
SUMUS LEONES

February 2021

Veni Vidi Vaccine

By Oluwamayowa Akinsanya, seventh grade, Jack Pearson and Lydia Park, eighth grade

Over the past year since the COVID-19 pandemic first hit, people around the world have been searching for a vaccine. According to *the Washington Post*, the first Covid vaccine was given out to the public on December 14, 2020, and, as of January 24, 2021, the CDC website says that about 41 million doses have been distributed in the US. With the arrival of the vaccine there has been a mix of emotions ranging from relief and worry.

Ms. Dobler, the sixth grade science teacher shared, "I am a little nervous, but mostly excited. I would definitely take the vaccine over the risks of getting Covid. I think a lot of people are worried about the longer term unknowns with a new vaccine, and that has definitely crossed my mind, but there are also long-term known and unknown health complications from catching Covid."

Ms. Dobler is thrilled about the vaccine, but won't totally change her lifestyle after she gets it.

"The vaccine is certainly not going to change the current reality right away. It is important for people to still wear masks and keep physical distancing, both because not everyone will be vaccinated at the same time and because we are not yet sure how effective the vaccine is at preventing asymptomatic spreading. I see the vaccine as another layer in the multiple layers of protection."

Some upper school students might also be eligible for the vaccine if

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they work in places that expose them to the public like a grocery store, since the vaccine is available for people 16 and older.

“I'm not too nervous about it, since I'm young and healthy,” acknowledged senior Lydia Moore. “I think I have a responsibility to protect immuno-compromised and older people around me by doing my best to bring about herd immunity...There's always some risk to being involved with something where you can't know the long-term risks, but I think it's more dangerous to continue living in isolation. School is so important for kids to get an education, have some social time, and escape unhealthy home dynamics.”

For students who are under 16 and currently ineligible to receive the vaccine, due to the lack of testing on kids 15 and younger, many of them say they would be willing to take the risks once the vaccine is available to them if it means keeping others healthy.

Eighth grader Wesley Freed mentioned, “I would be a little worried but not too much...I haven't had many bad experiences with medicine.” He added, “They have tested it and I don't think that the FDA would lie about how [it] went.”

Anja Pratt, a ninth grader, shared that she is, “Not [worried about] the vaccine itself, just the needle. I'm fine as long as I'm helping people...and it would not be administered if it were dangerous.”

On the other hand, while the majority of people trust the vaccine, some are skeptical.

Eighth grade history teacher, Mr. Byrd, commented on how he feels about the government's role in the vaccinations, “I [had] a hard time trusting [the Trump] administration..It's safe to say I don't have the most trust in anything they do...I want to see what the effects are first before I take it.”

As the amount of people getting vaccinated is growing, many teachers have already received their first doses.

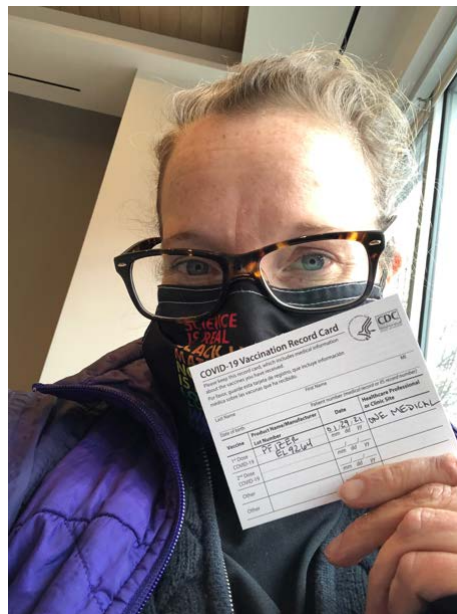
Mr. Stiff, an eleventh grade advisor and math and history teacher, commented, “I wasn't nervous..it felt quite normal. I felt a little bit gross on the second day after the vaccine, but nothing major..I thought that for us to get back to a post-COVID “normal,” we need people to be vaccinated; so when I was offered the chance for the vaccine, I felt I was doing my part to get it. Plus, I would love to be able to have more in-person classes again as soon as we can, and getting teachers vaccinated is one step toward that goal!” , after receiving his vaccination.

