

# Sumus Leones

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Washington Latin

## Snow Way! We Have Asynchronous Work!?!

By: Madeline Sickel and Alice Pittard, Seniors

Coming back from winter break, the District of Columbia was gifted with around 5 inches of snow January 5 through 6. This storm was forecasted to be the most snow D.C. had seen in years, so many schools in the area called off in-person classes for Monday, January 6. It took a while for the city to clear the roads, so school was closed yet again on Tuesday. Due to the icy conditions many schools were still closed, or had two-hour delays, on Wednesday.

Latin, however, did not have traditional snow days on Monday and Tuesday, where school was cancelled and kids could go outside and enjoy the snow without worrying about schoolwork. Instead, students were assigned asynchronous work, similar to that of the pandemic. Many students were confused or frustrated about why we were assigned schoolwork on a snow day.

The school's principal Mr. Kelly explained, "While we have one built-in snow day, we have had many years when we have used several snow days. Given that we had snow on the opening days of the new year, we did not want to use that snow day so early in the season. We are allowed by OSSE (Office of the State Superintendent of Education) to use up to five asynchronous days for weather events, and we decided in these cases that we would rather use asynchronous learning than extend the school year (affecting things like graduation) or take back days we have already promised off for students and families (i.e. spring break)."

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When asked if he would prefer an asynchronous day, or no work, but an extra school day later in the year, senior Raimon Nelson responded, “Nah, give me the work.” However, he added, “I’d rather [just] have no work!”

Junior Grace Norquist agreed with him, saying she “loves” snow asynchronous days.

Additionally, Freshman Emma Fitzpatrick weighed in on snow days, saying, “I think [snow asynchronous days] are not too bad. Having work is never good, but if you’re good at time management then there’s still time to have fun and relax.”

On the contrary, Junior Seamus Sacks, disagreed with the other students. He “would rather have a full snow-day ... but an extra day at the end of the year.”

Emma added that two-hour delays are “better than having a full school day and it’s nice to sleep in. I’d rather not go to school but they do count as school days which is good because then there aren’t extra at the end of the year.”

In terms of the amount of work assigned on asynchronous days, Mr. Kelly explained, “We reverted to the model we used during the pandemic for asynchronous work [to determine how long the assignments should be] - we have had a lot of practice with this in the past. Obviously an assignment will take different amounts of time for different students. When students flag to their teachers that things are taking them longer than anticipated, we ask teachers to be flexible and accommodating.”

Raimon thinks teachers gave a reasonable amount of work. It was “sometimes overdone though, especially with the horrors of the pandemic I cringe at all virtual work.”

Emma responded, “For the most part, yes, [the work] was completely doable. However, I had a bunch of meetings: advisory, Community Council, and three hours later one for Matilda the Musical. They were annoying because once I was done with work, I had to wait for meetings all at different times and I couldn’t have lunch.”

While some were upset with the asynchronous work, everyone was still able to have fun in the snow!



# Third Quarter Blues?

By: Daphna Soskis, Freshman

When days become shorter and temperatures drop, do students still have to attend school? The unfortunate answer is “yes” and to the highest extreme for many students. From the last day of winter break, January 6, students have to wait until March 21st until their next break, which is the longest stretch all year between vacations. Students under 10th grade also have to complete Map testing during this period, a long standardized test that maps growth. These are just some factors that make the third quarter one of the most challenging quarters of the year, but students are facing many other difficulties relating to their suffering during this time of year.

Freshman Avery Wood noted that the work has grown significantly more challenging this quarter.

She said, “There's more pressure in the third quarter to do well if you weren't happy with your final grades for the first and second quarter.” The third and fourth quarter are students' last chance to bring up final grades, and can almost act as a cushion to the first and second quarter grades. When asked how she is coping with the stress of the third quarter, she said, “I am using a planner and making sure to stay organized.” Many studies show staying organized decreases stress, saves time, and increases productivity making it one of the best and easiest ways to deal with all the stress that comes with school.

Many students' third quarter blues are also products of the cold, grey weather. Freshman Eden Claire said, “Grey weather makes everybody sleepy and everything less endurable. Once you get

home and the sun goes down quicker you lose motivation to complete homework and homework builds up easier.” A common saying is that humans are products of their environment, and when the student's environment becomes grey and lifeless, so do we. Eden is coping by, “trying to keep weekends free so I can rest and catch up on work.”

A free weekend can let students recharge from the busy week and prepare for the week to come, but do all students get this luxury of free weekends?

Students in the musical “Matilda” said they do not get a break, and the weekend is no exception.

Freshman Nora Paxon said, “For students involved in the musical, the third quarter is one of the busiest times of the year and schoolwork almost becomes a second priority. Students also start to lose enthusiasm and eagerness because they have gotten used to the school routine.”

When the beginning of the year jitters are replaced by the third quarter blues, every day, week, month, it all starts to feel the same. Routine becomes boring and pointless and we start to wonder, “when does it end?” and then summer comes and students' sparks return, just to repeat the same cycle the next year.

