics, AP Physics C: Mechanics, and six other equally demanding subjects.

“I can sleep later,” Warrior

said. “I can not afford to get anything below a five on the AP exam, or anything below an A in each class.”

While self-studying five of those courses, Warrior has given up not only any appearance of downtime this year, but has also committed to not taking showers and other personal hygiene matters into consideration, all for the sake of her AP grades.

“Some people don't understand the magnitude of this situ-

ation,” Warrior said. “Students, locked in like me, will have a better chance of a future.”

However, the magnitude of this “studying” situation has been characterized as “less concerning” than the dark eye bags underneath her eyes, according to her peers.

George Patrick Anderson '28 has also faced a similar situation to Warrior. Planning to graduate in two years with a perfect grade point average, Anderson

has also sacrificed sleep for his academics.

“It would be disingenuous to suggest that my academic exertions and abilities exist within the same intellectual stratum as those of my peers,” Anderson said. “The scholastic expectations surrounding me rarely approximate the level of intellectual discipline I deem necessary.”

From the perspective of different students, both Anderson and Warrior needed to change – for the sake of themselves and their peers.

“During every seminar, Anderson and Warrior basically fight to the death to give a single discussion point,” said Mr. Kenzel Drocker, AP United States History teacher. “The other students don't even get a chance to participate in the debate.”

Anderson and Warrior both disagree with Drocker, though.

“I'm just trying to prove my point to the best of my academic capabilities,” Warrior said. “If they can't keep up, they should also just be on my level.”

Anderson's perspectives also aligned with Warrior's.

“It would be intellectually feckless of me to dilute the complexity and nuance of my arguments simply to accommodate those who reach conclusions with less preparation,” Anderson said. “Academic discourse should reward those willing to push

themselves further and penalize those who fail to meet simple requirements.”

With both students having “Super A's” in Drocker's class, Drocker balances out this curve by giving “Super F's” to the other students that didn't have a chance to participate in the discussion. This sudden decrease in GPA sparked an immediate outcry from the back of the classroom.

“This system isn't fair,” said Breadkey Alexlarper '26, a classmate of Warrior and Anderson. “Though I don't do my homework or study for any of the tests, I still think that this system is cruel towards other students, who want to learn, like me.”

Alexlarper and other classmates have gotten a sufficient amount of sleep each night, and the sacrifice of letting students like Warrior or Anderson beat them in the “academic race” seems worth it.

“Students like Warrior and Anderson seem to prioritize long term goals, such as grades and academics, over short term ones, like sleep,” Alexlarper said.

As this academic race ensues, both Warrior and Anderson believe sacrificing rest is a reasonable price for academic success. However, many other classmates on the sidelines seem less concerned with perfect AP scores – and far more convinced of getting full nights of sleep.

The greatest invention of the 21st century

By Jacey Weng '27
Opinions Editor

As the end of the quarter nears, teachers start finalizing term grades. Whether it's the last major test or a few more homework assignments, many factors can still swing students' quarter averages.

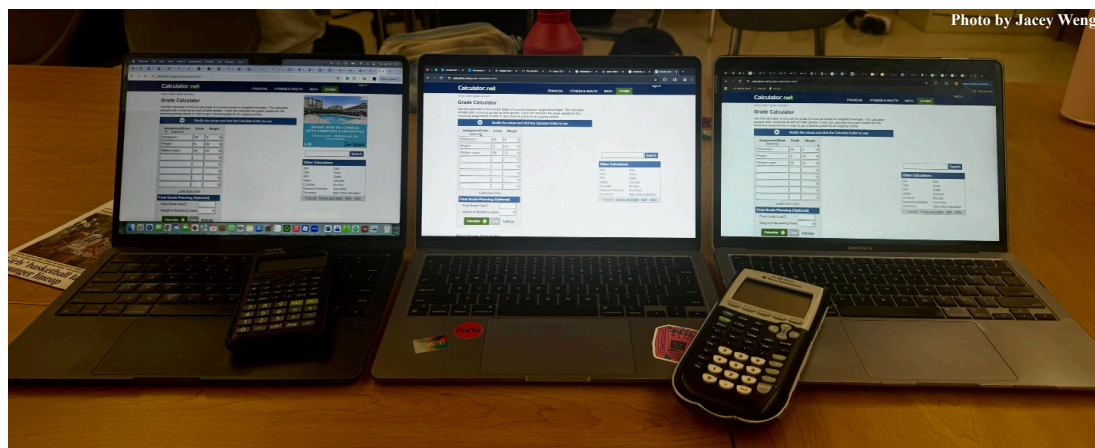
“I slept for three hours every night to maintain my A+ in Physics, but I forgot to speak on April 1 so I got a D for participation and a C- for the quarter,” said Avi D'lerner '28.

She raised the issue to her teacher, but since the syllabus

included the policy in one-point grey font, the grade was deemed fair.

