

The Blue and Gold

Malden High School
Volume 111 Edition 1

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Producing student journalism since 1915

GATSBY HOMECOMING

The Roaring Return of the 20s: Class of 2026 Edition

A Year of Change at Malden High: The Removal of Directed Studies

Fatima Husain
Copy-Editor

The start of the 2025-2026 school year has welcomed many policy changes, one of them being the removal of directed studies from the curriculum. Debates have sparked among administrators, educators, and students about the program that has been a part of Malden High School for nearly two decades.

Directed studies referred to a period built into student schedules, either upon request or due to a requested class—typically an elective—being full, sending students to a designated room supervised by a teacher. Its purpose was to give students guided academic time to complete assignments and homework. However, as the years progressed and the program grew, fewer and fewer students were focused on studies, turning the academic time into a social hour, or worse, a period to be skipped.

Spanish teacher Elana Mayer, who proctored a study last year, highlighted how she was “ecstatic” when she heard about the program’s removal, recognizing them to be a “waste of time for teachers and students included.” She continued, “It just ends up being a lot of students who are not doing anything or are on their phones or sleeping.”

In theory, the study

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Homecoming photo collage. ISRAA MALHOUNI

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Upon entering Malden High School’s courtyard on October 17th, it felt as if the year 2025 had melted away, transforming the night

into a time capsule dating back a century. The Class of 2026 brought the Roaring Twenties back to life, transforming the courtyard into a scene of lights, music, and memories, themed after F. Scott

Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*. Students arrived dressed head to toe in their best 1920s party attire, as laughter and chatter filled the air.

Starting at 6:00 p.m., students filtered through the gates searching for their friends in the crowd’s abyss, while flashes of gold and black

balloons littered the ground. Ticket shades either already been purchased for \$5 during lunch or were being sold for \$7 at the gate by Event Coordinator Fiona Youmell and Art Director Moon To.

While the sun was still out, attendees focused on taking pictures and getting food and drinks. One

of Jenkins’ exits had been transformed into a photo backdrop, adorned with LED lights and balloons for capturing the perfect photo. President Linh Do and Event Coordinator Vin Chau were the designated photographers stationed near a table filled with gold and silver props

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A Night of Farewells: Girls’ Volleyball Senior Night

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The giggles that once echoed in the Kindergarten hallways have, over the years, evolved to become the sounds of cheers and success at Malden High. As another batch of seniors prepares to graduate this summer, they are leaving a forever impact on those who have taught them, coached them, and the team they turned into a family.

In the Finn Gym on Monday, October 20th, as applause from the JV and Freshmen volleyball games subsided, the audience shifted its attention towards the seniors, who



Danielle Harrington posing with her friends and team members. FATIMA HUSAIN

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PROMOTING VOICES OF THE FUTURE

YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT PRESENTS ADVOCACY

Anna Bui
Copy-Editor

Youth and Government, or YAG, is a program offered nationwide by the YMCA. It gives middle and high school students an opportunity to become engaged citizens while providing

hands-on experience in government policies and methods.

The program initially began in 1936 in New York; however, the Massachusetts branch began in 1983. Originally, it was made to “help youth males gain civic experience,” but over time, the YMCA has grown to be inclusive of “all genders, races, identities, and creeds,” shared sophomore and delegation leader Julius Scott.

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Senior Thomas Conti giving a practice speech about pasta and its importance to his Italian heritage.

ANNA BUI



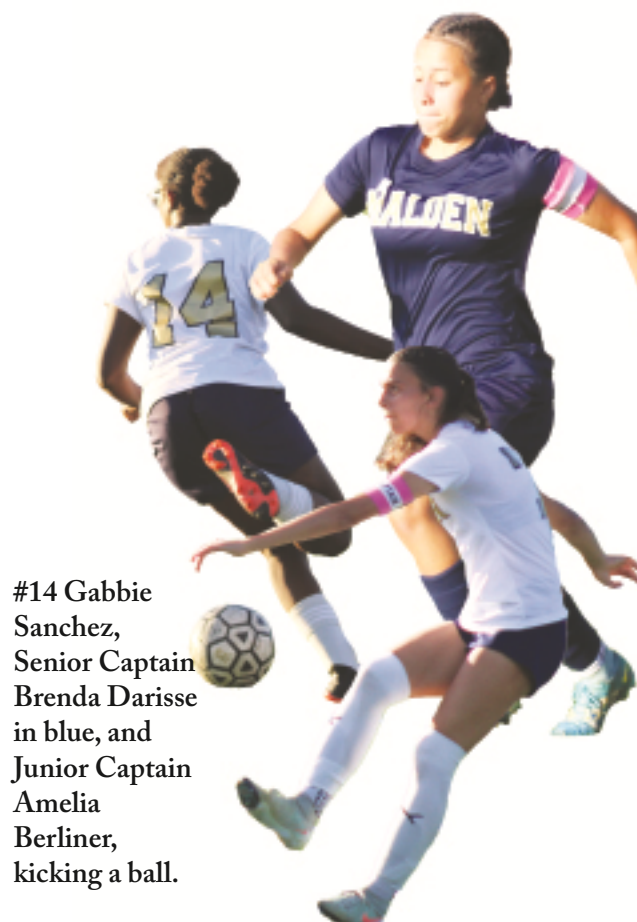
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Girls' Soccer Makes States

SENIORS SCORE THE FINAL GOAL



#14 Gabbie Sanchez, Senior Captain Brenda Darisse in blue, and Junior Captain Amelia Berliner, kicking a ball.

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The Blue and Gold

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THE YEAR I STOPPED CHASING PERFECT

Gabriela Parini Cordova
Editor-in-Chief of Print and Social Media

As a little girl, perfection was what I strived for. I had to be perfect in everything I did, or I just wasn't good enough. The perfect daughter, the perfect sister, the perfect friend, the perfect student. It consumed every part of the real me.

Growing up with two parents who had different cultural expectations, pleasing them was the most difficult task I faced, so I focused on perfecting my grades and being a good student. My mother plastered our kitchen wall right next to the kitchen table with all of my "High Honors" award certificates, A+ test scores, along any other recognition awards I received, all of which meant nothing to me.

I thought if I didn't keep it up, then I was just a defect to my family. I continued this desire for academic success throughout high school, yet I was not able to achieve the goal of perfection. I felt the heavy burden of AP courses and achieving every single success possible in four years of my life, while also being a part of every club I could, hoping to build my maturity through extreme discipline.

I believed these things defined me as a person, but once I came to high school, I realized that's not true at all. Stopping the stress over B's and C's as if it was the end of the world and not being able to grapple with the fact that an honors class was just too fast for me to learn anything were hard realizations I had to face.

I finally broke free from the extremes of 'I care too much about school' to 'I don't care at all' in my junior year, when I met someone a lot wiser than me. This friend changed the way I saw myself and the way I held myself up on this pedestal too high for me to stand on anymore. I wasn't who I was in eighth grade, never mind the person I was one month ago, and I finally realized that.

Perfection was no longer my every thought, and my true self was able to shine through. I grew into myself as I left behind that girl who always had to fit in and be better than her classmates. This time I was actually learning and healing from who I was supposed to be into the person I am.

It's okay to change and to fall short in life; it doesn't mean you're any less than or imperfect. This was a lesson I learned from that person, and I still hold it deeply within me. I was ashamed of moving down from Honors to CP.

Coming to the end of my high school years and into adulthood, I've finally stopped caring so much about what others think of me based on my performance. I'm not defined by any grade or achievement I earn, but by me and my hard work and impact on other people's lives. Along with putting effort and working at my skills in the things I love: writing, photography, understanding the world around me, and making a positive difference in my community.

This journey has opened my eyes to my passions for life and the deeper skills I hope to perfect, but not let define my life. That ideal image of myself was never me, and I'm so happy I had someone to open my eyes to that truth and help me grow into the girl I am today. My next certificate will mean something to me this time, and it will be a genuine achievement of mine.

The little girl in me would be so happy with where I am now, and I think of that all the time. I achieved her dreams of breaking free from perfection and pursuing what she actually wanted to without the burden of others' opinions, but also achieving a higher education and growing into myself without pushing away what I truly love and desire for my own life.

Senior year was what she always wished for, and now she's proudly here, achieving her own goals and living her own life.