To combat this cycle students must look for things that set weeks apart, a three day weekend, or a dress down day. These small things might seem insignificant, but in the long run, these are the things that give us something to look forward to and help us beat down the third quarter blues.

# Students React to Presidential Inauguration

By: Avery Park, Chase Warren, and Gabe Maysonett, Freshmen

The Inauguration occurs every 4 years on January 20th (unless it is on a Sunday). It takes place at the Capitol building and is meant to be a ceremony welcoming the next president of the United States. This year it fell on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and included the swearing in of a new president, Donald J. Trump.

There were many mixed opinions about this year's Inauguration but everyone agreed it was important that people should be educated about what the Inauguration is, when it happens, etc. Despite this, many chose not to watch the inauguration at all as they thought it was dull and Physics teacher Mr. Keller even said he was "actively boycotting by not watching the Inauguration".

And even though the importance of the inauguration was taken into consideration, what was even more important was the ways in which citizens and students/staff would be affected personally and the changes that would come with new policies. Chinese and government teacher and sophomore advisor Mr Liu said that, "The policies will change and it affects everyone and everything. It also affects our foreign policies and our relations with other countries (war and peace) and who the next Supreme Court justices will be."

When asked about new policies, sophomore Patrick Brooks said that, "federal employees had to

go back five days a week which included his father."

Finally, nearly unanimously, many thought that the inauguration falling on MLK day was "unfortunate."

It "took away the significance of MLK day", said sophomore Luca Pericola.

Mr. Keller even said that it was, "Branded as patriotic although they simultaneously go against many of America's deepest values, and seeing them being on the same day clashes with MLK's deepest beliefs."

The inauguration is and was an event sharing various opinions and feelings, mostly based on personal experiences and political views. This Inauguration hit some harder than others and was difficult for many while jubilant for others. It is a time where one President steps down to welcome another (though some may argue it was not exactly done "gracefully" during the 2020 Inauguration, due to the storming of the Capitol by people who were displeased with the results of the election) and allows for a transition in both policies and sometimes political beliefs. It is important to be both educated and aware of the topic no matter your political beliefs. It affects everyone, and though not equally, it signifies a change, and though you may not like it, it welcomes a new President of the United States.



# HBCUs vs. PWIs: Community and Culture

By: Folasade Jackson and Lily Williams, Seniors

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) offer different experiences for students. For many Black students, choosing between attending a HBCU or a PWI is about more than academics, it's about finding a sense of belonging. HBCUs offer spaces where Black students can see themselves reflected in their peers, faculty, and school traditions.

HBCUs have historically been places of comfort for Black students, offering an environment where they can thrive both academically and socially. Bowie State University alumni, Josh Spann, who graduated in 2018 and now works in the Student Support department at Latin said attending his HBCU, “meant being around people that look like me and I’m not the minority for once, it just meant a lot being in college from 18 to 24 as a young, black male surrounded by young black men and women.”

This sense of community also attracted senior Nadia Durham to HBCUs in her college application process. Nadia has applied to multiple HBCUs and stated “being at an HBCU to me, would be building a community with the people that look like me... stepping into a new community that would celebrate my identity as a Black person and would nurture my ambitions as I pursue my nursing career, and it would empower me to thrive in a world with like-minded individuals.” Many students interested in HBCUs highlight their welcoming atmosphere as major factors in their decision.

In addition to providing a sense of belonging, HBCUs have historically had a major influence on

Black culture. As Mr. Spann pointed out, “before, whites didn't want blacks going to school with them, and the fact that we've created our own HBCUs for us to excel and thrive, it means a lot, especially history wise.” He added, “you have fraternities and sororities that represent the colleges, and then you have celebrities and artists that represent colleges and wear the college paraphernalia. So it means a lot for black people to us, for us to have our own schools and for us to represent ourselves.”

Despite their continued positive impact on black youth, HBCUs often face challenges related to funding and resources. Mr. Josh and Nadia Durham both identified clear differences when comparing HBCU campuses to PWIs. Nadia recalled, “noticing when [she] visited Black college campuses compared to state schools, the white college campuses will have more modern things, and their overall campus will just be nicer.” Mr. Spann agreed stating “there was also a recent study in which [HBCU] colleges in Maryland weren't receiving the same funding as PWIs... but in the future hopefully [HBCUS] do receive the same amount of funding as PWIs.”

Some Black teachers who chose PWIs faced challenges in finding a strong support system. Biology teacher Ms. Allison, an Ohio University graduate, described her experience navigating the academic environment. “I had a 4.0 GPA throughout undergrad, but every time I met with my advisor, he would say that science is not for everyone...he assumed that science was not for me. He never even bothered to look up my grades. I cannot believe that this would happen at an HBCU,” she said. To find a sense of community, she used campus resources.

“I had a little HBCU within my PWI through the multicultural office,” said Ms. Allison. “They offered social support and mentors to students of color. This support was helpful to negotiate the daily microaggressions I experienced in class, in the dorm, and in common spaces on campus.”

The choice between an HBCU and a PWI depends on various factors, including cultural environment, financial resources, and academic opportunities. Nevertheless, it is clear HBCUs provide a unique space that celebrates Black excellence and identity.