Some Latin students even have parents who work on the front lines and have received their vaccinations. Eighth grader Niamh O'Donovan's mom is a family physician who sees patients at a community health center and at a DC jail. When asked about the vaccine she stated, "I felt incredibly privileged, relieved and excited to get the vaccine. I've spent most of the pandemic worried about bringing COVID-19 home from work, even though I'm very careful.

Dr. O'Donovan then added how it felt after getting the vaccine, "I felt like I had the flu for a day after my second shot. Most of the people I know who got the vaccine had some symptoms such as a sore arm, chills and body aches for a day or so after their second immunization. But, it went away quickly and it felt great to be immunized...The vaccine is safe and highly effective. I really hope everyone who can get it chooses to do so!"

The first group of vaccines in Washington, D.C. were directed at medical professionals and then people over the age 65. Many older residents lined up for this chance, quickly depleting the number of available doses.

Mr. Davis, seventh grader Oluwamayowa Akinsanya's grandfather, had some thoughts after he had taken the vaccine. He had already researched and read about it from CDC and Dr. Fauci. When asked how he would know if the vaccine was working properly he responded, "We'll have to see after I get the booster, for two weeks to give my body time to develop antibodies. If I don't catch Covid, we will know if it's working."



Left: A picture from the school Legenda of head of school Mr. Anderson receiving his first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine

Right: Upper school math teacher Ms. Raskin after receiving her first vaccine dose

The Capitol Has Been Breached

By Niamh O'Donovan and Oscar Murray, eighth grade

On the day of January 6, 2021, rioters stormed the United States Capitol, breaching its halls for the first time since the War of 1812. Among the chaos were angry agitators with guns and bombs, smashing windows and looting the offices of government officials, such as Speaker Nancy Pelosi. As a majority of the US looked on in horror, many questions crossed their minds: Why are these people destroying their own Capitol building? Why aren't they being stopped? How will America recover from this?

Following the event, debates ensued on whether or not these riots should be considered domestic terrorist attacks. Even though the "Stop the Steal" organization received a permit to protest at the National Mall, the storming of the Capitol was obviously not a part of the permit.

"I believe deeply in protests. I think the airing of grievances is a cornerstone of our democracy," wrote head-of-school, Mr. Anderson, in the weekly *Legenda* letter, "However, as I listened to the sirens and heard the people in my Capitol Hill neighborhood express grave concerns and as I watched the events of Wednesday unfold on television, I became convinced that this was not a protest. It was an attack on democratic institutions."

Eighth-grade history teacher, Mr. Byrd, shares this view, explaining that this event was not a protest. It was an upheaval of the rule of law and the US democratic system.

"The rioters were seen beating up police officers, storming into the U.S. Capitol, vandalizing and breaking windows of the Capitol building," said Byrd. "I feel this protest was an act of treason and the most un-American thing I've seen in my life. It does not represent the democratic principles we hold dear."

Members of the Washington Latin community were further distressed at the seemingly ineffective response from the police force and National Guard on the 6th, especially compared to the Black Lives Matter protests scattered throughout the nation in 2020.

Seventh-grade history teacher, Mr. Wills, an advocate for social justice, reflects this distress - and disappointment. "When I first saw the MAGA protesters storming the U.S. Capitol, I was shocked because I knew that the U.S. Capitol police officers never let ordinary citizens stand on the front steps of the building. So, I knew that something was terribly wrong with this particular situation."

Senior Zoe Edelman, leader of the Black Lives Matter Club, expressed anger on the dramatically inconsistent police responses, “There were videos of officers literally opening barriers to allow protesters nearer to the Capitol, and even if that wasn’t the majority, generally law enforcement officers were much more lenient than I believe they would have been for people of color or Black Lives Matter protesters... BLM is an advocacy for basic human rights and equal treatment. January 6th was a tantrum because their candidate of choice lost.”