Gabriela Parini Cordova
Editor-in-Chief of Print and Social Media

A SEASON DEFINED BY PASSION AND PRESSURE

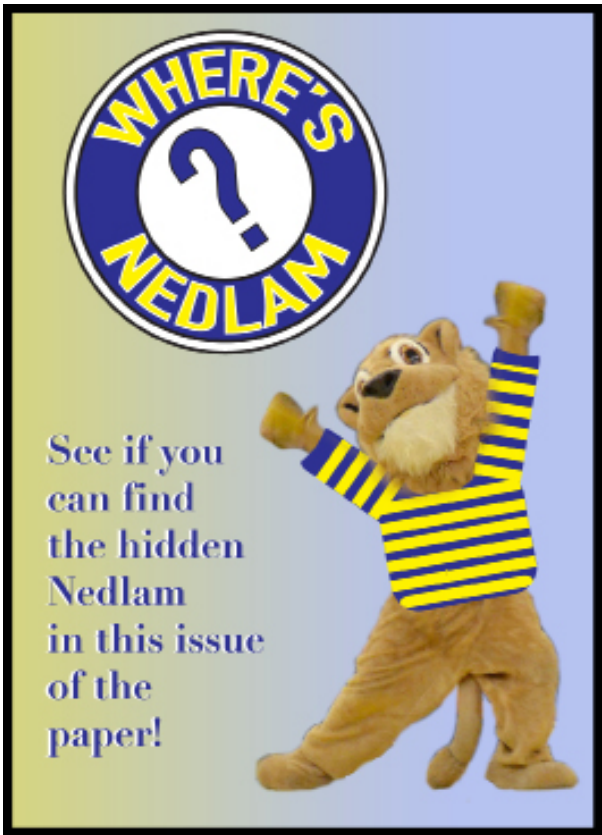


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MADE IN BOSTON FESTIVAL



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We strongly encourage readers to respond to material printed in the form of signed letters to the editors. No libelous, malicious, defamatory, obscene, or unsigned material will be printed. The Blue and Gold reserves the right to edit the letters. Names may be withheld upon request. Not all letters will be printed.

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History Behind the Shadows of Nepal’s Government

Chelmie Hyppolite
Managing Editor

History is a core class taken throughout schools worldwide, yet what many of us fail to realize is that we are witnessing history live every day as fires and protests are speeding their way across the globe. In a time of heightened political stress worldwide, many events seem to be brushed under the rug to prioritize political events relating to the United States. One of these major political world events is the corrupt government in Nepal.

As explained by Social Science teacher Richard Tivnan, “when governments are found to be corrupt by the people,” it is not uncommon that “action has often been taken.”

Although many of the protests taking place in Nepal have made their way to various social media platforms, such as TikTok, the misinformation being spread is adamant. According to the BBC, Nepal became a republic in 2008, after a decade-long civil war that resulted in 17,000 deaths. Since then, “Nepal has had 14 governments, and no leader has completed a full five-year term.”

As showcased in various news outlets, many believe that the protests arose from a simple social media ban, yet this is far from the truth. Junior Reva Upadhayay, who has family residing where the protests are taking place, expressed her anger towards these outlets for promoting false information without true compassion for Nepal: “The protests were never about a social media ban; it was about the corruption happening in Nepal and the silencing of voices that led to a ban on social media.”

Social Science teacher James Hill described how difficult it is for various countries to get true coverage, especially in American news outlets. “Something that happens in Nepal is always going to be a struggle for attention, for American eyeballs. So, I think a country like Nepal is not a country that Americans are keyed into, and certainly Nepali politics is not something that anyone knows about.”

The root of corruption within the government includes politicians stealing hard-earned tax money from citizens and using it for themselves. Senior Sandesh Ghimire, a Nepal resident until 2015, dived deeper into



A group photo of the participants of the WJMC program in front of the United States Capital building. CHELMIE HYPPOLITE

Chelmie Hyppolite
Managing Editor

Can you imagine a world without factual news reporting? This hypothetical question illuminates a striking issue that many countries grapple with. As media outlets and news sources begin to lose funding, it is crucial to remember the purpose of reporting. Nonetheless, it is essential to bring up a generation that is willing to prioritize factual reporting. The Washington Journalism and Media Conference (WJMC) aimed to do just that.

Over this summer, George Mason University (GMU), located in Fairfax, Virginia, hosted its 15th annual WJMC. The conference admits a multitude of high-achieving rising juniors and seniors with an interest in journalism and media to become National Youth Correspondents.

There are two sessions of the conference that take place in July; each session is a week long and admits a different group of students. Correspondents commute from two dorm buildings, located on the GMU campus. These correspondents are put into small, rainbow-colored groups, led by faculty advisors who are high school yearbook and journalism teachers. Throughout the conference, correspondents have exclusive access to various field visits and sessions with journalists. I had the opportunity to be a part of this experience during the second session, which took place from July 14th to July 19th. The first day acted as an introduction to the program for the correspondents. For the majority of the day, advisors were available to provide tours and aid correspondents in finding their dorm rooms. To end the day, color groups met together to play introductory games before heading to

the George Mason conference room to hear Savannah Behman, a Senate Correspondent for National Journal, speak about her journalism experience while eating dinner.

Day 2: Journalism in Action

The next day, the schedule began to be set in stone. Each day began at 7:30 a.m. with a hearty breakfast and ended at 10:30 p.m. with participants being expected to be in their dorms before room checks. After breakfast, each color group separated to head to their assigned rooms within GMU. Color groups worked on the First Amendment Simulation, which included correspondents playing different roles such as a Journalism teacher, student sources, parents, and more. Acting in these roles, correspondents had to determine whether an article published was protected by the First Amendment, and what would happen if it was censored.

After the simulation, correspondents headed to listen to Tom Jackman, a reporter for The Washington Post, followed by Anna Layden, a Freelance Photojournalist who worked in the Biden administration and is now working in the Trump administration. First, Jackman showcased some of the stories he had published and shared his methods for producing successful stories. He then went around interviewing various participants about a hypothetical situation to demonstrate active reporting skills before he wrote an article including the interviews within ten minutes. To conclude his speech, he read his article out loud for correspondents to hear.

After a fifteen-minute break for correspondents to refresh their minds, Layden was introduced on stage. Layden began her speech by describing how her love of photography started, and having to deal with

doubts as a journalist. She went on to show correspondents a multitude of her pictures before she opened up the floor for correspondents to ask her questions.

Once the guest speakers concluded their speeches, correspondents made their way to dinner before heading to the Washington Memorials. Advisors allowed correspondents to walk around the World War II Memorial freely before grouping up together and heading to the Abraham Lincoln Memorial Area. While there, correspondents could go see the Lincoln Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Vietnam Women’s Memorial, and the Washington Monument.

Soon, correspondents boarded a bus to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial. After viewing the memorial for around 30 minutes, correspondents boarded back onto the bus and headed to their dorms.

Day 3: Journalism in the Capital

The third day, correspondents headed to their Field Assignment Visits, which they chose prior to the conference session. The field assignments included the DC United, The People’s House, DC News Now, the International Spy Museum, Monumental Sports Network, The Hill, the Pentagon, and the Library of Congress; I went to DC News Now for my field assignment. Correspondents on this field assignment had the opportunity to tour the DC News Now news station. On top of this, we were given the chance to watch how live news is made.

Once we made it back to the campus, Andrias White Murdaugh, an award-winning event producer and news anchor from This Morning on WTVR, dove into her experi-

Continued on page 4.



Chelmie Hyppolite posing next to Massachusetts Representative Katherine Clark’s sign before her congressional meeting with her team. CHELMIE HYPPOLITE



Behind the scenes computer room of DC News Now, where reporters receive their signals and the news is directed. CHELMIE HYPPOLITE

the main root of the problem by explaining how “the politicians and leaders are not just accused of misusing money, but there is much evidence, and many ways they have been proven to have been misusing money.”

Many Nepalis have left the country due to the neglectful government, which “are and were never focused on solving people’s real problems

like poverty all over the country, unemployment, or even education,” Ghimire continued.

Additionally, many civilian voices have showcased just how drained Nepali citizens are of their government, as these protests involved the destruction and burning of many significant buildings, which has resulted in many politicians fleeing.