# How would the TikTok ban affect students?

By: Annie Paterson and Giselle Norquist, Sophomores

Over these last few weeks, a nationwide ban of the social media app “TikTok” was up in the air. This is not the first time the government has issued a ban on the app which is run by ByteDance, a Chinese internet technology company. On August 6, 2020 President Donald Trump issued a statement saying that TikTok automatically captures vast swaths of information from its users, including Internet and other network activity information such as location data and browsing and search histories. This data collection threatens to allow the Chinese Communist Party access to Americans’ personal and proprietary information — potentially allowing China to track the locations of federal employees and contractors, build dossiers of personal information for blackmail, and conduct corporate espionage.

Donald Trump has now stopped the Tiktok ban for 75 days, for his administration to find the proper course on how to deal with Tiktok. There are many investors like MrBeast and other billionaires. Donald Trump has threatened to enact tariffs as high as 100% if China takes away TikTok from America.

While this may be confusing for users of the app, most of whom don’t have a problem with national security threats on their iPhones, there were other problems with the way the app was being managed, including that the app “reportedly censors content that the Chinese Communist Party deems politically sensitive, such as content concerning protests in Hong Kong and China’s treatment of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities... and also be used for disinformation campaigns that benefit the Chinese Communist Party, such as when TikTok videos spread

debunked conspiracy theories about the origins of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus” (Trump, 2020).

Fast forward five years, despite incoming president Donald Trump asking that the country hold off on the ban until he is sworn into office, the Supreme Court has upheld a national ban on TikTok which USA Today reported meant that the app will become, “unavailable through the U.S.-based internet hosting services, meaning the TikTok website would not be accessible.” The ban was set to begin January 19, 2020. Hours later it was seemingly dissolved, but what this means for American users remains unclear.

16.75% of TikTok users are based in the US, with 32.5% of those being ages 10-18. The banning of this app would affect large numbers of American middle and high schoolers, including those at Washington Latin. The newspaper interviewed a number of students and faculty to get their thoughts on how they feel about the ban in general and how the loss of TikTok would affect their lives.

Before the 19th, Latin teacher, Mr. Nikota, gave his stance on how he believes the ban will go. “I don’t think the government will be able to carry this out, there are too many free speech violations, and many large non-tech companies are going to be mad, the government wants to nuke competition for certain businesses and is too much of an intervention. It is especially odd if this gets carried out seeing as the politicians coming into the government with the new presidency are supposed to be ‘free-market guys,’ this could be the beginning of a trade war.”

Many students shared their thoughts before the

ban was briefly implemented. Sophomore Daniel Anker-Schrer said, “My feelings are mixed. On one hand, there is a valid security concern, but this sets no great precedent and suggests a violation of the First Amendment, remnants of mid-20th-century monetization of freedom of speech.”

Sophomore Kinley Slakey told the paper, “It is a news source for many people, and an entertainment one too, I’m going to miss the edits of Hamzah.”

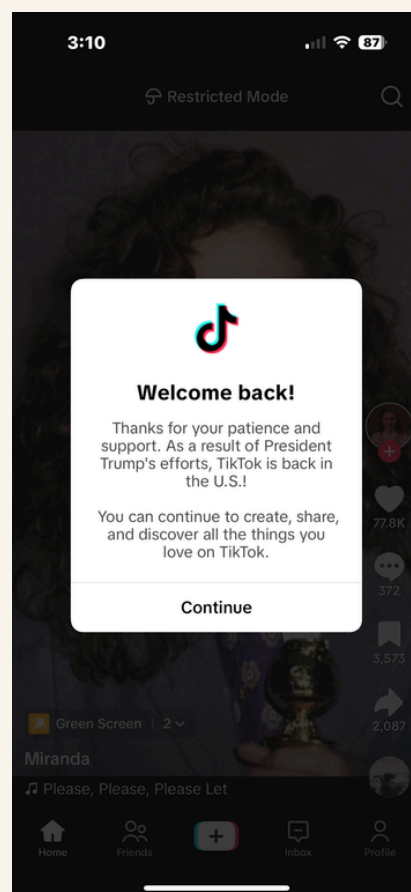
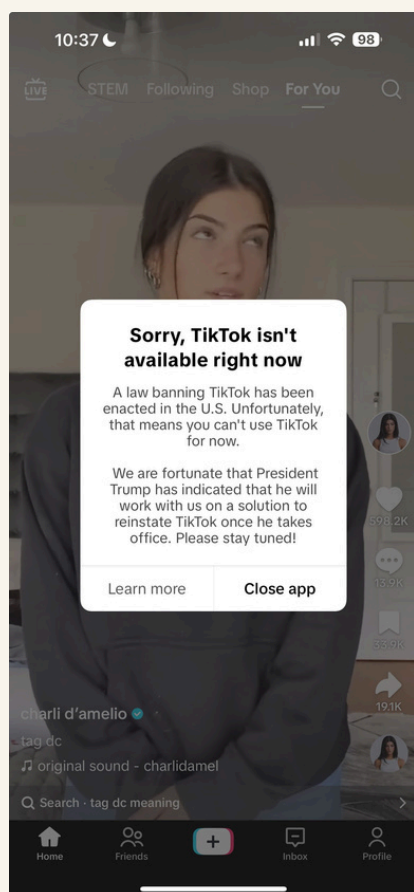
Sophomore Selah Brown added, “I’m gonna miss late-night giggling, rest in peace to the art form of edits, my favorites folder, and reposts will be missed but at least I’ll be able to lock in for school.”