The riots still burn brightly in the minds of the public, especially with the Capitol building still surrounded by a gate and closed off from the rest of the world.

“I think it would be naive of me to say we won’t see riots like this in the future,” said Edelman. “Prior to January 6th, I didn’t believe something like that would happen. I figured Trump’s inflammatory rhetoric would come to a head, but I couldn’t have predicted what occurred. Yet since it did happen, how can I say it wouldn’t again?”

The long term effects of this incident are still not clear. Mr. Wills believes in America but is not very optimistic, “Sadly, I think that this event will divide our nation even further than it was prior to the event. I believe this will happen because many of the rioters have refused to show any remorse or to take any responsibility for their actions.”

When asked what the next step should be for the Latin community, Mr. Byrd felt that it would be best to educate students on the importance of democracy and continue to resist hateful opinions and beliefs, “We should continue to denounce these actions and provide a safe haven for students, faculty and parents. We should be mindful and intentional in our efforts to combat violence and white supremacy and reach out to any families that have been affected in any way by this tragic event.”

As the 2021 inaugural poet, Amanda Gorman recited on January 20th in front of the nation, “We’ve seen a force that would shatter our nation rather than share it. Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy. And this effort very nearly succeeded. But while democracy can be periodically delayed, it can never be permanently defeated.”

Does the Early Bird Get the Worm?

By Zoe Edelman, senior

The college application process is one filled with late nights and early mornings, nail biting and epic celebrations. For some seniors, this process may take place over the entire school year, culminating in May, with a final decision of which school to attend. For others, this process could be finished as early as December, when many schools release their early application decisions. For a handful of Latin students, the latter is the case, with their college admissions Odyssey already closed.

Celia Doherty ultimately decided to send in a binding early decision (ED) application to Cornell University in Ithaca. “I was lucky enough to visit campus this past summer... [and] I could see myself thriving there.” She explained that two of her big draws to the school were strong educational departments and the beautiful nature nearby campus. “I plan to continue studying Classics in college, and Cornell's Classics department and the community were a big draw for me... [plus] Ithaca is definitely a great place to spend time in nature.”

Her love for the school led her to put a lot of time into the application process, “I wrote a few different essays for Cornell before I was happy with my idea.” She also was not alone in her process, thanks to the “time and energy” Ms. Seid and Ms. Latham put into editing, and her parents’ support with “bounc[ing] ideas... and offer[ing] me encouragement when I was feeling discouraged about an essay or application.”

On the night of the early decision release, December 17, Celia noted, “I tried to go in with no expectations, but I was pretty nervous.” She ultimately went upstairs to open the decision by herself, and “once it was 7, I said a prayer and opened my portal and then I started laughing hysterically. I couldn't believe it and I was so excited to share it with my family.” The night was a happy one thanks to her acceptance. So, is Celia done with the college process? Not quite. “I still can't take my foot off the gas. My focus has shifted to scholarships, so I'll be working on those for the coming months.”

Ishmael Cabading also went through the early decision application process, but his looked a little different as a recipient of the POSSE scholarship. He decided to pursue the full tuition scholarship after receiving a nomination from Washington Latin. He went into the process without “a number one school I was desperate to get into,” but decided to rank Bucknell as his top choice among a choice of five POSSE schools because it was nearby in Pennsylvania.

So, what was Ishmael's process like? "There were 3 interviews total in the process, and each one got more and more difficult (and personal)." The POSSE process was taxing, and Ishmael says, "I think I spent as much time looking into POSSE as I was looking at other colleges outside of the scholarship program." In the end, the process was worth it, as Ishmael shared his unique story of finding out. "After the final interview, the staff said that they were going to reach out in a few days, but I got a call very late on the same night... I thought I was getting the "Sorry, you didn't make it" call," before he discovered it was a congratulations call!

Another Latin student, Helena Ikenberry, also received the POSSE scholarship. She was drawn to it because of "the idea of being a part of a group/program that would make that transition a little easier." In addition to a scholarship, POSSE builds cohorts of ten students per college from each area and provides support as they enter college. Helena was accepted to her top ranked school, University of Wisconsin at Madison, her favorite because "I found that it had the programs, location, size, social scene, and challenging academics that I was looking for."