“At least I know now that participation is worth ninety percent of my grade and will improve my public speaking skills,” D'lerner said. “And really, it was my fault for thinking that I was better than daily grade calculations. Now, I make sure to remind my friends every three hours to alleviate their worries.”

Many students rely on grade



Affirming grades: the first step in Cooper Stresout's morning routine.

DISCLAIMER:

All articles in this edition of *The Bradford* are satire pieces.

Satire articles are a type of parody writing that uses humor, irony, and exaggeration to criticize or bring attention to certain topics.

NEWS EDITOR | Kaya Charoensiddhi
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calculators to gauge how certain test, assignment, and engagement scores will impact their transcripts. These devices exist in many forms, from pocket-sized keypads to industrial machines that analyze individual stress levels, heart rates, mental clarity, hours of sleep, breath capacities, blood sugar levels, and family histories.

"My Stressreliever Pro Mini® told me that I only needed a negative 43 percent on my history midterm to keep my A-, so I just cut class for a week," said Lay Zeebum '26.

With the recent release of the Stressreliever Mega Max®, the counseling department observed a 36 percent decrease in student cortisol levels and a 75 percent increase in peer interactions. They didn't expect the improved relationships, but officially attributed the cause to a rising trend in group grade-calculating sessions.

"My friends and I always calculate our grades together at

lunch to mitigate each other's stress and celebrate earned target scores," said Cooper Stresout '27. "High school has been the happiest educational experience by far; everyone is just so supportive of my GPA dreams, made possible by my calculator."

However, some teachers have advocated for the ban of these devices, complaining that the clacking disrupts classes. Although Canvas has a built-in "What-If" score calculator, the tech department disabled the feature out of concern for student mental health.

In response, the high school administration implemented a school-wide competition for the development of Efficient Quiet Calculating Devices (EQCDs): whoever can create the most surreptitious and stress-free experience that looks identical to Canvas wins a year of daily affirmations.

"I love how the school always

Photo by Jacey Weng

Your current grade:

88

The grade you want:

85

Your final is worth:

40

%

Calculate



Clear

Avi D'Lerner's rudimentary grade calculating device.

keeps my daughter on her toes. Letting Avi calculate her grades in Canvas without needing her to figure out how to do it herself would be detrimental to her

education," said parent Oliver Baring D'lerner.

All in all, the high school administration hopes that all students will be self-motivated

to achieve educational goals, instead of feeling pressured by grades since in the real world, they don't exist.

New law for content regulation passed to protect students

Evie Simon '27 and Kaya Charoensiddhi '27

Arts Editor and News Editor



Parents and librarians have recently been targeting books such as Kurt Vonnegut's "Slaughterhouse Five" for causing students to protest the government.

Last month, the Massachusetts Department of Education (MDE) passed the Children's Content Security Act, allowing parents and librarians to regulate books available to students at school. As a result, libraries across the country have banned

books for "obscene content" and "gratuitous ideological references."

"Obscene content" has been reported in "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle for representations of puberty via metamorphosis. In another town,

"Goodnight Moon" by Margaret Wise Brown was banned for encouraging children to stay awake late at night.

Despite mounting criticism from students, elementary school librarians stand by these choices, claiming it is for the protection

of their 'kids.'

"I don't want my students to have to see what the caterpillar goes through, you know? They're too young to be exposed to that kind of content," said Paige Turner, elementary school librarian at the Learning School.

Other librarians echo this sentiment, claiming that the library is a space for learning about the world, without actually having to be exposed to the world.

Anna Story, librarian at Hamilton Preparatory, said, "You can learn about the world without having children be encouraged by asinine ideas like saying goodnight to different objects at the expense of their sleep like in 'Goodnight Moon'."

But it isn't just elementary schools that are banning books.

In high schools in Massachusetts, "The Kingdom Keepers" book series by Ridley Pearson has been banned for encouraging students to trespass and cause criminal damage.

"I was a little confused when they banned 'The Kingdom Keepers,'" said Aurora Caroll, a librarian at Spiel High School. "It's just about the magic of the Disney Parks and fighting evil."

A study mounted by the MDE found that more than seventy percent of students performed better in school when they weren't aware of social issues plaguing the country.

Similarly, parents are also advocating for a ban on the book "Pride and Prejudice" in schools due to its negative portrayal of

traditional British aristocratic society.

Penny Weiss, a member of Wolfhard High School's Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), said, "I'm the fourth cousin, twice removed of an English Earl and when I heard my daughter was reading that book in English class, I felt like it was insulting my entire lineage."

Similar sentiments about the value of banning books were shared by the local Orwellian Society, a group that recently formed to support George Orwell's beliefs against government censorship.

In an ironic turn of events, however, the Orwellians shifted their belief to claim that the government should censor books to foster a more respectful community.

Winston Jones, leader of the Orwellian society, said, "Big Brother is always watching and they should be. If we want to protect the children, we can't expose them to the content in some of these books, it's just not right."