Sophomore Sabine Mann expressed how TikTok has been a tool for her learning. “I use TikTok for a lot of my notes in school from the online teachers and being deprived of that will definitely have an impact on how I study for my classes.” However,

she also noted that TikTok has its fair share of negative side effects, “While I enjoy being able to use TikTok as a way to wind down and calm my mind, the ability to go on my phone without being looped into an endless string of online videos will have its benefits. With TikTok being one of the only social media platforms I have that doesn’t negatively affect my mental health, I worry for the students that will now turn towards using Instagram Reels and other platforms that worsen the mental health of its users.”

Junior Nora Durcan shared more about the educational aspect of Tiktok, “they have a STEM category that may help students. I would never like to admit it but TikTok is my main source of news.”

Sophomore Patrick Brooks expressed how he feels the app has politically influenced the country, “TikTok is how Trump won, it’s spreading propaganda.”





# Taiwan Spring Break Trip

By: Leo Shapiro-Morton, Sophomore



AP Chinese and Chinese 4 students performing at the Chinese New Year Festival

This year, Latin's AP Chinese and Chinese 4 classes are taking a trip to Taiwan led by Chinese teachers Mr. Liu, Ms. Han, and Mr. Kelly will also be joining the trip to Taiwan where they will be leading a total of 19 students. They will be leaving on March 20th and returning on March 29th. Over the trip, the students will be visiting Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, and Tainan, which is the oldest city in Taiwan. The group has been doing monthly meetings to discuss the itinerary and to prepare for any logistical plans that could go wrong.

The students have also been writing to their pen pals in Taiwan who attend Hsin Chuang Senior High School in Taipei. Mr. Liu said that the group will be, "visiting landmarks such as the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, National Palace Museum and Taipei 101 skyscraper." Not only is the class visiting these monumental landmarks, but they

will also be taking a lesson on Tai Chi, an ancient martial art, with a local master and attending a professional basketball game.

Seniors Lydia Park and Nick Kempf both expressed their excitement about the trip. Nick said that he is "really excited to try the food and explore the night markets", while Lydia said that she was most excited, "to interact with local speakers... and learn more about the culture and history of the people in Taiwan."

Junior Ruby Churches and senior Lydia Park did share some fears that they have for the trip. Lydia was most concerned with, "having to adjust to the time zone and combating jet lag.

Ruby stated that she was more worried that she, "will get sick, either home sick or physically sick."



# Chinese Lunar New Year Celebration





# Keeping it Classical On the Latin Trip

By: Madelyn Zeller, Sophomore



Latin students on the 2023 trip

Every year, the modern language departments lead a certain number of spring break trips for students in high level language classes. There is much planning involved for students and teachers alike, but overall students find the trips extremely rewarding, and a huge incentive to continue studying a language. This March, Latin students and teachers --led by Latin teachers Ms. Sisk and Mr Nikota--are headed off to Rome!

This trip was available to all students currently enrolled in a Latin class past the school's minimum requirement, Latin 3. This year's cohort is made up of sophomores, juniors, and seniors, with the majority being sophomores. To apply, these students wrote essays detailing their reasons for wanting to journey to Rome as well as their hopes and fears. Currently there are meetings every other week so students can get to know each other, especially across grade levels, and prepare for the trip. As the date approaches, the meetings will become weekly.

As they prepare for the trip, students expressed what they're most excited for and nervous about.

It's no surprise that Rome's renowned ancient sites are high up on everyone's list of must-sees.

Sophomore Francesca Murray noted that she is "really looking forward to [seeing] the ancient ruins in Rome and places mentioned in the text we have read." In Latin class, students often read about long ago and distant places and events, so this trip is an opportunity to see those places and events come alive to the extent possible. It's also a chance to see what few "real life examples of Latin [are] still around today," Francesca mentioned.

Sophomore Orode Omatete agreed, specifically noting "Pompeii, the Colosseum, churches, and Palatine Hill," as sights she is eager to see, in addition to just being excited to be "in Europe and be in a different country," and getting to experience, "their culture, their norms, and their way of life."

Mr. Nikota, one of the organizers of the trip and an upper school Latin teacher, added the "Herculaneum and the Roman Forum" to Orode's list of must-sees. He's thrilled to be headed to Rome for the second time, and for the first time since earning his "bachelor's, master's, and PhD in Classics" to "experience these sights in a new way."