Like Ishmael, Helena found out in a surprise way. "After the last interview, I got a text from one of the people at Posse DC saying that they had extra questions regarding my application and that I'd have to rejoin the Zoom." Initially confused about whether this was positive news or not, Helena was delighted when "they asked me if I like the cold weather and I was like yeah.... and then they were like well you better because you're going to UW next year!!!"

Not everyone chooses to send early applications, though. Liqian Shoag decided not to apply to any binding schools early, noting, "I am an indecisive person and didn't want to lock myself down to one school." For her, the advantages, like potentially "knowing earlier where I am going, tak[ing] away this long stressful waiting period of self-doubt," didn't outweigh the potential disadvantage of "clos[ing herself] off to many different schools." Although she admitted, "I absolutely hate this waiting period," and feels anxious about the spots filled at schools by early applicants, she says she doesn't regret her choice to not apply binding early decision. "I keep going back and forth between [schools in] two states so I am glad I have more flexibility."

College counselor Ms. Latham spelled out some of the advantages and disadvantages of sending in an early application. "You receive a decision earlier in senior year," this decision, if positive, "is a huge weight lifted off the shoulders of seniors." Additionally, this can allow students to "turn[] their attention toward scholarship applications... and also focus more attention on their academics if need be." At an institutional level, early applications can also sometimes "increase your chances for admission and scholarship consideration."

But Ms. Latham notes that there are drawbacks for the early application option. These applications “push[] up the timeline for students. Instead of applying to colleges in January, they are now working toward a deadline that is often two or three months earlier.” Further, the ability to apply early decision could be indicative of more financial resources to “do the exploration necessary to make those decisions through campus visits, for example, to know that that school is “the one” for an ED application.” Also, when it comes to a binding decision, families can be “reluctant to consider” a school for fear of “being locked into a decision that will ultimately be unaffordable.” Many families need to explore and compare multiple options and financial aid packages, and applying Early Decision does not allow for that.

Even if the benefits are in a student’s favor, one must have knowledge and research on the particular institution to which they are applying early. Ms. Latham explained, “Seniors at Latin have access to two college counselors for a senior class of 74 to provide them with information to help make decisions about where they may ultimately apply.” This is truly a unique position at a public school, many of which instead have a general school counselor who may potentially have hundreds of students in their caseload. “Right now, the national average student-to-school-counselor ratio is...311:1 for high schools.”

Ms. Latham did draw a distinction between sending in an ED application, which is binding, versus a non-binding Early Action application. For the latter, “there’s really no reason not to apply if you have a consistent and strong academic record leading up to senior year and have done the work necessary to present the best application you can to that institution.” This year, Latin’s seniors sent in 155 non-binding, non-restrictive early applications. Only 11 binding applications were sent in, however.

In the end, a decision to send in a binding application is up to the student and their families. Personally, Ms. Latham is “not opposed to early applications if it can be a somewhat equitable process.” This would, in her mind, include “doing away with factors like demonstrated interest,” an application facet which includes campus visits, utilized by some schools to highlight an applicant’s commitment to an institution. “I think that a student choosing to take the time to complete a college’s application should be demonstrated interest enough and that a student hasn’t flown halfway across the country to visit your campus should be a factor in determining their admissibility.”

Additionally, she stated that students should not receive “additional scholarships or priority housing or other enticements simply for submitting an application earlier than someone else when not everyone else may have had the resources -financial or otherwise- to do the same.” Overall, the process “isn’t an equitable one” at the moment, “so we do the best we can to help our students and families navigate it so they can have the best outcomes possible.

February 13, 2021



Celia Doherty celebrating her college acceptance with family

Helena Ikenberry virtually meeting with her Posse (other scholarship winners attending University of Wisconsin) for the first time.



All for One and One for All?

