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# SUMUS LEONES

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November 2021

## Teachers' and Students' Reactions to Climate Crisis

By Sadie Greenhalgh and Ry Shapiro, seventh grade  
With additional reporting by Zoe Wood, seventh grade.

Climate change is the shift of our atmosphere created by the increasing levels of carbon dioxide, from burning fossil fuels. According to carbonbrief.com, greenhouse gasses began warming the world's oceans in the early 1800s. And, the World Health Organization (WHO) states, climate change is not only expected to cause 250,000 deaths, but also make the Arctic Ocean essentially ice-free in summer, before the mid-century.

Just in the last 650,000 years there have been seven cycles of glacial advance and retreat, with the abrupt end of the last ice age about 11,700 years ago, at the beginning of the modern climate era and of human civilization. Most of these climate changes are attributed to very small variations in earth's orbit that change the amount of solar energy our planet receives.

Teachers and students here at Washington Latin have strong views on this issue.

“In order for climate change to be fully addressed, everyone - every single person - needs to change how [they] live,” eighth grade science teacher Ms. Barlev stated. “Individuals can cut our carbon emissions through personal changes like walking or biking instead of driving, using solar panels for electricity, or not

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eating foods that come from poor land management practices. Governments, companies, and society at large also need to change what we do on a large scale for transportation, electricity, and food.”

“I don’t think that Latin can even come close ‘stopping’ climate change, but there are definitely things our school can do to reduce our carbon footprints. For example, we can encourage teachers to teach in the classrooms without the lights on and instead open the blinds. The school parking lot is very small but that does have its advantages including encouraging teachers to use the metro rather than using a car which cuts down on our carbon footprint,” freshman Eleanor Ashdown expressed.

Climate Change is negatively affecting communities in so many ways. If the community doesn’t work to resolve it fast, the world could drastically change for the worse.

“Climate change impacts the community by causing heat waves and sea levels to rise,” fifth grade science teacher Ms. Dorsey explained. “It impacts agriculture so certain plants can’t thrive and grow like they used to. Wildfires become more and more common because of the bad air quality. It can also cause flooding, because of extreme storms and tornadoes. It’s also affecting cold places way more negatively.”

Fifth grader Liv Darling agreed with Ms. Dorsey, stating “I know it’s caused by greenhouse gases and it’s affecting cold places the most because it’s melting the polar ice caps.”

Climate change is also impacting individual lives.

“I believe it’s very important to lead with the science. There is data to prove that our globe is getting warmer each year and that natural disasters are occurring more frequently and more severely than ever. It’s important to focus on change instead of who to blame,” Ms. Goldstein, the seventh grade science teacher explained. “For example, I attended college in New Orleans, and in my junior year of college, our entire first week of classes was canceled due to a hurricane! I am increasingly concerned about the hurricanes and other natural disasters we’ve been facing, and it’s only going to get worse if we don’t take action.”

“I live as ‘green’ as is reasonably possible,” high school science teacher, and creator of the Green Club, Mr. Torrence expressed. “I drive a hybrid vehicle, recycle, and compost in my home, I rarely take plastic bags from stores, and also I have educated over 2,000 teenagers on climate change in my nineteen years of teaching.”

“What I am doing to help solve climate change is making paper out of reused paper. This is so I don’t have to buy paper from factories, so they don’t pollute our environment as much,” seventh grader Annie Alcorn explained. “Climate change is very important to try to stop because we could eventually be pushed off the earth. I want people to try their hardest to stop and manage climate change!”

Students want their peers to know that each and every person can do something to help, and make a difference.

“Climate change is definitely an important subject that needs to be treated,” seventh grader Madelyn Zeller expressed. “It’s happening here and now, and if we want to solve it we need good solutions fast! I want other kids to know more about what they can do to help, things like carpooling or using other methods of transportation that don’t hurt the environment.”

U.S. President Joe Biden now has a new climate change plan to try to make a 100% clean energy economy by 2050. President Biden’s plan states that he will make smart infrastructure investments to rebuild the nation and to ensure that our buildings, water, transportation, and energy infrastructure can withstand the impacts of climate change. Every single dollar spent toward rebuilding our roads, bridges, buildings, the electric grid, and our water infrastructure will be used to prevent, reduce, and withstand a changing climate.