With Malden High School being the most diverse high school in Massachusetts, according to Niche.com, these worldwide events are affecting many students, such as the Nepali student population.

“In terms of the protests, I’ve heard about the situation since I was younger. It is a shame how it has gone on,” mentioned Upadhayay.

Ghimire emphasized that the corrupt government was the reason his family decided to move. “My father once came to America with the dream of giving his kids a better opportunity. Because his country and government failed him.”

As a result of the protests, former Supreme Court Chief Justice Sushila Karki was appointed as prime minister, the first

female prime minister Nepal has had. The social media ban was also lifted on September 8, 2025.

This successful overthrow of the government demonstrates how vital citizens’ voices are to the government. “I am hopeful to see progress in Nepal,” concluded Upadhayay. This is just the start of the journey Nepal has to rebuild its beautiful country.

WASHINGTON JOURNALISM AND MEDIA: HIGHLIGHTING JOURNALISM AMONG HIGH SCHOOLERS

*Continued from page 3.*nalists: Kayla Sharpe, the Digital Newsletter Team Leader at Bloomberg Industry Group, Nadgeena Jerome, a multimedia journalist, Rodger Smith, aradio/podcastjournalist, and many more.

Day 4: Becoming a Journalist

On Day 4, correspondents took part in a Newsroom simulation. In this simulation, we were assigned a specific story and had to try to “sell” it to various hypothetical news stations. After this simulation, correspondents traveled to the National Press Club, which is the traditional meeting place in Washington for newsmakers and journalists.

Once we made it to the National Press Club, we heard from two guest

speakers: Carmella Boykin, a host and TikTok producer at The Washington Post, and Chris Cillizza, an independent news creator. Boykin highlighted the importance of enjoying what you do, while Cillizza demonstrated the need to make your own decisions.

Day 5: A Day in the Nation’s Capital

The last full day revolved around Capitol Hill. Correspondents were able to walk freely around the National Mall and visit various museums, such as the National Museum of African American History. Yet, correspondents who set up congressional meetings with their House Representative or Senator spent the majority of their time within Capitol Hill for their meeting.

To end the conference, correspondents enjoyed themselves at a gala where they ate, socialized, and danced.

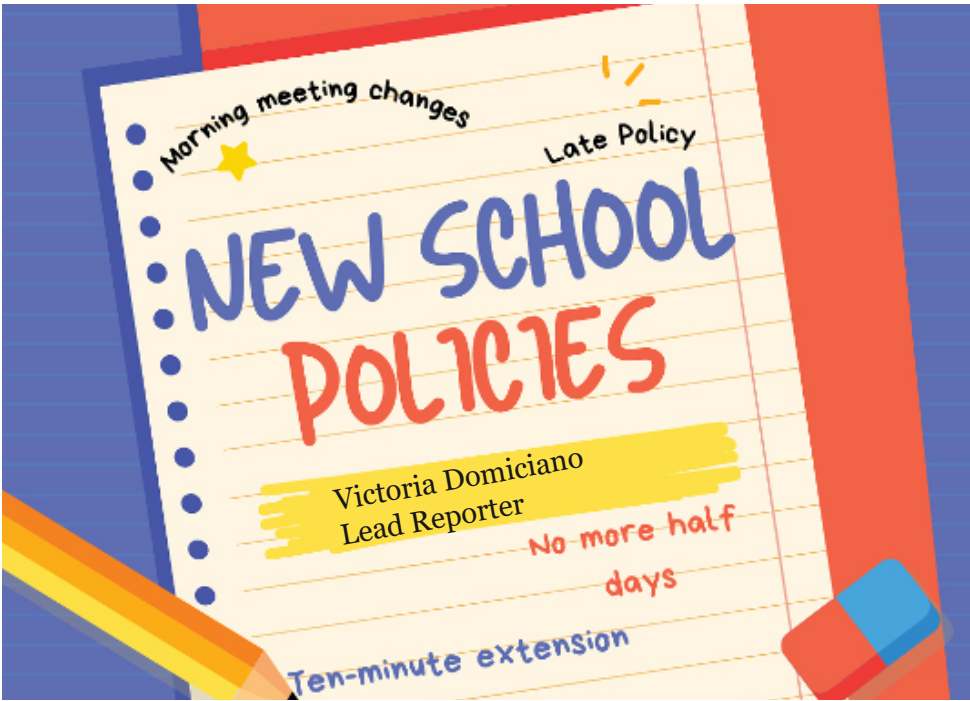
Overall, the WJMC experience was amazing. Although programs such as these may not seem to be of any importance now, they play a critical role in shaping the community of the future.



The United States Capitol building. CHELMIE HYPOLITE



Chelmie Hyppolite and her fellow correspondents posing for a picture before the gala. CHELMIE HYPOLITE



Malden High School students and faculty returned to several major changes to the schedule and policies for this school year, many of which began taking shape last year. From a later dismissal time to the removal of joy block and homeroom, the school day now feels different for both students and teachers.

One of the biggest updates, the late policy, was introduced last year as an effort to reduce hallway wandering and increase accountability for tardiness. If students are not in their class by the final bell after the warning bell, teachers lock their doors, and students need to be escorted to their class by hall monitors. While some students say it keeps hallways more organized, others feel it adds unnecessary stress. When their class is on the other side of the building, many feel anxious that they won't make it on time.

Alongside the tardy system, a highly notable change is the school day ending at 2:25 p.m. instead of 2:15 p.m. The ten-minute extension was made to better align instructional hours with state requirements and to create more consistent class periods. Despite the fact that many students believe the additional ten minutes makes no difference, some students miss the earlier release.

Junior Aaliyah Ferreira expressed, “I have less time to get onto the bus for away games, no time to even get food after

school since the extra ten minutes this year.”

Beyond the regular school day, there are no more half days on the school calendar. Instead, the district has opted for extended holiday breaks, giving students more time off around major holidays and vacations. This change is meant to simplify the calendar and provide more meaningful rest periods throughout the year. Initially, half days were meant to give faculty the opportunity for meetings, but now, meetings have been moved to after-school hours.

Joy block, a popular period known for its flexibility, allowed for many students to look forward to every gold day which landed on a Wednesday. Joy block allowed students to catch up on their work or participate in enrichment activities like watching movies, playing games, going for a walk, coloring, and many more creative, unwinding activities.

Its removal has been met with mixed feelings—some students appreciated the free time, while others used it for socializing, which the administration reportedly saw as unproductive and unnecessary. “For my mental stability, Joy block needed to be brought back, and any student would agree,” junior Julianna Mercidieu said.

“I need some time to myself, I want to have fun,” Ferreira stated. “I know we weren’t learning anything there, but for students, that’s their getaway from school work.”

Advisory has also been scaled back. Instead of meeting weekly or every other day, advisory now occurs bi-weekly, focusing mainly on academic check-ins and social-emotional learning. Extensions are now being used as class time, and junior Youssef Abu Rubieh believes “we should be using the extensions for another class period, or maybe just for studying to catch up on our classes.”

In previous years, extensions—formerly known as enrichment classes—were mainly used as free time to catch up on any missing assignments for any class. Teachers are now required to use the extension period as—quite literally—an extension of class.