While students across Massachusetts have staged various protests, these demonstrations have largely been ignored by parents, teachers, and administrators. Many parents believe that the new act will be beneficial to students and will help cultivate a healthier, more respectful society.

"Banning books helps the next generation stay a little more ignorant and a little more free," said Jones. "After all, isn't that what America is all about?"

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Different forms of love at the high school

By Josie Song '26 and Katherine Xu '27

Features Editor and Editor-in-Chief



"I've had twenty talking stages since freshman year," said Vivienne Nguyen '27.

For students at the high school, the world of love and relationships can be difficult to navigate. However, some students claim that they have struck gold and beaten the unfavorable odds.

Couple One

For Jenny McCallister '26 and Parley Lee '29, it was a case of love at first sight.

McCallister was an eleventh grade student ambassador for Lee's eighth grade class during their preliminary tour of the high school.

"I saw him in his highlighter-yellow Nike t-shirt and his matching dri-fit shorts, and I immediately knew he was the one," said McCallister. "We got together when he got to the high school in August."

Their relationship is defined by gaps, both in age and in height, but they don't let that deter them.

"When we met, she was over a foot taller than me," said Lee. "Now, she's only eight inches

taller, so I'm catching up. Just wait until I hit my growth spurt."

Although the two have only been together for little more than six months, they are already planning for the future.

"Since I'm graduating this year, we're savoring the time we have left together before we go long distance," said McCallister, who recently committed to the University of Washington, Seattle.

Even though they'll be over 3,000 miles apart starting in August, they are finding ways to make the relationship work.

"We're going to try to see each other every other weekend," said Lee. "And we'll take turns on who flies out to see who."

McCallister nodded enthusiastically in agreement.

"The distance won't affect us," she said. "If anything, it will bring us closer."

However, there is one issue that comes with the increased visits: the costs of flying across the country each month are high.

"My parents won't cover it, so I think I'm going to have to get a job," said Lee. "But my options are pretty limited since I'm fifteen and can't drive."

While the couple is aware that many long distance relationships don't last, especially for high schoolers, they are confident that they will be the exception.

"It's hard to think about not seeing Jen-baby every morning when she picks me up for school. But I know it will be okay because we have each other," said Lee.

Couple Two

Maren Tilmer '26 and Callie Kowalczyk '26 have reportedly been "talking" for over three years, starting in January 2023. However, they don't label themselves as "girlfriends" — rather, they refuse to label themselves at all.

"Labels make everything so official," said Tilmer. "We're exclusive for sure, but it just seems too soon to call it dating."

Instead, the couple has cho-

sen to define their relationship as long-term, low commitment, girl friends.

"Emphasis on the space," said Kowalczyk. "We're basically just very close friends who like to kiss sometimes."

The term "situationship" arose in the late 2010s and has continued to gain popularity among high school students across the country. A situationship is defined as something less than a committed relationship but more than a friendship. Often, it's two people who go on dates but don't have an official label — colloquially described as "talking".

"I guess you could say that we've been in a situationship for three years, but I think even that's a bit too label-y," said Kowalczyk.

As for the cause of their indecision, they blame societal pressures.

"It's just not cool right now to be in a committed relationship," said Tilmer. "I'm really worried that my friends will judge me if we start dating because everyone else is single."

When Tilmer said this, Kowalczyk looked down at their conjoined hands, which she was holding in her lap.

"I guess technically we're both single," Kowalczyk said.

Timer offered some clarification.

"We've said 'I love you'," she said. "But, again, we're definitely not dating. It's just complicated."

Couple Three

Wedding bells are ringing for Marco Perez '26 and Amina Davis '26, as the couple revealed their engagement through an Instagram story on March 5.

"We didn't want to wait," said Davis. "We've been together for five months and we knew it was

the right time."

They describe their relationship as a "whirlwind romance", having met the parents, said "I love you", and gotten engaged all before hitting the half year mark.

"We're soulmates," said Perez. "I just know we're going to be together forever."

For them, forever started on October 24, 2025, when Perez messaged Davis on Snapchat, asking her if she wanted to go to Dave and Buster's after school.

"Of course I said yes," said Davis. "How could I not?"

That very night, the pair confessed their love for each other as Perez won Davis a stuffed Pikachu.

"He somehow knew I was obsessed with Pokémon," said Davis. "Even though it wasn't love at first sight, it came pretty close."

Over the next four months, Perez and Davis checked off the typical yearslong relationship milestones in rapid succession and set a date to tie the knot: the day after graduation.

"We've committed to the same college so that we can stay close," said Perez.

Later, while Perez was in the bathroom, Davis confessed that she had been accepted to Stanford University, but instead chose to attend community college with Perez.

"That's how committed I am to us," she said. "Anyway, I'm not sure I could survive without Marco now, even though I did for seventeen years of my life. I just can't see myself without him anymore."

Note: Davis and Perez broke up two weeks after the writing of this article, citing their first fight as the reason.