“I think that the [previous] government has been trying to do a better job in slowing climate change down, but not the best job,” seventh grader Jocelyn Gill emphasized. “But now in 2021 the government has put it as more of a priority. But I do believe that is a good thing!”

“The climate crisis has already been solved. We already have the facts and solutions. All we have to do is wake up and change.” Greta Thunberg, 18 year old environmentalist and climate change activist stated during her TED talk.



Homemade recycled paper 7th grader Annie Alcorn made



Signs on the wall of a corner store, Kwik Stop, on Georgia Avenue, photo credit Sadie Greenhalgh



Litter in the courtyard on October 27, 2021, photo credit Ry Shapiro

# Does Classical Education Ever Get Old?

By: Lydia Park, freshman

“A classical education for the modern world,” is one of the many phrases used to describe Washington Latin. Recently, more political issues have been gaining traction following the events of the past year with a pandemic of more than just COVID but also of racism, economic inequality, etc. As these topics are becoming more acknowledged in our society, is the relationship between classical or traditional education and students changing?

Latin teacher Mr. Whitchurch explained some of the main foundations in the classical education system and why he thinks it is still relevant for today’s world, “An important feature that characterizes classical education is how it is centered in questions of timelessness...Even in a divided world, there are still some things that [people] can agree about. Namely, what is common to our human nature and what has transcended centuries and centuries of time.”

Sharing from the student perspective, Sophomore Caroline Ball, commented on the most impactful parts of classical education, “For me the biggest part of classical education are the discussions that we have. I’ve been [at] this school since 5th grade so I don’t know much about other schools, but I think that the discussion component separates Latin from other schools...it gives students a wider understanding of the world.”

Some feel that the pandemic has gone hand in hand with the principles of classical education, commenting on the fact that it allows people to have a greater understanding of the human condition that the classical education questions.

Eighth grade Latin teacher, Ms. Sisk mentioned, “What a lot of people don’t know about classical education is that it seeks to educate the whole person and focuses on humanity. What could be a more challenging, but eye-opening look at humanity than life during a pandemic?”

After the recent popularity of certain political issues, some have been led to think that now, more than ever, classical education is an essential tool for students preparing to form their own opinions and ideas.

Freshman English teacher Mr. Baum believes, “The pandemic has just magnified the importance of classical education. More than anything, classical education is about promoting a way of learning about the world, forming opinions that are well-informed and flexible. You could argue that there’s never been a more important time to build these skills. How do we know who to

listen to when it comes to things like masks and vaccines?...Can you develop an informed opinion based on things you hear on social media? From your friends? From politicians? The classical model helps us learn how to take in all of that information, think critically about it, and adopt an informed opinion that is also flexible.”

The pandemic has also caused people to question tradition and the relevance of classical education.

With the addition of online learning during the pandemic, Sophomore, Mark Jancachagua, commented on the effect that it's had on the traditional style of education, “Our world right now is going through an internet revolution and with that we can use the internet to improve learning for our young generation...other schools use modernized tools to educate their students.” He then added, “our way of learning is not as efficient as what modern learning teaches us.”

Freshman Philip Douglas agreed and has gone as far to say that with the modern times, traditional education is not suitable for students who find learning by reading and writing, commenting, “Sitting down and taking notes is not the best for people who struggle with learning because some people are more visual learners. It's been like this for years, just sitting down and writing notes.”

Freshman Sophia Smith is on the fence about whether or not classical education is outdated. She explains that, “I can see why the classics are important and I personally enjoy them, but I can definitely see why others find [them] irrelevant.” Then she went on to add, “Whether or not the ideals of ancient Rome and Greece are outdated, they still have lasting impacts on our world today.”

Whether the classical education is still relevant or not, many have agreed that there is much room for improvement. Mr. Whitchurch posed the questions that many educators have been struggling to answer. Some of them being, “What should tradition be?”, “What should be considered timeless and something that transcends generations?”, “How do we find that?”, “How do we teach classics in a way that is representative of the students who are learning it?”