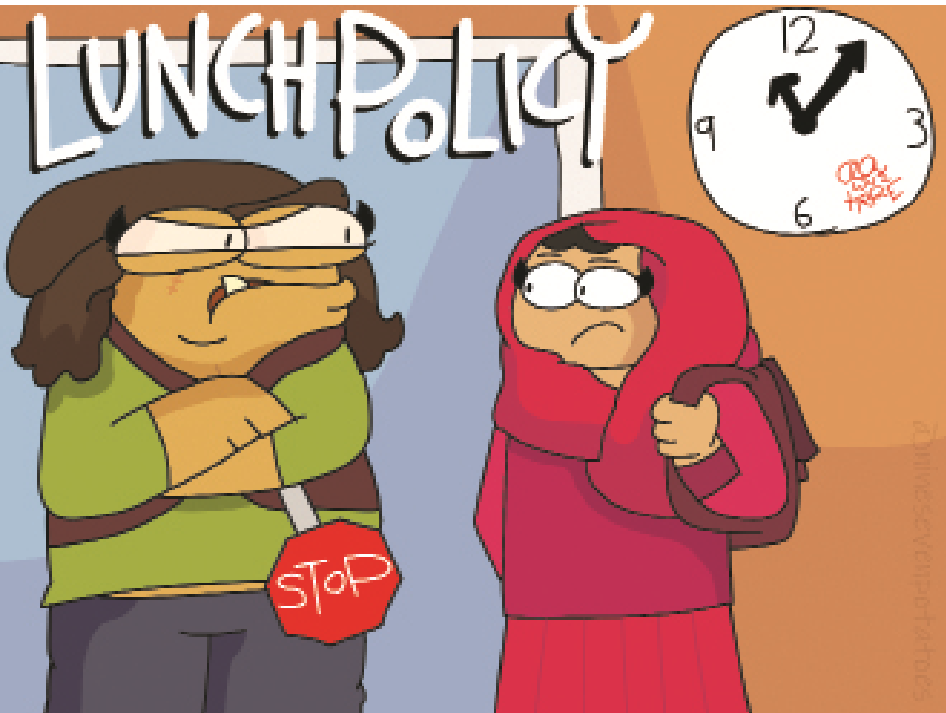
Meanwhile, homeroom has been fully eliminated. Students now go directly to their first or fifth period at the start of the day, streamlining attendance and cutting down on transitional time. “I can get to homeroom and my class on time without having to worry about the transition. I would say this new policy has positively impacted me because there were times I couldn’t make it to homeroom,” Mercidieu explains.

These new policies mark a significant shift in Malden High’s approach to time management and student accountability. While the long-term effects of these policies remain to be seen, the changes have already sparked conversations among students and staff about the balance between structure and flexibility in the school environment.

Teen Daze October Comic



Comic by Richie Cortese



Comic by Abyan Ali

"Reasonable or Redundant? New Lunch Room Policy's Effectiveness"

To read Israa Malhouni's article about the new Malden High Lunch Policy scan this QR code!



The Removal
of Directed
Studies

Continued from page 1.

was supposed to give students with busy schedules or responsibilities after school more opportunities to be on task with their schoolwork, get extra help, and utilize 80-90 minutes of academic time to the best of their abilities, and, if present in a student's schedule, were supposed to only occur for one period or one semester.

Sophomore Aya Bihi described them as "really helpful," giving her "time to finish" her work and "a sense of relaxation throughout the school day," knowing she had productive time to look forward to.

While the practice sounds efficient in concept, it soon derailed due to a few significant factors: understaffing, students not meeting the required academic time dictated by the state, and the misuse of the period.

Superintendent Dr. Timothy Sippel expressed his worries about students "not receiving the education they deserved," observing that some had two or three directed studies built into their schedule. That was essentially a loss of approximately 160-240 minutes of class time between a single two-day rotation. While one study is understandable, two or three take away from its value, reducing it to a free period, which is exactly what happened.

At the beginning of a semester, students would be inclined to attend their designated location and use the time effectively; however, as days passed, the novelty of the situation died, and precious academic time was wasted. Students did not deem the study as important as actual classes, giving them incentives to mindlessly scroll on their phones, chat with friends, or quite simply skip by feigning an excuse to go



Yen Nguyen
Head of Local

The Iconic Ferris Wheel at the Big E. Photo submitted by Andrew Xiong

The Big E is an annual autumn fair festival that goes on for 17 days in West Springfield, Massachusetts, well known for being the largest fair event located on the East Coast. From fun amusement rides to racing pigs, musical performances, and scrumptious fair food, the Big E offers a wide range of entertainment and accommodations for all visitors. This year, The Big E took place from September 12th to September 28th. Even though it only pops up for a brief amount of time each year, it continues to leave a memorable impact on its guests. "My favorite ride had to be the Ring of Fire. It had me go upside down, and it just went in really fast circles. I think it was the funnest ride there, even though I was terrified going on it," visitor Adam Embarch exclaimed.

Contrary to the quick-paced rides, some people appreciated the slow-

er rides. Visitor Rubee Cheng added, "I liked going on the Sky-High Super Wheel. I'm not a fan of fast, big rides, so the Ferris Wheel was super chill. The view was especially nice at night, when all the other rides were lit up and colorful."

Besides the thrilling rides, the carnival had many exhibits featuring farm life, which included: horse shows, pig races, and a wide variety of livestock for guests to see. As to the content featured in the horse shows, there was a series of obstacles that horses had to go through to get evaluated in their overall performance at the end. The audience had the opportunity to watch the animals perform tricks for the competition at the Coliseum. It demonstrated the horses' array in agility, flair, and talent while keeping the audience amused.

There were also other shows and petting zoos

for other farm animals, such as sheep, cattle, chickens, and goats. Visitors could feed them and watch them do tricks in their own demonstrations. The Swifty Swine race in particular was one of the biggest, busiest animal exhibits. The event was a resilient race among baby pigs in which they scurried around a track for Oreo cookies as a reward. There was space for the audience to watch the race around the track and cheer on the piglets. After the race ended, the audience was given a chance to take photos with the pigs.

"My favorite part of The Big E was watching the pig race; they were so cute," Nguyen emphasized.

The Big E included a bunch of classic fair foods as well, such as their signature creme puffs, Craz-E burgers, loaded baked potatoes, fried Oreos and dough, candied apples, and apple

cider donuts. As for the non-traditional fair foods, they had loaded potato chip nachos, pickle sundaes, deep-fried butter and whoopie pies, and

sides to visiting The Big E came with "the complicated ticket system, with the rides, the expensive food, the long traffic while driving there, and

"My favorite parts were going on the rides. I had a super fun time; being with my friends and family made my experience very memorable."
Aaliyah Ferreira

candy bar pizzas. The carnival also featured multiple music performances where fairgoers could go to watch with no additional fees. Artists such as "The KID LAROI," "Train," "ZZ Top," and "B.o.B." performed at the Big E Arena. The crazy fun foods paired well with the exciting amusement rides and groovy music performances that had big crowds singing and cheering.

"I went with friends, and my favorite part was the atmosphere; it was thrilling," Huang added. However, some down-

difficulty finding parking since it was super crowded," Nguyen explained. Despite these drawbacks, fairgoers ultimately felt like spending their days exploring the fair was worth it, despite all the cons. At the end of the event, most folks had fun because they had good company and a wide variety of attractions to check out.

"My favorite parts were going on the rides. I had a super fun time; being with my friends and family made my experience very memorable," Malden High junior Aaliyah Ferreira concluded.

shared. The process consisted of school administrators conducting 60-65 meetings and working well over 100 hours combined, even in the summer, to

kids in classes," believes Mastrangelo.

Moreover, a concern shared by both the superintendent and principal was the Massachusetts Department of Elementary



to the bathroom or nurse.

Sophomore Ruby Neicth Forbes remarked that "many times directed studies were fillers in students' schedules who didn't need them."

Student attitudes toward the system further showed how directed studies had begun to harm more than benefit, pushing the need for a schoolwide change to prevent falling down a rabbit hole from which

support, as a mix of students were dumped into one location, each with different needs. Those who decided to utilize the time could not ask for help unless the teacher taught the subject, further disadvantaging and frustrating students.

Sippel continued that one of the factors influencing the prevalence of directed studies at Malden High was the "lack of teachers in the Art and

World Language departments," causing many students who were "deeply interested in taking a class to be redirected." Instead of having the exciting opportunity to learn a new skill, it was replaced with a directed study, stagnating student growth in areas of their chosen interest.

"When I first heard about the removal, I wondered how it would work with the amount of staffing we had," noted Chemistry teacher Martin Berryman.