The 2:30 PM bus dash: five minutes to outrun failure

By Stephanie Pan '28

Staff Writer

For some students at the high school, the 2:30 PM bell is a starting gun for the most crucial sprint of the day: the rush to the bus.

With only five minutes before their bus leaves to squeeze through hordes of students, gather textbooks and instruments from lockers, communicate with teachers, and maintain healthy friendships, these students are forced to hone their bodies into nimble machines.

Butch Chester, coach of the

high school track team, spends his free afternoons scouting for track stars in the courtyard.

"There's a lot of promise in these kids," Chester said. "No amount of training can measure up to their passion for getting to the bus."

Over the past two years, Chester has successfully convinced several of these talented bus riders to join the track team.

"I just tell them to use a little bit of imagination and envision

the finish line as a bright yellow school bus, and off they go," said Chester.

With the addition of five bus-riding athletes, the boys track team became the national champions last year and is expected to continue its streak of 258 wins.

However, for many, the tight schedule between the last class and the bus departure also means making sacrifices.

Polly Niña '28, a regular bus rider, has experienced tensions

in her friendships due to her dedication to making the bus on time. Aggressively shoving past longtime friends every day after the bell, she scurries away from their major life updates and concerns for her mental well-being.

"Because we don't share any classes and are always so busy, I haven't been able to speak to her this entire year," said her friend Marco Bonaparte '28, "We've been best friends since kindergarten, but now the only thing

she cares about is a vehicle."

Niña, on the other hand, sees her situation differently.

"When it's time to go, it's time to go," Niña said.

Not only has the bus rush fractured friendships, but also potential connections with teachers or learning during afterschool office hours.

"Many of my students who take the bus are always behind," said Lloyd Lewis, a history teacher, "I fear they may never

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catch up.”
“This spring, I plan to ask my bus driver for a letter of recommendation for college,” said Bertha Godfrey '27, “He’s seen me through thick and thin every

day, so it’s clear he’s my most trusted adult. He’s also my only friend in this school now.”
Despite the strain this system fosters, the school administration has stood firm behind the five-

minute window.
“It builds character in numerous ways,” said Jim Doyle, the principal of the high school, “Time management, cardiovascular endurance, and prioritizing

yourself are all necessary life skills for the future.”
“Mr. Doyle is absolutely correct,” said Godfrey, “If you’re not first, you’re last.”

Students’ caffeine addiction leads them to bounce off the walls

By Lillian Stephens '28 and Lila Thornton '28

Staff Writers

Photo by Lila Thornton



A student bounces off of the walls.

Due to an issue with over-energetic students, several walls in the high school’s building have been excessively damaged and are currently under construction. As of March 2026, 670 students have been reported doing parkour off walls, causing the weak structures to collapse.

98.3 percent of students at the high school consume caffeine daily, and 74.9 percent of them start acting like crazed animals after excessive caffeine consumption.

“It’s really just a way of life

at this point,” said Uhlan Eehe '26, an avid caffeine consumer. “Honestly, I think that people need to accept this reality, because people won’t change their ways anytime soon.”

Ms. Cathy Smith, school nurse, found Eehe foaming at the mouth due to caffeine withdrawal just minutes later.

“It was a pretty harrowing sight, but you really can’t do much to help,” she said.

Others have faced health complications due to their sizable caffeine consumption.

“We’ve had some pretty bad heartburn,” said Reid Bull '28 and Ellie Spresso '29, “We didn’t think to do anything about it because we were just so happy and joyful!”

The administration is seeking solutions to this issue, but cannot monitor students’ consumption, even after banning outside beverages.

“We told students that all drinks containing caffeine were prohibited, but they still managed to sneak it in,” said high school administrator Nomoor Cawfee.

“They discovered caffeine packets that you can dissolve in water, and we knew we had to admit defeat and take cover.”

In an interview with Joe Mawnstir, an esteemed doctor, he discussed the concerns he has about students’ energy drink addictions.

“I’ve seen more than 1,000 students in the past few months, all with the same heart issues and brain dysfunctions. I am concerned about the health and well-being associated with excessive energy drink use,” he said, while taking a sip of his morning latte.

Mawnstir also claims that he has had to put casts on more than 200 students’ feet because of the excessive bone breaking occurring from bouncing off walls. Sources say the steep increase in demand for crutches in Massachusetts has skyrocketed their price.

“We are doing everything in our power to stop this issue,” said Cawfee. “However, right now, the students are far too out of control.”

Many students report that they can’t go a day without drinking a couple of cups of coffee or bringing a few hundred energy drinks to reach their daily maintenance of 10,000 milligrams of caffeine.

New Wellesley cafe set to open in 2045

By Viola Fagenholz '28

Staff Writer

Since the announcement of its opening in October 1958, Rainbow Road Coffee has been highly anticipated among the Wellesley community. While generations of students have graduated within the building’s construction period, excitement is still high among current high schoolers who hope the new shop will be a new study and social spot.