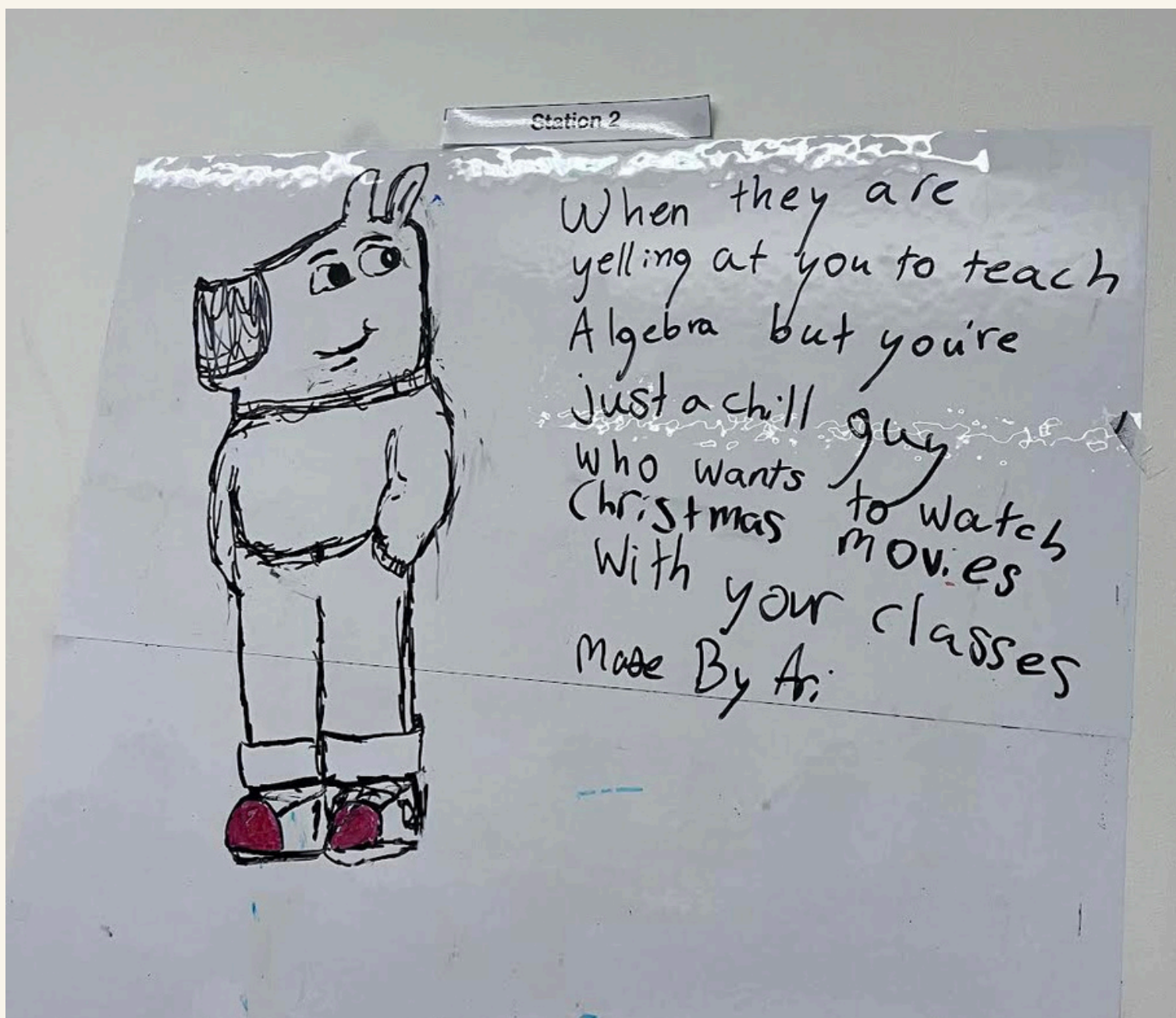
However, heading off to a brand new country can also be nerve-wracking for a variety of reasons. Francesca was hesitant about "traveling overseas without [her] family," but she's come to view it as an exciting new experience.

Orode was most concerned about "how [local] people would react, maybe racism." Compared to Washington DC's diverse population--which is

roughly 40% Black, 40% white, 4% Asian and 4% Hispanic, Italian society is racially and ethnically very homogenous. Because of this, Orode mentioned that in preparation meetings, they discussed the possibility of receiving strange looks from locals who “are used to people looking like them.”

Furthermore, the logistics of planning an international trip are challenging and the cause of many worries about something going awry.

“I’m most nervous about transit to and from Italy as this is where I foresee the most potential for problems related to travel – missing flights, missing appointments, etc,” shared Mr. Nikota. “Once we’re in Italy, I’m confident all the nervousness will go away. Ditto for once we’re back.” Orode concurred, noting “flights being delayed” or “something bad happening with [the] flight” as things she feels most uneasy about.





# Senior Privileges

By: Lydia Park, Senior

For the class of 2025, the second semester means more than a few schedule changes. Five days after the end of the first semester, on Wednesday January 22nd, the entire senior class gathered together in the MPR, eagerly anticipating what everyone has been waiting for: Senior Privileges.