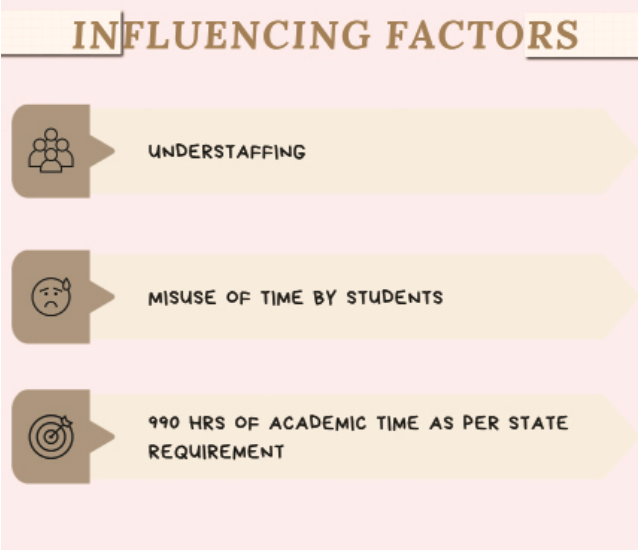
Sippel highlighted that this problem was his and the school committee's "driving motivator" to ensure that students were able to enroll in the curricula they were ambitious about, without anything holding them back. This was supported by recruiting for new teachers "earlier in the spring" rather than the summer—which had been done for the previous years—allowing the applicant pool to be far larger than before. The change proved successful with the hiring of 16 new teachers, including four art teachers and four language teach-

ers.

"I am all for not having directed studies for the reason being that students who want to excel in a class, but cannot due to its unavailability; however, for the ones who used the time valuably and need it, it's unfortunate to no longer have them," noted junior Reva Upadhayay.

Principal Chris Mastrangelo explained that the thoughts that went into this decision and the process behind it were a "long-term series of meetings, discussions, and analyses" before the administration could settle upon a tangible solution. Believe it or not, the planning for the next school year begins after winter break, and for the past few years, directed studies have been a glaring component of the annual agenda.

"Our hope when we went into this was to be able to make a dent. We had around 50 directed studies last year, and planned to get it to ten for the 2025-2026 school year; instead, we got it down to zero. We outshot our goal," Mastrangelo



see the different possibilities available to students at Malden High. They reached out to two outside agencies to run simulations and get predicted outcomes of what would occur from certain changes and inputs. This in itself took multiple cycles, especially while trying to maintain school and state standards. Despite all the challenges, the "hard work paid off with all the

ry and Secondary Education requirement stating that each student must receive 990 hours of structured learning. Due to the increased presence of directed studies and enrichment not counting as academic time—which is why it had switched to extension—the high school was just shy of meeting the mandatory hours.

Suddenly, removing studies became a part of a

Continued on page 9.

Made in Boston Festival: Small Businesses Present Big Dreams

Haset Tesfaw
Lead Reporter

On September 20th, 2025, NAAAP Boston hosted their very own “Made in Boston Festival,” located in the Faneuil Hall Marketplace. This event shone a spotlight on local small businesses who don’t receive much recognition, giving them a big chance to showcase their products. The color, creativity, and culture made the festival more than just a marketplace; it was a celebration of community and empowerment. From delicious foods and drinks to beautiful jewelry, creative artwork, books, and more, this celebration provided a wide array of things for the public to enjoy.

Vendor Nancy Daniel introduced her chai company that she created because herself and her coworkers “hate the ones you get in the market here, so we wanted to bring an authentic product to the market.” She continued, “This is an Asian-based business, so it’s nice to be a part of this group of people that support each other with their own businesses and products.”

Chef Daniel’s company is called Madhrasi, with a focus on creating chai concentrates “made with fresh ginger and spices and filled with chai.” She started this business two years ago, but has been a part of the food industry for ten years.

Disappointed with the lack of good products, Daniel took action and decided to make her own brand. “Our masala chai, our first original product here that we launched, is one of our best. Our other flavors are also catching up, though, such as our special flavors, like our rose chai, saffron chai, and more,” Daniel expressed.

Moving from drinks to food, Sun Bear Street Food is one of the food vendors that specializes in making hot dogs with unique toppings. The idea for Sun Bear came about a few months before COVID hit. The owner, Gary Yin, provided background on the history of his business.

“A few days after Christmas 2020, I received a phone call from my aunt, who told me my mother, who was living in Cambodia, had fallen and potentially had a stroke. Two days later, I was on an airplane with my older brother flying to Cambodia to rescue and

Continued on page 11.

FARMERS MARKET LEAVES IMPACT



Beatriz Oliveria
Lead Reporter

Mayor Christenson speaking to Clark Atkins, salesman of Top Shelf Cookies, before his Welcoming Week Speech.
BEATRIZ OLIVEIRA

After many different insights from the community, the farmers market was finally brought back into Malden, selling a range of agriculture and food. Marcel Schwab, financial director of The Gallery@57, Katherine Cruikshank, owner of The Downtown Paw daycare, and Jennifer Kuhnberg, owner of OnStage Dance Company, all came together to plan and execute this market at the City Hall plaza every Wednesday. With an abundance

of requests from Maldonians, these market managers did not have issues getting ground permissions or advertising. This process also consisted of calling different small businesses and asking them to “take a chance” on this upcoming market, informed Kuhnberg. Luckily, Wednesdays aligned with many people’s schedules, and vendors were willing to sell their products in Malden.

This first year, the Malden Farmers Market strived to be communi-

ty-driven by taking constant feedback from customers, involving local organizations, and hosting events in their weekly markets. “For example, we [invited] Malden Grows, the Malden Community Garden, [and] the Alzheimer’s Association. I think having other local things represented there helped to have a lot of community engagement,” said Kuhnberg.

All of these collaborations, in addition to all the regular vendors, contributed to Malden’s most

successful farmers market yet, especially with the Mayor’s constant support and presence. “I am happy to say that the vendors I’ve spoken with are pleased with the numbers attending our farmers market, which is a positive sign for the future because we weren’t sure which way this was going to go based on what has happened in the past, but from all accounts, success,” voiced Mayor Gary Christenson.

One of these collaborations included Wel-

coming Week, which was organized by Elena Martinez, Malden’s Language Access Coordinator. Welcoming Week is a week-long national celebration of various heritages, cultures, and languages.

In Malden’s second year of celebrating this holiday, Mayor Christenson began by reading its proclamation in English. He was then followed by Superintendent

Continued on page 11.



Daniel Orme from the MacCluskey Farm interacting with customer, Kelle Griffins, MHS teacher. BEATRIZ OLIVEIRA



Superintendent Dr. Sippel reading the Welcoming Week proclamation in Spanish and Portuguese. BEATRIZ OLIVEIRA

Youth and Government Presents Advocacy to Malden Students

Continued from page 1.

Senior and youth leader Thomas Conti described the program as “run by students, for students that... want to do some form of public speaking and in a governmental sphere.” YAG focuses on student development. In each of their meetings, members practice public speaking, debating, and other processes regarding legislation.

Each year, the group spends time preparing bills focusing on an issue related to Massachusetts and the community. Youths from other YMCA programs across the state meet and share their ideas.

The bills are built up until the spring, leading to YAG attending a state-wide conference where “delegates present their bills in front of their peers from across the state,” explained senior Fiona Youmell.

Out of the hundreds of proposals, twelve are chosen through numerous rounds of evaluation. “Different committees rank your proposal based on national importance, knowledge of the topic, presentation, evidence and research, and so on,” said Scott.

Following the state conference, the twelve bills are to be presented at a national level. This meeting, named the Conference on National Affairs (CONA), takes place in July in North Carolina.

Many of the delegates within the program have made it their personal goal to achieve a spot in the top twelve. Shashi Pokhrel, a sophomore at Everett High School, expressed her hopes of presenting a proposal that is well-written and researched to be able



YAG leader Karen Gately discussing protocols with the members. ANNA BUI

to “go past states and make it to CONA.”

The program has additional events, like the National Judicial Competition, which takes place in Minnesota over the span of four days. Students get to participate in a mock trial with youths from around the country, taking on the role of a judge, attorney, or other court positions.

The members of the Malden Mystic Valley Delegation highlighted how much they have been able to benefit from the program

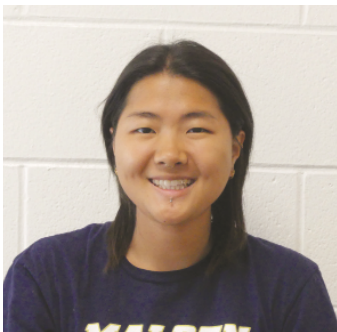
so far. With a mission of encouraging the youth to use their voice, while simultaneously forming a tight-knit community, everyone is thankful for the program and is excited to see how it will develop.