The cafe is located on Central Street and is currently occupied by an extensive network of cobwebs, giving it a dark, gothic style. The menu will feature an array of designer lattes and coffees, such as an Aged Americano and Geriatric Green Tea.

“We aim to open in the next fifteen years,” said CEO Joe Olde, later adding that the delay helps build excitement and works as a marketing strategy. However, this method has received mixed reactions from the Wellesley community.

“I was seven when they said they were opening a new cafe, and now my grandchildren are in high school,” said resident Maisy Centurrae. Her frustration at the prolonged opening is ubiquitous,

and similar attitudes can be seen around town.

“Twelve restaurants have opened and gone out of business since Rainbow Road Coffee started their opening process,” said Mayor Andrew Decaide.

Still, town officials insist progress is being made in response to complaints from Wellesleyans.

“The cobweb density has decreased by nearly three percent,” Decaide said, pointing to a single cleared corner near (what will eventually be) the register. “At this rate, we’re looking at visible flooring by 2042.”

Despite these concerns, Olde remains optimistic. Construction crews have reportedly been “hard at work” — but only on every third Tuesday of the month between the times of 11:15 AM and 11:40 AM, weather permitting and morale allowing.

High school students are also choosing to remain hopeful. “I’ve already planned my entire aesthetic around it,” said Clara Tieme '27, who purchased three burgundy jackets and a poetry notebook in preparation to study



Photo by Viola Fagenholz

Rainbow Road Coffee’s recent building progress, after ten years of construction.

there. “By the time it opens, I’ll probably be retired, but I think it’ll be such a vibe.”

Olde has also recently announced a loyalty program for future customers. For every decade spent waiting, patrons will earn one free napkin. Those who have been anticipating the opening since the first announcement, are rumored to qualify for a complimentary whiff of espresso scented air.

In an effort to engage with

the community, Rainbow Road Coffee has begun hosting “Pre-Grand Opening Events,” during which residents are invited to stand outside the building and imagine beverages.

As anticipation continues to grow, the people of Wellesley hold onto their optimism, in hope that their new cafe will exist within their lifetime and provide a place for socialization and relaxation.

SPORTS EDITOR | Solomon Jin

For more SPORTS, visit www.whsbradford.org

Heavy weights and flow states found in high school's fitness classes

By Freddy Alexander '27 and Camden Chan '27

Staff writers



Photo by Freddy Alexander

An introductory barbell lift using two 45-pound plates per side. Students in Love's class begin with lighter lifts like the barbell; as they progress through the curriculum, weights get heavier, and exercises become more complex.

Each morning of every school day, high school students clamor to the dance studio, rushing to be the first to arrive for Mr. Calvin Sorojoy's award-winning hot yoga instruction. At the same time, a smaller group of students congregates in their own sacred space of helpful suffering: the fitness center.

While these classes attract all kinds of students at the high school, they do have some notable differences in student com-

mitment and intensity.

Bobby Cashman '28 expresses his complete and utter devotion to the weight room — the "house of iron", as the most committed students call it.

"Swole souls like me look forward to one thing during the school day, and one thing only: it's going to the gym and lifting that metal off the floor, bro. I've got a serious fitness persona, dude, and nobody can take it away from me," said Cashman.

A part of the "Intensive Lifting" program taught by gym teacher and wrestling coach Ms. Emma Love, Cashman and his classmates meet in the weight room every A-block, including those days when they have to skip their lab for a science class.

Love's curriculum teaches students lifts like landmine presses, high-weight deadlifts, barbell bench press, as well as hundreds of bodyweight exercises such as pull-ups and weighted planks.

Each day, students strive to break their previous personal record for exercises like the squat, even if the weight only increases by a few milligrams.

Love corroborated Cashman's commitment to "getting swole".

"We're in the business of growing our students here at the high school — mentally and, more importantly, physically," said Love.

Statistics from the athletic department show a sharp increase

in noise complaints from the first floor since Love introduced the Olympic Lift program at the high school.

"The Olympic Lift days are my favorite," said Cashman, "we get to literally throw weights around. Who cares if they slam onto the floor? We're getting big, that's all I care about."

Some students, though, prefer a slower, calmer approach to fitness. Sorojoy, who teaches self-care and hot yoga, advocates for this attitude towards high school fitness.

"I think we should, as a society, be moving towards a smoother style of training. It activates your soul and makes you more connected with the Earth and the world around you," said Sorojoy.

A certified instructor of Jivamukti yoga and a Shodan (advanced) black belt in Aikido, Sorojoy believes that the best way for students to grow is by looking inwards rather than lifting weights.

"I usually sit back and allow my students to explore the different poses themselves. As long as you're here, that's all that matters to me," said Sorojoy. "I don't teach to a schedule, that goes against my values."

Sorojoy backs up this sentiment with his grading: each student gets to decide what they get for the term based on their personal growth every quarter.