Like previous years, Senior Privileges are reserved for second semester seniors who, according to the Senior Privileges permission slip, “[do] not have any disciplinary actions of any kind whatsoever,” and who “is a kind and good community member, exhibiting respect and leadership.”

But unlike last year, the class of 2025 has Senior Planning Committee. The committee is made up of Seniors who have volunteered to represent the senior class - organizing events, running the commitment instagram page, and proposing Senior Privileges.

Proposing Senior Privileges was a process. Senior Brooke Roberson, a part of the planning committee, shared that this year, “[the committee], alongside Ms. Raskin, got the ball rolling with a Google form with options for senior privileges.”

Senior Raigan Watson, also a member of the committee, added that the Google form “included a blank space for people to suggest their own ideas.” Raigan explained, “For the most part, we could propose whatever we wanted, but obviously, there were some limits—like, we’re never allowed to leave campus for lunch. And not to name names, but someone suggested making underclassmen bow down to seniors, which was never going to happen.”

In the end, the Google form included a mix of potential new and old privileges, such as allowing sweatpants, no collared shirts, leaving early if you have study halls at the end of the day, etc.

Once seniors had filled out the form, to ensure the privileges truly reflected the wishes of the senior class, “[Senior Planning Committee] had a meeting with two elected senior leaders from each advisory and the administration to officially propose our privileges,” shared Raigan.

After an official proposal from those senior representatives was sent to the administration, Ms. Brady, Ms. Kovach, and Ms. Raskin “took [the proposal] to the senior team of teachers...and then to the culture team,” explained Ms. Kovach, the Assistant Director of the Upper School. She shared that during the approval process, everyone is concerned with the “safety, protocol, and logistics of how things will actually work.”

A week later, Ms. Brady and Ms. Kovach finally revealed the approved privileges and guidelines to the senior class. Seniors are now allowed to order food on Mondays and Fridays, dress down every first and third Friday of the month, wear their college gear once they have committed, and leave school early if they have a study hall last period.

Additionally, Ms. Kovach revealed, there are a few unspoken privileges. “Something we didn’t actually write in there, but is totally fine and fair, is when it gets nice out, we’re fine to have you guys go to the field and have a study hall out there.” The rationale, she explained, is, “We didn’t write those things in there because we need to actually see it

happen.”

While these privileges are “in general, the same as ones that have been requested in the past”, according to Ms. Raskin, seniors are still excited.

Raigan shared, “Overall, I’m pretty happy with the privileges we have.” She believes having dress-down days and being able to order lunch makes “senioritis so much more manageable.”

Senior Cate Shepherd agreed, and added, “I think leaving early from study halls is really nice.”

Although seniors are grateful for the new privileges, some of them wish the school could have given them a little more.

Cate shared, “I wish we could have had a more lenient uniform senior privilege, like no collar shirts.”

Senior August Heim agreed with Cate about the uniform policies and mentioned, “We should have senior tax, where you can take things from underclassmen. We shouldn’t have fought for ordering lunch to school on Mondays and Fridays because those are the days we are going to be missing the most. It’s so expensive. We should’ve gotten no collars or something better.”



# World Languages at Washington Latin

By: Alice Birkenhead and June Walsh, Freshmen

At Washington Latin, students pick a language to take to complete the required two consecutive years of world language credit. The languages that a student can take as early as eighth grade are French, Chinese, and Arabic. The French track has an honors program and APs, while the Chinese track only has on-level and APs. The Arabic track, on the other hand, does not have an honors program or APs, but it has an equivalent advanced course. Instead of taking the AP exam at the end of the year, they take the NEWL exam. There are many world language teachers in the school, including the head of the language department, Mr. Porcelli.

At Washington Latin, all students take Latin until at least Latin III/IV, but unlike Latin, French is a spoken language. “In my French class, I teach French as a practical tool,” said Mr. Vernarsky. It’s a living language and isn’t just something you read and then forget about.” Mr Vernarsky is one of two French teachers at Latin. He teaches French I, II, Honors II, and media.

Many students who come to Washington Latin already speak a language. These people have the choice to either take the language that they speak or pick one of the other two languages to learn from scratch. An example of somebody who chose to take the language with which they already have some experience is Max Smudde. Max tested into Chinese III as an eighth grader and now takes Chinese IV. When asked about the differences between the way that Chinese is taught here compared to his past experience he said, “It is different than Chinese summer school and Duolingo. This class is more repetitive and vocabulary-based.” Max felt his previous

knowledge of the language aids him while learning, noting that “Things I knew before are subconsciously in my brain so it makes it a lot easier and it does not affect the way the teacher teaches, it just helps me.”

For some students, language may be an area they will focus on in college. For example, Liane Reidel, a senior, said, “I am minoring in Chinese in college.” Liane had no previous experience with Chinese before coming into Latin as a freshman and throughout her time in the school has enjoyed many things about the class and language, so much so that she wants to continue it out of high school and into college. Liane is not alone in wanting to continue Chinese past high school.

Her Chinese IV classmate senior Folasade Jackson agreed she would bring her language education with her going forward. Folasade said, “I plan on continuing with Chinese in college. It’s a valuable skill that will set me apart, and I genuinely enjoy learning it. Plus, it will give me the chance to connect with more people.”