“We really want to build a community... where everyone feels comfortable talking, because it’s really difficult to share your ideas and what you personally love,” Conti declared his passion about this program, uniting people with a common interest.

MHS WARMLY WELCOMES NEW STAFF



ILEBODE RETURNS TO CERAMICS



To read "Gina Yu Brings Digital World into Malden High's Art Departments" by Joana Vassao, Rin Clough, and Bilal Psarly, scan this QR code!



To read "New Art Hire Courtney Gould brings Lifelong Experience to Malden High's" by William Yu, Antoine Alce, and Nyla Ligon Chambers, scan this QR code!



Priscarla Villefranche
Reporter
Ariana Edwardsen
Reporter
Kayla Turner
Reporter

Following the retirement of beloved ceramics teacher Julie Mullane after 18 years of teaching, Malden High School welcomes an alumnus to the ceramics department: Michaela Ilebode. Despite being sports-focused during her high school years, she had a love for the visual arts and majored in Fine Arts at the University of Massachusetts in Boston after

graduating from Malden High School in 2015. She later attended Lesley University for her master's in Art Education. "I think we're very lucky to have Ms. Ilebode here, not only because she was a former Malden High graduate, but because she is an amazing art teacher. So, I think it's wonderful that she's now teaching back where she got her roots from," Courtney Gould, another new art teacher, expressed. When it comes to her goals as a teacher, Ilebode strives to create a space where her students can have fun and explore themselves freely through their respective experiences, making sure that everyone has a positive

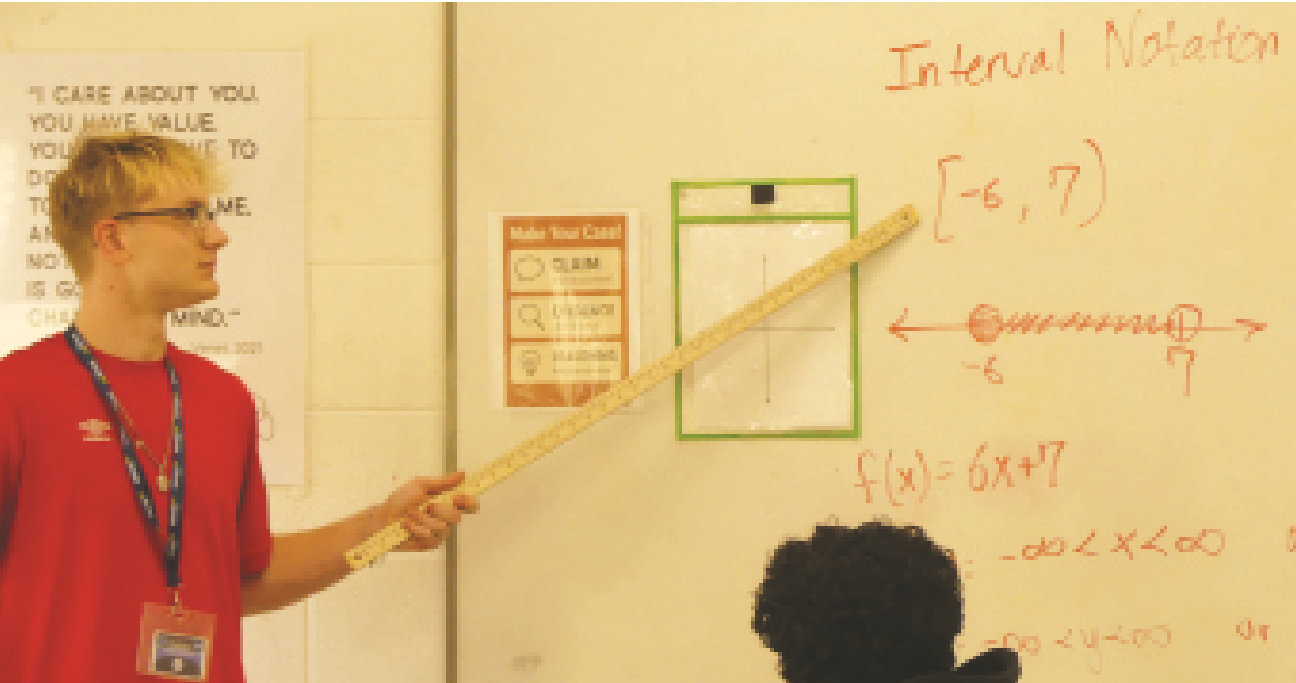
one. "Schools sometimes can be the only outlet for people to have a positive experience through their day-to-day life," she explained. "I really enjoy Ms. Ilebode's classroom environment," voiced sophomore Wafia Saruwar. "It's a very calming environment and I like the fact that she plays music because I think it sets a good environment for us to be able to tune in with our artistic abilities," she added. Scott Marino, Ilebode's former Girls' Basketball coach, described her as a great teacher who has the "ability to explain things" and is "able to connect with kids." Prior to joining Malden High School, she

had an art club at Melrose Middle School and continues to coach Girls' Volleyball there. Sophomore and varsity volleyball player Hadassa Pierre-Rene shared that "as a freshman when practicing with JV, coach Ilebode was hard on us, pushing us to exceed our personal and team expectations, using practice as a time to improve." Ilebode has made great connections with her colleagues and the players she coaches. These connections have essentially helped them succeed. She pushed her team, whether in arts or sports, to be the very best they can be. "She really does a lot for the department. She doesn't have a problem taking the lead on things,"

Gina Yu, a neighboring art teacher, shared. "For example, she did an entire spreadsheet ordering stuff for all ceramics classes," Yu continued. Ilebode has a rare, distinct ability: the ability to closely observe the classroom "while she'll still have students on the wheels at the same time," voiced Gerard Tanetta, Director of History and the Arts at Malden Public Schools. So, let's give a warm welcome to one of Malden's own, Ilebode, whose familiarity with the city of Malden and MHS is a strength among many. She's flexible but firm when she needs to be, and overall, a kind and helpful addition to the Malden High faculty.

New Math Teacher Aaron Johnson

Israa Howard
Reporter
Sarah Etienne
Reporter
Ani Guillaume
Reporter



Math teacher Aaron Johnson shows his students how to do interval notations. SARAH ETIENNE

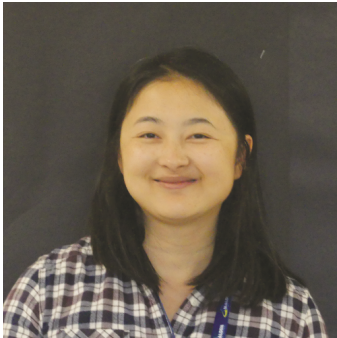
Meet Aaron Johnson, a new and impressive mathematics and statistics teacher located in Boyle House. Johnson, a graduate of Vanderbilt University, strives to bring his love for math to his students. Upon graduating from Vanderbilt, Johnson had not yet worked in education. He is from a small town in Kentucky called Corbin, which is culturally, politically, and demographically different from Boston. For instance, Malden has eight times as many residents as Corbin. After graduating, he was eager to relocate. When Johnson went to Vanderbilt University, he decided to let himself find his path as opposed to committing to a specific career. His two options were mathematics and computer science. Johnson also dabbled in tap dance and was a soloist, creating various choreographies at his university, while being on the 'Vandy Tap That' tap

dance team. Outside of school, he likes to listen to Taylor Swift and has a passion for stirring up homemade sweet treats, such as ice cream. Principal Christopher Mastrangelo expressed his enthusiasm when hiring Johnson. "We loved him in the first interview. We just couldn't move him forward because of certification." Mastrangelo continued to explain that when another job opened up, he called "to say that he's certified," allowing him to be hired. Johnson continuously impresses those around him. "He brings a lot of fresh knowledge; he just graduated from college. He took classes a lot more recently than someone like me. He's got a lot of fresh ideas, brings a lot of energy, and knows a bit more about the way that our students communi-

cate. He finds ways to integrate students' interests into math," Christopher Giordano, lead teacher of the Math Department, stated. As Johnson begins his first school year at Malden High, teaching Statistics and Math 3 College Prep and Honors, he is eager to make a lasting impact on his students. "What stands out about him is that he actually takes time to understand the well-being of his students. One thing he does to connect with both me and other students is that he finds something that we both relate to and relates it to math," junior Venusia Teklu, a student in Johnson's period three class, shared. Senior Rachel Lanza, a student in Johnson's period two Statistics class, voiced that Johnson positively "accepts criticism"

and "cares about" his students' learning. "He's open to changing methods and working around us," Lanza added, continuing to explain how even though she doesn't enjoy math, the class is a space where they can get work done and "pop jokes left and right." "So far, things are going really well, and his students are in class and learning their math. So I think Aaron's going to bring a lot of energy to his classes and hopefully get students excited to learn a subject that can be difficult for a lot of students," expressed Boyle House principal Caitlin Quinn. Johnson himself described his experience at Malden High School in the last few weeks as "so far so good." He enjoys "the student population" and "teachers here."