# Editorial: Later Lunch Lamentations

By Aitana Camponovo, freshman

As of early October, it has come to the student body of Washington Latin's attention that lunch has been pushed back an extra hour for the high schoolers and eighth graders. The main motivator for this change was to separate the grades and to maintain harmony. With the difference in ages, language, and maturity between the high schoolers and middle schoolers, the faculty thought it was for the best to implement this new schedule. Previously, lunch was at 12:35 in the upper school, but due to the new time switch, it has changed to 1:20pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"I feel that it is an abomination. Every morning I have to eat so much to make sure I am full throughout the day to make sure I am not starving with a stomach ache by lunchtime... I am always very hungry throughout the day, and I eat my lunch late, and I then am not hungry for dinner," says Sam Wilkinson in the eighth grade.

In order for the new schedule to work, students are forced to sit through an extra class before they can satisfy their hunger. This means that after lunch, there is only one period left in the day, a concept students find confusing.

"Lunch is associated with the middle of the day, and it's the last stretch of classes before you go home. If it's later, it feels like you have more classes, because lunch is sort of the break of the day. I don't like it," says freshman Belen Gonzalez.

A lot of students dislike the extra class before eating because of how far away it makes break feel, a time which usually stands for the "midpoint" of the day.

"I was a little bit frustrated because now we have to wait another hour to eat," said freshman Ruby-Rae.

Ruby-Rae's anger towards a postponed lunch is not a new concept. Having a hungry stomach makes it harder to focus in class and do one's best work, which could later cause a negative effect in grades.

Furthermore, lunch was moved in order to separate the middle schoolers with the high schoolers (with the exception of the eighth graders, many of whom have high school classes).

According to Wilkinson, he says, "Now we have to eat with the high schoolers, are you kidding me?!"

When asked about the controversy, Ms. Barroso explained, "They changed it because they were trying to lessen the overlap of the middle school and high school lunch line from happening; the fifth graders kind of got lost in the shuffle."

So, what can be done to prevent any uncomfortable hunger or boredom?

Ruby-Rae comments that the break between the first two and last two classes can be utilized to eat any food brought from home and to recharge, "I guess we could bring a snack to eat."

Along with bringing extra food, the biggest thing students can do right now is change their mindsets. Could this extra class potentially be a good thing?

"Since the day is shorter, it makes me look forward to the last class, so it will go by quickly," says freshman Brooke Roberson.

Lunch that was once a "midpoint" can now be thought about in a new light as a reminder that the school day is almost finished. Later lunch will start to feel a lot more normal and soon students will become accustomed to it; it's just a matter of time. One more hour, and we're out!



# Fall Play Announced: Our Town

By Sadie Greenhalgh, seventh grade

Every fall and spring, Washington Latin puts on a school play. The fall play is only for high schoolers to perform in, but the spring play is open to everyone to try out for! This fall, the play will be *Our Town*, which was written by Thornton Wilder. *Our Town* is presented on a bare stage, with minimal props and sets. The main character of *Our Town* is a stage manager, but other leading characters include George Gibbs and Emily Webb. *Our Town* is presented in three acts, and “breaks the fourth wall,” meaning that the actors interact with the audience.

*Our Town* focuses on the relationship between two young neighbors, George Gibbs and Emily Webb, whose childhood friendship blossoms into romance, and then culminates into marriage. But when Emily loses her life to childbirth, the circle of life portrayed in each of the three acts - growing up, adulthood, and death - is fully realized.

Students and teachers here at Washington Latin agree that this play is very relevant, in terms of both our school, and life.

“I chose *Our Town* because it’s a very timely exploration of the ties that bind us together, and a reminder of the importance of community,” Mr. Birkenhead, seventh and eighth grade theater teacher, and head of the fall play explained. “It’s about all the values that are important to us here at Latin, an affirmation that words, ideas, and people matter more than money, fame, or material possessions.”

“I didn’t really know much about *Our Town* at first,” ninth grader August Hiem, who is acting as George Gibbs, recalled. “But after reading through [the script] I am very glad they chose it! I think it’s a very interesting and relevant play. It deals with the ideas of life and death in a very unique way.”