Joseph Smart, '26, is a sporadic attendee of the hot yoga class

"It's a big relief to catch a break from my study hall," said Smart. "I've already committed to a college, I only come to school now to check off my attendance — but Mr. Sorojoy's class still keeps me engaged."

So far, students have reported back to the athletic department with extreme satisfaction for these classes, and participation continues to grow under the existing instruction. Despite the differences between the two styles, it seems that students find joy in both classes, whether that is in repping a 200-pound bench press or perfecting the downward-facing child pose.

When 'athlete' comes before 'student'

By Katherine Xu '27 and Evie Simon '27

Editor-in-Chief and Arts Editor

On March 21, Dr. Melissa Stone, the principal of the high school, announced the dissolution of the school's athletic department.

"Due to the high volume of students who participate in club sports, the school committee has elected to cancel all athletic programs at the high school," wrote

Stone in her email announcement to the community.

Throughout the past few years, club sports' popularity has grown dramatically among

students at the high school. According to a survey conducted by The Bradford, 67 percent of those who played sports in the school's athletic programs also simultane-

ously participated in club sports. This is an uptick compared to 29 percent in 2021.

"My freshman year, there

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8.

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 were only three other people on the team who played club," said Zelda Ortiz '27, the girls lacrosse team's former star player.

One reason for this increase is the Student Income Act (SIA), passed by Congress in March 2025. The SIA authorizes Name, Image, Likeness (NIL) deals for high school students playing sports at the club level. First approved for NCAA athletes in 2021, NIL deals provide athletes the opportunity to make money from endorsements and merchandise based on their Name, Image, and Likeness.

Since the act's ratification, the toll of financial responsibility has been felt by young athletes.

"It's a lot of pressure. I wake up in the middle of the night with dreams of being chased by red Gatorade," said Jensen Dupree '29, a basketball player who already has sponsorships from Nike and Gatorade. "My parents got me a manager in sixth grade."

His manager, Morgan Ross, specializes in NIL deals for young athletes.

"It was an untapped market ripe for the taking," said Ross.

Ortiz has had a similar experience as Dupree.

"Since eighth grade, I've been the main breadwinner in my family. My parents both retired to help me manage lacrosse and merchandise and sponsorships," Ortiz said. "My mom calls herself 'The Momager' and trademarked it."

(The Ortiz legal team noted that any use of the term 'Mom' in a managerial context without payment of a licensing fee would result in a lawsuit for copyright infringement.)

However, a debilitating social stigma against NIL athletes — referred to as "NILLies" — has taken hold at the high school.

"Some people bought my merch and wore it to school to mock me," said Dupree.

Brand-based bullying has also risen to new heights at the school.

"People like to make 'The Momager' signs because that's my mom's verified Instagram handle," said Ortiz. "Thankfully she hasn't seen any of them. You know Sofia Ortiz would bring them to court for monetary compensation if she knew people were using her likeness without her consent."

Dupree and Ortiz have both found success and community in school athletics alongside their club teams.

"My mom always says that club sports are for sponsorships and school sports are for college. So, of course, school sports are always my priority," said Ortiz.

Because of the importance of school sports for recruitment, the administration's decision has faced backlash.

"My daughter committed to Yale for track her freshman year," said Ms. Marguerite Doisneau, parent of Françoise Beaufoy '27. "If we got rid of the athletic program any earlier, how would she have shown colleges her talent?"

On the other hand, the administration believes the decision will alleviate pressure on student athletes.

"We hope that taking school athletics off kids' plates will help lighten the load," Stone wrote.

But there are still 33 percent of athletes who do not play club sports — those who rely on

school athletics for their daily step count.

"[Cancelling all athletic programs] is so drastic," said Bobby Chu '27. "I do track because it's an easy way to get my exercise in, not because I want to do it competitively."

Citing a study conducted by Harvard University researchers in 2024, school counselor Mr. Robert Turner expressed concerns about the connection between low dopamine levels in students and higher rates of in-school outbursts.

"70 percent of students felt more connected to each other and learning when they exercised. It's shocking that with these numbers, we would get rid of our athletic program," said Turner.

Multiple administrators reported receiving messages from parents expressing dissatisfaction with the decision.

"Angry emails from parents were pouring in by the minute," said Stone. "I've been called countless names and accused of deliberately sabotaging my students."

Meanwhile, student complaints about the loss of locker room facilities and the expected overgrowth on the football field have given way to large scale protests.

"I think it's important to stand up for what you believe in," said Chu.

Regardless of the backlash, the administration has made it clear that all decisions are final. However, threats from parents persist.

"I'm going to bring issues like this to a national level. This is an absolute abuse of power and you will be hearing from The Momager," said Sofia Ortiz.



The exuberant day in the life of a high school athlete

By Jacey Weng '27
 Opinions Editor



ARTS

ARTS EDITOR | Evie Simon
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Taylor Swift threatens to release new album

By Daniel Luo '27 and Ella Asfaw '27
Staff writers



Photo courtesy of the New York Post

Swift recently threatened on the social media platform X that she would release a new album if "The Life of a Showgirl" did not reach first on the Billboard 200 by March 22.