Jean Jones, a fellow math teacher, explained how his background can be an "asset" because he can "build connections with students who are interested in life outside New England and might be able to connect with students due to his relative youth and seeming relatability to teenagers." Jones continued, "There was a student who was not in his class, and the student asked me something that I didn't know, and he took the time to go over the concept with both of us." Above all, Johnson's eagerness and dedication to his job are visible in every class he teaches. His passion for education shines through his teaching style. By connecting with his students, he ensures that students have fun and get work done in his classes.



To read "From Nashua to Malden: Meet New Math Teacher Shu Tan" by Safa Niazi, Adam El Fatihi, and Michael Chacon, scan this QR code!



To read "Melissa Murphy Finds Her Place in Malden High's Special Education and English Department" by Dylan Chen, Vanessa Nguyen, and Khkola Niazi, scan this QR code!



MORE NEW TEACHERS

NEW BIOLOGY TEACHER INSPIRES STUDENTS’ LOVE FOR LEARNING



Meghan Fitzpatrick leans over and offers advice for a student. VANESSA NGUYEN

Vanessa Nguyen
Dylan Chen
Khkola Niazi
Reporters

New teacher at Malden High School, Meghan Fitzpatrick, is already meeting her high expectations. Fitzpatrick, a 2019 alumna of Malden High School, has already brought in a sense of comfort and nostalgia to many while teaching biology in room B344.

As a recent graduate from Northeastern University, she completed most of her college life online to further her education in teaching and science, to then share her passion for biology with students. “I want kids to enjoy science, because a lot of people often think they come in and it’s hard, or it’s boring, but it’s actually super cool,” Fitzpatrick voiced.

“Honestly, watching her teach, it’s like she’s been teaching for 25 years. Sometimes people are just born for this profession, and I think she’s one of them. She’s a natural,” Chris Mastrangelo, principal of Malden High School, expressed.

During her time last year covering for biology teacher Jessica Webber, many stu-

"SOMETIMES PEOPLE ARE JUST BORN FOR THIS PROFESSION, AND I THINK SHE’S ONE OF THEM. SHE’S A NATURAL." Chris Mastrangelo

dents remarked that she was a wonderful teacher. Irie Debel explained: “She’s really a good teacher, making things easier to understand and ... she is very thorough with her explanations, and I like that.”

To connect with her students, Fitzpatrick makes sure she can find ways to relate to them; she asks them what foods they like when discussing the digestive system, or checks up on them whenever they are upset, making sure that they are heard. Ash Doolley, who was also in Webber’s class during the time she was on maternity leave, said that she was very close with many students and that being taught by her felt like being taught by an “older sister.”

Fitzpatrick has already inspired many students, lighting the candle in their path to science. Not only that, but making them comfortable around her and willing to learn, knowing that they have a teacher they could rely on.

“Science has never really been my thing, but Ms. Fitzpatrick did make it a lot more fun. I can’t say that I’m head over heels with biology or science in general, but having

Ms. Fitzpatrick for the time that I did really helped me feel comfortable with biology for that time,” Dooley continued.

When Fitzpatrick was a student here at Malden High School, she built many good relationships with her teachers. “She was a very great student, she was very quiet but very bright, and she did really well in honors biology; and then I also had her as a senior, she is very bright and loves science, and all the teachers thought very highly of her,” Webber said.

Webber watched her student grow into a teacher who was able to share the same passion for science as herself. “I love biology, but I do know that not all of the students do, so to see someone love the same thing I do and how it sparks them to do it, it makes me so proud. Especially when we needed more teachers,” she stated.

With high hopes for her future students, Fitzpatrick hopes to share her passion for science with all. If her students plan to follow in her footsteps, her class can be a stepping stone for those who are interested or plan to pursue a career in science.

Bringing in a Pop with the New Hire in the Spanish Department

Harmonie Ortiz
Aaliyah Nowlan
Kevin Prum
Reporters

Ally Patrie has recently joined the World Language department as an educator, teaching both Spanish 1 and 3 at the College Prep and Honors level. Her engaging personality serves as an inspiration to her classroom, fostering a positive and fulfilling learning environment for her students.

Patrie had previously been interviewed for the open Spanish teacher position last year and was accepted. However, at the time she was admitted, she had been teaching at North Andover High School and didn’t want to leave her students “without finishing their education.” Due to this, she had rejected the open slot.

Coming into the new school year, she had

called over the summer, and Christopher Mastrangelo, Principal of Malden High School, was delighted to welcome her, as the slot was still open.

Alessia Guglielmi, a teacher in the same department as Patrie, explained she first met her at the YMCA, where Patrie taught classes before her current position, becoming acquainted with her for about a year prior to her employment at MHS. “She’s been lovely to work with, she’s full of energy, very vibrant, outgoing, talkative, and she has a lot of experience with teaching,” continued Guglielmi.

Patrie brought this new energy to Malden High, showcasing her personality, leading her students to be excited to walk in and learn through her enthusiasm.

Robert Grinnell, another teacher in the World Language department,

described Patrie as “very knowledgeable, especially on the topic of Spain,” as well as having “a lot of energy and expertise that adds to the World Language department.” She has “a friendly, approachable personality,” added Grinnell.

Patrie is a mother of two toddlers, one who attends Cheverus Catholic School in Malden. Patrie shared that in her downtime, she teaches Zumba classes four times a week, expressing her love and passion for Zumba, a hobby she participates in during her free time.

Patrie started teaching because her mother taught in Malden for 30 years. “She has always been my example in just about every aspect of my life; it only seemed fitting to follow in her footsteps professionally, too,” Patrie expressed.

“I had worked at my old school for a long time;



Ally Patrie is explaining the paper to Kenny Turcios Melgar. AALIYAH NOWLAN

it was a great community, but budget cuts led to five language teachers being laid off. I was not one of them, but my leaving meant someone else could stay, so I decided to look at other options. When I saw Malden had an opening, it just made sense,” Patrie explained.

As the school year continues, her bubbly personality welcomes students as they step into her classroom.



Ally Patrie posing for photo. HARMONIE ORTIZ

A Teacher There to Make a Path for Students Coming to America: Alicia Roth

Aaliyah Nowlan
Harmonie Ortiz
Kevin Prum
Reporters



Alicia Roth posing for photo. HARMONIE ORTIZ

At Malden High School, new ELL teacher Alicia Roth helps all students feel seen and supported while they learn a new language, aspiring to have her students feel as comfortable as possible in her class while also encouraging them to develop their English speaking skills.

Roth, a graduate from UMass Boston with a degree in Linguistics, worked at Cambridge Rindge and Latin before coming to Malden High. She is experiencing a welcoming community willing to help her. Roth stated that she has opportunities to learn a variety of languages due to Malden High’s diversity.

Patrick Healey, a health teacher adjacent to Roth’s classroom, observed that she “seems like a teacher who really brings her whole personality into her teaching.” Roth intends to be open with her students because it is not only a new environment for her, but also for them.

Roth’s class has made a significant impact on Marvens Fanfan and Ezequiel Souza, two of her students in Period 5. “She is a very good teacher for me. I feel good in her class,” Fanfan shared. In her efforts to create a comfortable environment, she has taken the time to learn Haitian Creole, Fanfan’s native language. One of her other students, Souza, expressed, “I feel like she really pushes me to speak more English.”

Roth wants to make a big impact on her students, wanting “to give them the option to go to college or push doors open for immigrants who have taken the time to learn English.” She continues to build on this goal by creating suitable work for all different languages and providing personal time to every student in hopes of giving them better chances to succeed.