“I was hoping that they would choose *Our Town*,” 11th grader Paulina Iglima, who plays Mrs. Wibbs, expressed. “I’d read it before and I thought it was great. It’s not an easy play, it has a lot of potential but there’s a lot you can get wrong with it. The show has very simple characters and problems, so it can be easy to take it at surface level and not go any deeper into the words. But the characters say a lot in the unspoken, and the show is about how complex and beautiful life is. If you act each character at surface level and don’t try to dig deeper into your character, you lose the point of the play. I think we’re doing a great job with that.”

Currently, the performances are scheduled to happen from the 9th through 12th of December, so be sure to go and see it!



High schoolers practicing scenes from Our Town.

# Editorial: Are We United As One?

By Nadia Durham and Raigan Watson, freshmen, and Alice Birkenhead and Leila Elfath, sixth grade

Have you ever looked around in the MPR during lunch, in a classroom, or even outside during break and noticed that all the students who look the same are sitting together? This is called “self-segregation” when individuals from one specific racial, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality separate themselves from people who do not share that same identity. This has had a stronghold on the Washington Latin community for a while now. It’s like the elephant in the room that everyone notices but never talks about. But the big question is how can we encourage diversity amongst students? Or is self-segregation even a problem that needs solving?

Washington Latin Principal, Mr Kelly, said “There have been numerous academic studies that show that young people benefit from learning in diverse classrooms where they are exposed to different ideas, perspectives, and life experiences. I think self-segregation is less likely to be present in the classroom, because our teachers are intentional with grouping students in classes that are themselves diverse. But school is more than what happens in class, and we learn a tremendous amount from times that are not strictly academic. Bonding over shared experiences of interests is a good thing! At Latin though, our focus on a common humanity means we hope that students find common ground with students from all backgrounds.”

Mr. Kelly realizes that self-segregation may be the result of complex issues outside the school’s control.

“Washington Latin exists within a broader societal context that is itself not simply self-segregated (which suggests choice) but also segregated by way of historic decisions,” notes Mr. Kelly. “Practices that existed decades ago - redlining and segregated schooling, for example - still impact our city's geographic landscape. Washington, DC remains a very segregated city residentially. Because many schools are neighborhood-based, our schooling system is also segregated.”

Freshman Folasade Jackson shared her thoughts on why her friend group is not diverse, “My friend group is not diverse, because I feel that I relate to my friends because they’re Black. We gravitate naturally toward people we would relate to most. I don’t think that the school should push us to have diverse friend groups.”

Eighth grader, Eric Mason had a different perspective: “I have diverse friends. Some are transgender, part of the LGTBQ community, some are El Salvadorian. I don’t even know why my friends are so diverse. ”

Freshman Lucia Claire believes that she was drawn to people who looked like her since she was young. She also believes that most systems we have in the school building work well.: “I think we just drifted to people who are more like us... have similar interests. I feel like if I weren't like me when I was little, I would have a more diverse friend group.-- I think the advisory system is really good especially when it's intentional community building, I think that teachers having different students work together and also just having intentional conversations.”

Lucia shared her opinion on why she self-segregates, “I feel like in fifth grade when meeting new people we were drawn to people who look like us.” In fifth grade, the school randomly assigned students in pairs, so you could become friends with at least one person before school started.

Freshman Maggie Southworth shared her thoughts on how the buddy system affected diversity amongst students, “Most people I’ve talked to about the buddy system said that they were matched with people of the same or similar racial background as them. This could just be a random thing, but I know I was matched with another white girl.”

Everyone has different opinions on self-segregation, some believe we shouldn’t separate ourselves, some think we should have friends of all different backgrounds. Some believe we should not only associate ourselves with people who look like us and should try to become friends with people from all different racial groups and backgrounds, but others believe that being with people of the same race is more comfortable. Regardless of what you believe, the Latin community should recognize self-segregation and should respect people no matter what race, gender, and background.

# The Many Moving Parts to the New Latin Administration

By Nick Kempf and Maggie Southworth, freshmen

With the saddening departure of Dr. Smith, Latin was left with the task of finding a new administration. Mr. Kelly has been appointed as the new Principal, Ms. Bradley as the new Middle School Director with Ms. Reed as her new assistant, and Ms. Brady is staying as head of the upper school with Ms. Kovach as her assistant. What does this new administration bring to the Latin community and why are they important?