By Ella Hankins, freshman

One of the most important life skills a person can possess is the ability to work with others, after all, every job requires some level of collaboration. In order to better prepare youth for the “real world”, teachers create a variety of group projects in hopes that students will develop their teamwork skills; the teachers of Washington Latin are no exceptions. Group projects can be an exciting prospect for some, while for others they are not, begging the question are they actually effective and worth the effort?

Freshman Janiyah Basil is one of many critics of group work. Her main problem is the idea that “the group could fail because of someone not doing their part to help.”

However, teachers are aware of worries like Janiyah and try to address them during their grading process.

8th grade science teacher Ms. Barlev said, “I understand that collaboration and group work can be challenging, as any human interaction can bring up as much conflict as collaboration. Because of this, I make sure that all grades are reflective of an individual's efforts, not a group's. I give students opportunities to offer input on who they collaborate well with before making groups.”

Mr. Byrd, the 8th grade history teacher, also had a similar grading process stating, “I give an individual grade and a group grade with a rubric... The individual grade is so students are accountable for their part of the project. The group grade is for the actual end product and cohesiveness of the project, but participation, contribution, and presentation will ensure that each member is responsible for their role.”

Considering each member of a group individually when grading, at least to some extent, is appreciated and preferred by students.

“I think that there should be a group grade and an individual work grade. Students need to be graded on how well they worked together but also how they contributed to the group they were a part of,” said freshman Rougui Sturr.

Mr. Byrd also went on to explain the assistance he gives while the project is being created. “I try to ask students while working who is responsible for their portion of the project, or assign roles. If it is working on a slideshow presentation, I remind students to put their names on

their slides so I know who is responsible for a particular side. I believe giving the individual grade also gives students motivation to pull their own weight.”

Unlike Janiyah, fellow freshman Kai Mcfadgion was more positive about group work, saying “I like group projects because being able to split up the work instead of doing it all by yourself can be helpful.”

Though Kai’s reasoning does seem sensible, it brings up the question: if a group is dividing the project, is it still a group project or just a bunch of combined individual projects?

For Ms. Barlev, the answer is no, dividing and conquering does not count as a group project. She believes “science is best done in collaboration with others. The ability to bounce ideas around, split up different tasks, and compare arguments are all essential in the practice of doing science. [However,] when students don't consider every part of the assignment (especially analysis questions), they're missing important critical thinking and their own learning and development.”

In addition to the importance of individual grades, students also believe that being able to choose their groups heavily affects the outcome of their project’s success. With all the students interviewed, unsurprising, preferring to work with groups of their choosing.

Rougui explained her preference by saying “I know who I work well with, and if the teacher assigns groups the dynamic might not work.”

Janiyah added, “I normally try not to pick friends because they could make me lose focus, but when teachers pick our groups for us we're put with someone who most likely won't do their part.”

Nowadays, the members of a group project are especially important due to the added challenges distance learning brings to group assignments, after all how can a group work together if they are miles apart?

Kai said the work was “a bit harder because we aren't able to really talk and look at each other's work if we were in person.”

However, Rougui completely disagreed saying, “While group work over distance learning does come with its own separate challenges, I think that it is easier depending on the kind of project because everything is online and we can usually communicate easily.”

Students are not the only ones struggling with group projects over distance learning, teachers are too.

Mr. Byrd admitted that accommodating group projects for distance learning “has been a real challenge” and says, “it’s difficult sometimes using zoom to facilitate group projects because of the logistics with breakout rooms and not physically being in the same space with students.”

However, Mr. Byrd is working to overcome the obstacle by coming up with “engaging and enriching projects that make students want to really give their best effort...I try to simplify the projects and make them digital friendly.”

One of the groups projects Mr. Byrd has given this year was on the “Iroquois Confederacy (Haudenosaunee Nation). Each group member was responsible for one specific tribe. There are 5 tribes that make up the nation. So they researched each tribe of the nation and displayed their research through a slideshow presentation.”

Ms. Barlev is accommodating by allowing students more freedom, saying, “In distance learning, even more than in person, I let students choose their groups, since it can be much easier and more comfortable to collaborate with peers that you know well over Zoom.”