On the other hand, many eighth graders start taking a language before they even begin high school. Eighth graders who get a high GPA and grade in Latin class are able to take a language instead of taking a study hall. These classes are difficult classes so it takes some getting used to.

For example, eighth grader Evie Paisner in French I says, “[French] is definitely very hard and fast-moving.”

Devin Raj, a classmate of Evie’s, agrees, saying, “French is really challenging but I am learning a lot

and it is a lot of fun.”

On the other hand, Oliver Weymouth, another eighth grader who takes French, finds it difficult in a different way, saying, “Taking French class a year early has been a struggle mainly because it takes away one of my middle school lunch & recess periods, not necessarily because of the class difficulty.”

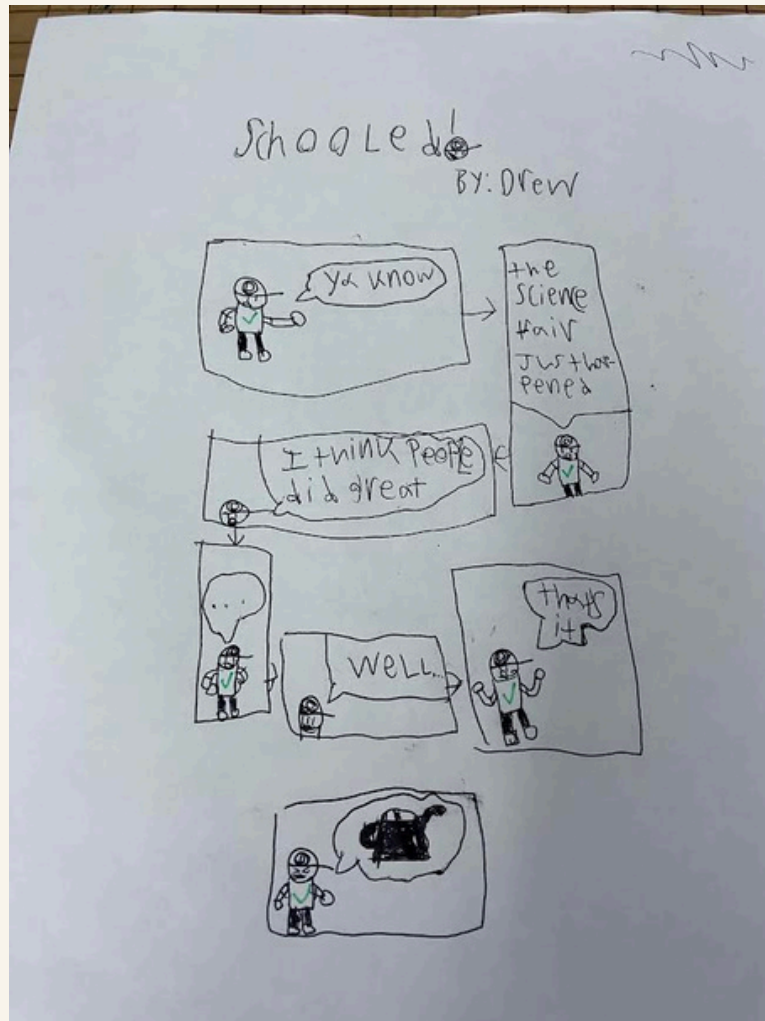
While getting through the class, the students have to lean on each other. Devin Raj says, “If anyone doesn't know if there is homework, people text the group chat and find out. I also text my smarter friends to see if they have homework.”

An exciting thing to look forward to while taking a language class is the spring break trip that is

available to students who have been taking a language for at least three consecutive years. These trips run every other spring break. Some of the Chinese students are going to Taiwan this spring break, while last year some French students went to Paris last spring break and Arabic students went to Morocco.

Folasade is very excited to be able to attend the Taiwan trip next month adding, “We’ve been having meetings to get ready, and I can’t wait to experience night markets, visit schools, teach kids English, and explore temples!”

Liane added, “We're going to Taiwan in March, gonna be lit!”





# Fantasy Football: Winners and Losers

By: Noah Ratzman, Andrew Kim, and Noah Eustler, freshmen

For any sort of sports fan or competitor, fantasy football can be one of the most praised and dreaded ways for competition between a group of friends. Usually, the leagues are set up with 8-12 people and every week each individual goes head to head with another opponent in the league. Each member drafts a team of players who play professionally and each week those players compete for points, sometimes earning large or very small amounts. After around 14 weeks, there is a playoff in the league that is set up by record. At the end of the season, most groups decide on rewards and punishments for both coming in last and first. This article below lists some of the punishments or highlights from a couple of groups of people at Latin who participate in a league.

The freshmen who had been a part of the Latin Fantasy League consisted of 10 people, 8 being from Latin, the other two having left the school. This league had just finished its 2nd year of competition and this year was like last. Like the first year, the winner was awarded a Fantasy ring and a WWE belt. This year, freshman Noah Ratzman passed the belt along to Jack O'Rourke, the winner of this year.