Mr. Kelly has undergone a major change, going from director of the middle school to becoming Principal. In his former position, he focused more on the day-to-day operations of the school. “As many know, I helped with several key elements of academic operations behind the scenes, like supporting all of our academic testing. As Director of the Middle School, I coordinated assemblies, supported the launch of our Dialogues Across Difference series, and organized things like Parent-Teacher Conferences, and more.”

However, he also has to leave behind certain aspects of his former job that he enjoyed. Mr Kelly is hopeful that the new administration can help each and every student to find their way to success. Mostly, he hopes to help Latin continue to be a place where students are heard and are listened to. Overall, he’s thrilled to serve as the Principal for a community that he deeply cares about.

The new Middle School Director, Ms Bradley, reflects on how her role has changed since last year, when she was the assistant director, “In a lot of ways this position is closely correlated to what I have been doing at Latin over the last two years.”

Even though the shift isn’t major, she still misses having the opportunity to work with and teach more students. At the end of the day, however, she just wants the best for the students. She wants to be remembered as someone who leads with love and someone who made a community in which the students are seen and heard.

Ms. Reed, the new Assistant Director of the middle school, really loves her and enjoys her current role at the school. She says, “I really love my new role partly because I’m still allowed to teach two sections of English and I still get to be in the classroom and partly because I have the best partner in crime there is, Ms. Bradley, the director of the middle school.” She hopes that this administration can help students and faculty to readjust to being back at in-person school.

She loves the work she does with students and faculty everyday and is hopeful that the school will thrive even with COVID.

When students were asked about the issues they hoped the new administration would work on, the topic of lunch kept arising, specifically how late the upper school has lunch and the lines for school lunch. Students were also asked what could be improved upon from the previous administration, to which eighth grader Gabriel Cooper answered, “That Mr. Kelly will fix the lunch schedule. I am hungry in second period, and then I can eat after third period and be there with a small lunch line, but on Thursdays and Tuesdays at 1:20, there is a line that goes to Mr. Staten’s room and it is so annoying.”

Freshman Amal Buba shared her thoughts regarding the changes this school year. She says, “I hope everyone can adjust to the changes, but I know most of them are for Covid safe purposes.”

With a new administrative team that is eager to serve Latin, hopeful to change its community for the better, and aiming to impact the journey of each scholar in the community, Latin is facing a bright future. With the support and guidance of the students, this new team of administrators will certainly be able to help the community continue to thrive.

# Popular Games People Are Playing in 2021

By Micah French, Deadre Foxx, and Gerardo Tobar, seventh grade

What is your favorite video game? Lots of people have played at least one video game before, maybe very old ones or new ones. Friday Night Funkin is a very popular with it's continuous weeks that change the plot of the story and how the game is played with over 364.1 thousand hours broadcast. This game has grown its popularity by the different variations of the game other creators have made featuring Sonic the Hedgehog, Sans the Skeleton, Tricky the Clown and many more.

For many students, the year and a half of virtual learning was a time for a lot of gaming.

Seventh-grader Brandon Keita says, "During quarantine, I played 10 hours, but now I play 7 hours on the weekends. Now I have work." He plays in the morning. "I start at 11pm, go to sleep at 12 pm, wake up at 6am. I play when I get to school, in advisory, after the two periods are done at break. I game at 6 pm, until 8 pm, and then again at 11."

Seventh-grader Dylan Hais said he plays 5 hours a week. "I play any free time I have."

Santino Starace says, "I play 14 hours a week, whenever I can. It changed because now we have to go to school and we can't play a lot of games anymore. I play Roblox, Minecraft, and Legend of Zelda."

Others say their addiction to gaming hasn't changed since in-person school has resumed.

Seventh-grader Saamir Young says he plays 4 hours a day. "I changed nothing. I played on my phone and my PC: War Zone, Roblox, Fortnite, sometimes Shindo Storm."

# Word Search

By Oz Glucksman and Ben Webb, seventh grade

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

Math Algebra History Lunch Science	Recess Classroom Chair Friends Teacher	Locker Paper Pencil Pen School
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# Photo Spread



Photos from October's Wellness Day.



Middle Schoolers on Halloween.



Middle School Community Service Day.



DC History Field Trip on November 10th.



The Middle School Girls' Volleyball team after winning the PCSAA Championship.