Dean Herst acting as the "modeler" for his group while the facilitators and explainers describe the model they collaboratively made in Ms. Barlev’s class

Community Service Requirements Relaxed

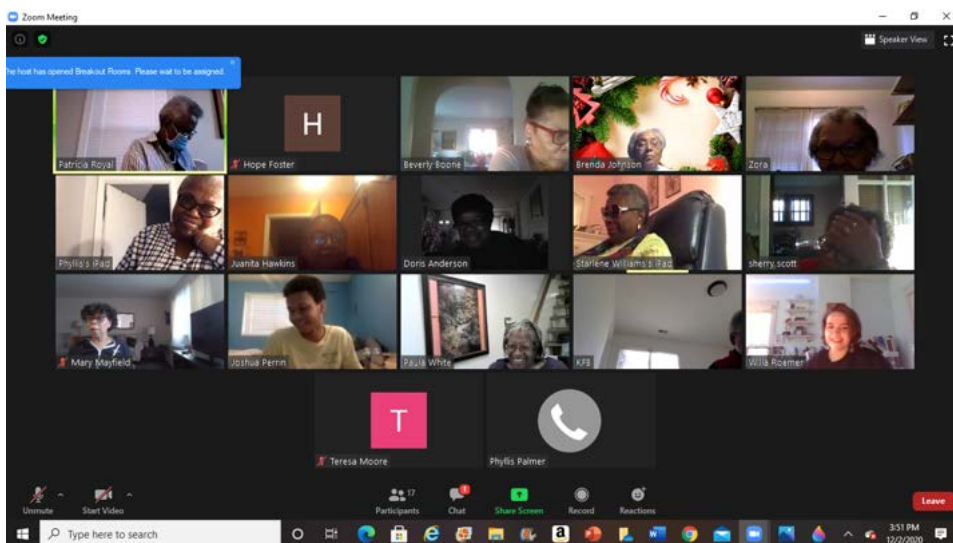
By Nile Thaxton, senior

This year of distance learning has been turbulent, particularly for Latin seniors. Seniors have dealt with their classes, internships, jobs, college applications, and more, but in the back of their heads stood the impending expectation of the community service hour requirement. In Washington D.C., it is required to complete at least 100 community service hours to graduate high school. However that requirement has recently been waived, and the reactions have been varied.

Ms. Brady, the upper school director, sent out the message on January 5th about the service requirement being waived. Brady noted, “The Council approved legislation providing flexibility from graduation requirements for the 2020-21 school year.” Brady noted that as a result of the city council’s legislation, this “waives the community service requirement for a senior who would otherwise be eligible to graduate from high school in the 2020-21 school year.”

Charles Brown, a senior at Latin, supported the requirement being waived, even though he had already surpassed the expectation of minimum community service through his work as a boy scout. “I just got over 100 hours this year, like recently I made a sign for my neighborhood. But I feel fine and I think it’s really good that the school did this, so we won’t put other people in danger.” Charles accumulated 30 hours to push him above the 100 hour mark, by making the sign, and putting it up near the community center.

Senior Ishmael Cabading felt relaxed by the news. “Reacting to it was a major sigh of relief. I had under 100 hours,” said Cabading. “Knowing it would’ve been tough to get more over the next few months, it was stressful thinking about getting it done.”



Latin students virtually speaking with seniors living at Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center

Georgia Welcomes New Senators

By Nadia Durham and Raigan Watson, eighth grade

On January 5, 2021, Georgia elected two new senators. The two winners were Democrats Jon Ossoff and Rev. Raphael Warnock. They are the first Jewish and Black senators from Georgia, replacing two incumbent senators, Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue. Latin teachers and students had a lot of thoughts on the Georgia election, which impacts the balance of the Senate.

Middle school civics teacher Mr. Staten said it was an important election, because it changed the balance of powers and showed more representation.