Freshmen Paul Boone and Liam Porter both finished last, record wise, but Paul ended up unfortunately losing in the playoffs. The league had looked forward to doing one of the most dreaded punishments in all of Fantasy Football... "The Dog Cage." This meant that the loser was to enter a decent sized dog cage and sit there as the other participants poured condiments and other uncomfortable foods. The group aimed to do this punishment at the NFC championship watch party, hosted by the league leader, freshman, Jack O'Rourke. The conditions outside were unfortunately too cold and the punishment would've been too messy to do indoors.

The group sadly had to conclude the long season without a punishment, but looks to do a genuine punishment in the future.

In the sophomore fantasy league, freshman Chase Warren and former Latin student Gordon Beares won. The prize was \$175 for the first place winner, and \$75 for the second place winner. In all fantasy leagues, there's a loser and that usually comes with a punishment. In this league, someone who attends a different school got last place. The punishment for him was a milk mile. A milk mile is when you drink half a gallon of milk, then immediately run a mile on a track. This is a horrible experience, as people get very nauseous once they start running. If one lesson is learned, it is to not get last in your fantasy football leagues!

The juniors at Latin created a 12-man league, and at the end of the season, the winner was Tate Meier. On the flip side, JD Miller lost in the league in a nail-biter of a season. His last-place finish is something unique to Fantasy called 'points for;' points for is the collective amount of points someone has scored in a single season. Therefore, two records can be the same so the better team is decided by how many points the team has scored, deciding who has the better team. JD's punishment was to wear an embarrassing outfit, including a Christmas-themed Lightning Sweater and skin-tight leggings on a dress-down day. His thoughts on the sentence were, "it wasn't that bad a punishment, comparing that to the ones online."

But even the last place can have fun during the Fantasy season. JD's favorite part about Fantasy was bragging when winning, and watching and rooting for his players.

# Busy Basketball Courts and Other Winter Sports News

By: Kayode Elion and Neri Portilla-Marchiori, Sophomores



As winter sports begin, the demand for space to train indoors increases, and unfortunately, not all teams are satisfied. At Latin, the gym is the number one option for almost every sport, from basketball to indoor track, as it provides the most open space and presents athletes with the best possible conditions to train in. However, with middle school, JV, and Varsity basketball teams needing the gym, it becomes very difficult for coaches and the overall athletic department to find ways to share this prized location. In fact, some sports rarely get the opportunity to train in the gym, and if they do, they find themselves on the court with 2-3 other sports practicing at the same time. This has proven to be difficult for the players especially, and they have seen some negative results in competitions due to that.

Justin Briggs, a sophomore who currently plays on the Boys' Varsity Basketball team, said that practice has even occasionally been canceled due to the lack of space in the gym.

"It can sometimes be frustrating," says Briggs, "The volleyball season sometimes ties in with ours, and when they finish, we have to deal with track, and JV basketball as well... [The coaches] will split the gym down the middle for [varsity] and either JV or middle school, which takes away the full experience for us."

In order to make it work, with so many teams on the courts, teams had to share space, and rotate through other parts of the building.

“We had to be flexible with times because there were just a lot of teams trying to get their work in,” said Paul Boone, a freshman on the JV basketball team. “We would go in rooms, and just talk as a team. We would rotate for thirty minutes, go in the gym, switch with other teams, and use the outside to run around the school for warm-up while we didn’t have the court.”

This forces them to be able to only practice certain types of plays, and not work on other key components of the game, like fast-breaks and overall five-on-five play. “We get trapped in full court presses often,” Justin continued, “Since we only practice half court, we don’t really know what to do in those situations, which leads to many turnovers.” However, Varsity and JV Basketball also practice on Saturdays, which provides them with the full court experience that they lack during the week. “We do what we can with what we have,” stated Justin, ending on a positive note.

The wrestling team isn’t really affected by the crowded gym. Recently, the team has traveled to Washington Leadership and Georgetown Prep for practices and weight lifting. As states are approaching on February 15, they try to reach out to other schools when things are being used by other teams.

Kayode Elion, a member of the wrestling team, explained, “traveling to other schools is better for the team. Because we get the experience and the opportunity to wrestle with other teams that could be better like Georgetown Prep or work with teams that are about the same skill level like leadership to enhance our team's knowledge of the sport.” The wrestling team has been in the weight room all of 3 times this year and are more than ready to take on all the schools in DC for another state title.



The track team, on the other hand, didn't have the same resources or connections as the wrestling team.

Lyla Kramer, a sophomore on the track team, felt like private schools that have better facilities showed better performances at meets. She says Latin’s the team has had to “run in tight hallways that only two people can run down at a time,” and “only one person at a time can run up the stairs during training.” The team had to work inside the school when it got too cold outside. The indoor track team is also a massive team, and when all these kids are running it creates a very hot environment. for everyone. Windows aren’t supposed to be opened because then heat is supposed to stay in for the kids during school hours.

Lyla said that, “most schools have better facilities than ours,” but when they do go out to Benjamin Banneker's old track 20 min away from the school, she believes it is a way better practice that helps more than running inside the school.