It has been three months since Swift released her twelfth album, "The Life of a Showgirl" (TLOAS), which spent twelve non-consecutive weeks on the Billboard 200. Her two main singles Opalite and The Fate of Ophelia reached the peak position of the Billboard Hot 100.

However, on March 1, "The Life of a Showgirl" found itself plummeting to the 105th position on the Billboard 200. In response to no longer being first, Swift made several tweets on the social media platform X that blasted her fanbase (the "Swifties") for the commercial performance of the album.

"This is not acceptable," said Swift. "I worked like a dog, pour-

ing blood, sweat, and tears into the production of this album."

Swift criticized her fanbase for failing to give "The Life of a Showgirl" enough love and support — despite the album breaking multiple streaming records and making over three million album sales and digital downloads in its first week of release.

"I recorded this album on top of doing one of the biggest tours that the music industry has ever seen and on top of releasing seventy different versions of my other songs. I don't understand why people won't give it the flowers it deserves," Swift said.

Swift then continued her rant on a special episode of *New Heights*: the podcast belonging

to NFL players Jason and Travis Kelce — the latter of which she is engaged to. In the episode — released mere hours after her rant on X — Swift switched her frustration from her fans to other artists.

"I understand that other artists need to push out their album releases — I mean it's standard for the entertainment industry; however, I don't appreciate them overshadowing my releases," Swift said on the podcast.

Kelce came to her defense on X, slamming artists like Morgan Wallen, Megan Moroney, and the singers from *KPop Demon Hunters* for overshadowing his fiancé and affecting her commercial performance.

"She [Swift] worked so hard on this album, and it's a shame she didn't receive enough streams. It's all because of that movie, *K-Pop Demon Hunters* and all these irrelevant singers," said Kelce. "I mean who's even heard of Morgan Wallen before?"

Swift later wrote in an Instagram post that she would do anything in her power to ensure the top spot on the Billboard 200 and Billboard Hot 100.

"I will release an album if it ["The Life of a Showgirl"] is not number one. I will release it so that everyone has no choice but to listen to it. I will give everyone until March 22 to get to number one on the Billboard 200. Everyone will face the consequences when

I release it," said Swift.

The post quickly went viral across all social media platforms, with Swifties expressing horror and concern.

Maisy Parks '26, a member of the Swiftie fanbase, stressed over the news. "As a die-hard Swiftie, I'm praying to the heavens and falling on my knees hoping that she won't release the album," she said.

"If streaming it on repeat will stop another album from happening, I'll do it," said Jayla Schepers '27. "I love Taylor and it doesn't matter if I have homework or the SATs coming up."

Calvin Carter '26, a student who plans on majoring in economics at NYU Stern next fall shared his concern over the consequences of the new album release.

"My AP Economics teacher was talking about how this new album — if released — could drive us into a recession worse than the 2008 financial crisis and I agree," he said. "The scale of consumership that we'll see when she releases the album will be at a magnitude we have never seen and people might redirect huge portions of their spending towards new merchandise and the thirteen other versions of the new album. This could disrupt normal market patterns."

Other artists voiced their opinions regarding the post.

Benson Boone said, "I'm currently preparing if she does plan on releasing the album. I plan on dropping an album in two weeks to counter her on the charts, and I got a lot of backflips in my pocket whenever necessary."

Swift has stayed silent since the threat and fans or not alike continue to worry as the March 22 deadline for her fans draws closer by the second.

"Theater is my sport."

By Evie Simon '27 and Kaya Charoensiddhi '27

Arts Editor and News Editor

It's 3:00 AM, and the high school's production of "Nice Guys" has just turned off the lights in the auditorium following its final dress rehearsal.

As theater kids begin the process of shedding their costumes and makeup, they welcome the likely future of intense homework and little sleep.

"I had a few hours of homework when I was done, just three or four so it wasn't that bad," said Cosette Emerson '26, one

of the student leaders of the high school's drama department.

Emerson stays after each rehearsal to make sure everything is cleaned up and put away, adding to her workload. Other students are responsible for staying after in order to neaten up their wigs and remove any stray costumes from the ground.

Yet student leadership differs depending on their role in the show.

Roxie Alexander '28, stage

manager for "Nice Guys", had to make sure all 173 students were accounted for before rehearsal could start.

"I know everyone is dedicated," said Alexander. "But sometimes I look up and people who are supposed to be on stage are re-choreographing a dance in the audience seating area of the auditorium."

The dancing is, of course, an intensive part of the production with student choreographers

having recently acquired harnesses and mats for a two-minute airborne number called "Bottom of the Food Chain"

"It was really important to me to do something the audience could've never thought of," said Victoria Bowles '27, the choreographer of "Bottom of the Food Chain"

Student dedication is a pervasive theme throughout the department.