“The Georgia Senate elections in 2020 and 2021 were significant because it change[d] the balance of power in the United States,” voiced by Mr. Staten. This means that the Republican party controlled more votes on the floor, committee hearings, and nominations before the election.” He added that with a new vice president, the win is particularly important. “In the event of a 50-50 tie, then the Vice-President casts the tie breaking vote.”

Eighth grade history teacher, Mr. Byrd says that this is a very important election, and it is something different for the Senate. Mr. Byrd expressed how important it is to have a Black and Jewish senator elected in the senate in a notoriously conservative Southern state, “It is extremely important that we have this kind of diversity in the Senate. it gives the African-American and Jewish communities a voice to represent them on important issues. It also sets a precedent that minority communities can ascend and become leaders and voices in our nation's government.”

Eighth grade student Liam Saxon phonebanked Georgian voters, encouraging them to go to the polls.

Liam Saxon phonebanked registered voters in the recent election in Georgia. He was surprised about how long it took for the votes to be counted.

“I was surprised that it took so long to count the votes. I thought I would wake up and see the results but instead I had to wait five days. It was pretty surprising and stressful. “

Art and middle school math teacher, Ms. Coleman is a native of Georgia and felt that Georgia was united during the election. People of all races and classes came together. Her loved ones from Atlanta, who hadn't voted in previous elections, made it imperative to vote in this election. When asked if she felt surprised by the election she replied with, “Yes, we all were.”

“This election was very important for Black people and I think it united Black people as a whole,” stated by Ms. Coleman.

Middle school assistant director Ms. Bradley is Spelman College alumna, and spent four years living in Georgia. She was very content about the Georgia Election.

“Yes, Georgia is historically a red state; there were once practices in place to make it inconvenient to vote while Black,” noted Ms. Bradley. She was surprised to see the election results. Her friends in Georgia saw a lot of posts on social media and in the news about the election to encourage more Georgia residents to vote. Also during the time between the presidential and senate races, nearly 76,000 new voters were registered in Georgia, according to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. “There is power in reaching out to people and showing them that their voice matters, especially in Black communities and as new voters,” added Bradley. “Historically Black colleges in Atlanta like Spelman College and Morehouse College have students who are of age to vote and really want to see change in our country. Young people truly possess the power to create a better tomorrow.”



Reverend Raphael Warnock campaigning in Athens, screenshot by art teacher Ms. Coleman from a live stream by friend Vanessa Gary.

Pajamas All Day, But Less Sleep?

By Sophia Smith, eighth grade

Along with daily routine, many sleep schedules were upended by changes amidst virtual learning. The CDC recommends 8-10 hours of sleep per night for teenagers. That means, in order for students to fulfill those recommendations, they ought to go to bed before midnight. With school starting at 8:45 instead of the previous 8:10, students at Latin have the chance to get more sleep during distance learning, though not everyone says they have.

“We get to sleep in a little later, but I’m going to sleep later now. So I think less sleep altogether,” explained Maeve Marchand, an 8th grader, “We aren’t allowed to get out and do much, so at night is the only time we feel freedom to do what we want.”

For some students it is hard to go to bed earlier once they start a routine of late nights.

“At first the most I could stay up was 1am, but when Covid hit, I started staying up until 5 or 6 am,” said Zoey Derricott, an 8th grader. “When I do go to sleep early, I never have enough energy and I’m still sleepy.”

For others, their sleep schedule changes daily.

“It depends on the day and how tired I am. But it is less consistent than it used to be,” said Liam Saxon, an 8th grader. He also remarked “I have been staying up a lot later and sleeping in later.”

Teachers are also affected by school start times.

“I am going to have a HARD TIME waking up before 7 since I always sleep past 7 now,” noted 8th grade English teacher Ms. Breitman, who has been spoiled by the extra time in the morning. “Pre-Covid, I left the house at 7:15. I would be happy to go back, but I hope we keep a late start, because starting early was hard for me.”

There are many things people can do to get better quality sleep.

For example the CDC recommends, “Be consistent. Go to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning, including on the weekends.” They also say that people should “get some exercise. Being physically active will help you fall asleep more easily at night.”

Wintery Flicks