Emerson created the "The-

ater Pacer Test," a warm-up designed to prepare students for the physical and vocal demands of rehearsal.

"We do twenty push-ups, five laps around the auditorium to get the lungs in shape, and then vocal scales in every key. If you can't sustain a note after that, that's how we know people aren't in shape," said Emerson.

Student commitment to preparing for shows doesn't stop when rehearsal ends, either.

"I haven't gotten a haircut in a year and a half in preparation for the spring play, 'Rapunzel'" said Maria Shakespeare '29.

Meanwhile, for the infamous tractor accident scene at the end of "Nice Guys", Evan Todd '26 ("Reginald") paid fifty dollars to be hit by a tractor so his acting would be realistic.

Todd said, "It's important that the audience feels immersed in the whole experience, you know?"

The week leading up to a show, the honey-flavored cough drops begin to deplete at an alarming rate and the dulcet tones of the ensemble tracks echo throughout the department hallway.

"My diet mainly consists of different types of cough drops right now," said Annie Turnblad



A deserted theater at 6:00 AM, the only time students aren't there.

'27. "The red ones are like my protein and the yellow ones are for dessert. They help keep my voice smooth when I hit the high note during the "Everyone is OK" number towards the end

of the show."

But despite the commitment to the theater department, the fervor they all seem to share for their love of performing is most impressive. Perhaps mania has taken over and each person's actions are obsessive. Or perhaps their actions are no less crazy than a hockey player insisting on putting on his left skate first and then his right, or a football player wearing an unwashed jersey because it's lucky.

"Theater has given me a community," said Alexander. "I would stay up all night and all day to make sure everyone can have a good time and put on the best show possible. So I guess, in some ways, theater is like my sport. I would do anything for it."

Administration bans "Letterboxd" after countless violent altercations

By Ayesha Kapoor '26

Editor-in-Chief

The recent increase in popularity of the movie review app, "Letterboxd", has caused uproar in the high school community. First released in 2011, the application began as a website meant for tracking and reviewing films, as well as finding new ones to watch.

But Gen Z has recently found a new use for it: competition. Starting in 2024, many students joined "Letterboxd" after the app became popular through TikTok. And at first, the goals of the app were met.

"I found my new favorite movie, 'Interstellar', on there," said Ziggy Stardust '26. "That was until...well, you know..." [Stardust was unable to complete the interview due to the stress this topic brought upon him.]

Students at the high school brought attention to previously "niche" movies like "Dead Poets Society" and "Interstellar", with each film gaining millions of new streams within a one month period. But as these new films climbed to the top of nearly every user's Top Four movies on the app, it became less cool and more embarrassing to enjoy them. A stigma surrounded them, similar to the one around household films like "Fight Club" and "Taxi Driver".

Unsatisfied with the new-



The high school's yearbook has proposed a new logo for "Letterboxd" after a recent uptick in physical fights due to the application.

found popularity of films that were once considered "niche", Gen Z began finding more and more obscure movies to consider their favorites.

"I used to love 'Beautiful Boy'. My brother suffered from addiction, and I thought it portrayed the topic very well," said Limbus Heart '28. "But the movie became too popular, so now I need to find a new favorite."

This craving for unique films, each having to be more esoteric

than the last, has caused a frenzy. "When asked, I tell people my favorite movie is 'The Long War'," said Hydro Flash '29. "It's really just an hour long recording of the Anglo-Zulu War. They didn't have video back then, so the movie is technically just audio of the battle field overlaid with a black screen. But no one knows what I'm talking about when I mention the title, so that doesn't matter."

Indie film festivals have even

become flooded with the high school's students, as they desperately try to find a new, niche movie to claim as their favorite.

Move McDoodle, a film student at UC Berkeley, talks about how this had a reverse effect on her work.

"As soon as a single person rates one of my films or puts it in their top four on "Letterboxd", it's considered 'too popular' for anyone else to watch," she said. "Which means my film will be

blacklisted by practically every other Gen Z movie watcher."

This need for nicheness has even pushed students towards violence. When discovering that Katnip Everdark '29 had placed "Kung Fu Panda 4" in her Top Four, students petitioned to get her banned from the app. It was only following the incident that the student's family discovered it had been Everdark's five-year-old sister who had rated the film, not Everdark herself, and that the punishment had been ill-suited.

Some students have gone as far as boxing each other (as an ode to the app's name) over a movie if it happens to end up in two people's Top Four. By tradition, whoever wins the fight is allowed the right to enjoy said movie.

Due to this increase in violence, the high school's administration decided to ban "Letterboxd" in March 2026. Starting at the beginning of the month, no student is permitted to have the app downloaded on their phones and the website is blocked on school internet.

The administration hopes these decrees will allow students to focus more on their studies and lessen the aggression "Letterboxd" has created.

"We hope the ban works to lessen this newfound violence has spread throughout the high school, but it is yet to be seen how effective the policy will be," said principal Dr. Van Goodwin.

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