The Removal
of Directed
Studies

Continued from page 5.

larger issue regarding our educational legislature. With the implementation of the new policies, MHS no longer falls under the requirement; in fact, it surpasses the 990 hours with approximately “1010-1020 hours,” concluded Mastrangelo.

Although directed studies have been removed, there are some alternatives for students who do not have a full set of classes or have chosen a separate course of action, such as “School-to-Career, Early College or Dual Enrollment with Bunker Hill Community College, work experience outside of school, and AP studies,” elaborated Sippel.

School-to-Career is scheduled as an elective on a student’s transcript, whereas Early College or Dual Enrollment takes the place of one of Malden High’s periods, allowing students to have one less class period due to enrollment in a college class after school or during the school day.

For work experience outside of school, students would have to show proof of an occupation and justify leaving early to work a shift in place of fourth or seventh period. The last choice available is only to those taking two or more APs. Students can sign up for an AP study, a time dedicated to completing assignments, and have that as one of their scheduled periods.

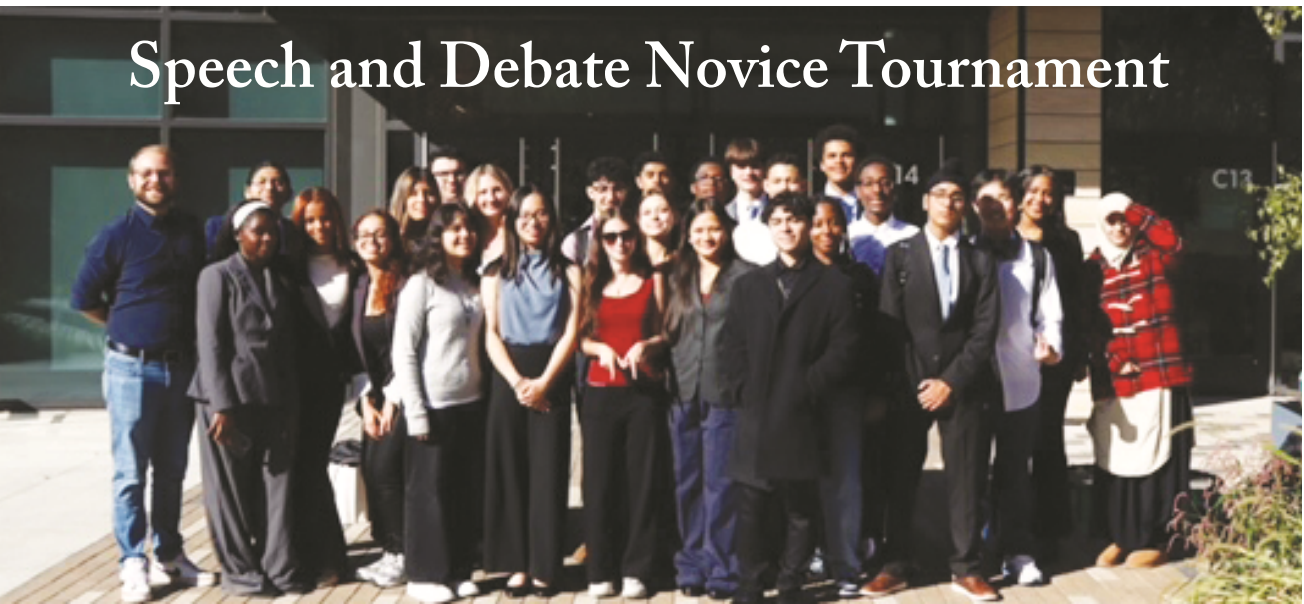
Senior Jessica Chen shared that as someone “taking 6 AP courses,” she “couldn’t be happier about the existence of AP studies,” allowing students like her to “push themselves academically without worrying about not having enough time to finish their work.” This differs vastly from the previous system, as exclusive students have access to it; therefore, only a handful of such classes are present.

Here is where a difference of opinion arises. Most teachers agree that the number of students in directed studies last year was overwhelming and should not have been that way; however, some argue whether its complete removal from the curriculum is effective, particularly in terms of independent work time, counseling, and addressing inequalities.

Freshman and junior counselor for Boyle House students, Taryn Gabbay, expressed how, in her role, she finds it “more challenging to pull students and respect classtime” when students do not have free periods within their schedules. There are a lot of “demands for counselors to meet with certain students.”

Directed studies used to be a time when students were able to get things done that they

THE SKY IS THE LIMIT



Speech and Debate team group photo in front of Sharon High School. Photo submitted by Thomas Conti.

Israa Howard
Reporter

Ani Guillame
Reporter

Through Speech and Debate tournaments such as the one that took place on October 18, 2025, students are able to argue various topics in competition with other schools.

Speech and Debate students and judges wake up as early as four to five AM to prepare themselves for the big day. They have completed weeks of preparatory work in class, practicing skills to be ready for the first novice tournament of the year.

One school Malden competed against was Sharon High School,

a prestigious, highly ranked public high school located in Sharon, Massachusetts. “They seemed prepared and serious,” junior Wongel Yohannes remarked on her feelings towards the schools they would be competing against.

“I saw a bunch of the students, and they seemed like prodigies. They were very good at speech and debate,” junior Jason Dutaille noted.

Even with 42 competing schools in the tournament, Malden’s extremely diverse student body allowed it to stand out among the schools participating. For schools like MHS, it is important to go out and represent not only the school, but the city and the individual

cultures within the team.

Speech and Debate teacher, Kurtis Scheer, additionally stated: “We should focus on these opportunities because the schools that go to these tournaments do not look like Malden High School. They are from wealthy suburbs and private elite schools. There is no Malden High School equivalent there.”

“When we start to win, these other schools get nervous because they have gate-kept this opportunity. The more we go, the more we win. The more we participate, the better opportunities we will have,” Scheer continued.

A lot of students joined Speech and Debate from mutual rec-

ommendations. Some joined due to their friend or teacher recommending it, and some were introduced to the team as a club after school—but what kept students invested was Scheer’s exemplary teaching style, techniques, and overall personality.

“He’s a great guy. He’s part of the reason why I came back. I think he’s the reason why so many people came back,” Yohannes exclaimed.

Speech and Debate at Malden High began as a club with a few people and has turned into a class with tons of eager students hoping to grow their public speaking, researching, writing, and argumentative skills. Students report that the class

has helped them in those exact areas, for example, Yohannes elaborated: “Something I want to do in the future is major in law. You need to be a good public speaker, be able to build strong arguments, and have evidence to support them. I feel like it really teaches me how to do that.”

In regard to Speech and Debate’s ability to improve speaking skills, sophomore JJ Scott stated, “I became more confident. I feel like when I’m confident speaking, it gives me confidence in other areas too.”

Senior Leena Chawqui expressed a similar point of view. “It made me have more confidence in speaking, and it made me a better researcher too,” illustrating how Scheer encourages students to sort to their strong minds, and not towards physical actions in quarrels.

He strongly conveys how he feels that “discussion and debate is so far from the norm in society these days—people don’t know how to respectfully disagree with people without resorting to violence, insulting, or name-calling.”

“There was a time when two people could disagree on important issues, but still maintain a friendship, a relationship, regardless of how they feel on particular social, political issues... If you’re going to be a carpenter, a plumber, a salesperson, anything, you need to be able to communicate, to persuade, and get your message across. This is the perfect place to do it,” Scheer continued.

However, there is one particular obstacle standing in the way of these tournaments: financial hardship. Even though the team fundraises, as they complete more tournaments, they become more expensive.

To enter each person must pay a \$10 fee, after a few tournaments “that’s \$1,000 right there just to enter,” Scheer noted.

The team is also tasked with supplying their own judges, which can be difficult because they are asking people to volunteer their whole Saturday. Scheer continued, “If we don’t have enough judges, we can’t bring everybody. The rule is you have five competitors and you have to bring one judge for every one of them.”

Throughout these difficulties, Malden High continues to shine through. A total of 28 students participated in the novice tournament this year, and 15 out of the 28 received 1st or 2nd place.

“The behavior in representing Malden High was at a ten here,” Scheer exclaimed.

Scheer shared more on this by explaining, “They were able to pull them in and allow for different thoughts. The tournament organizers came up to me at the end, saying Malden High was especially respectful in this tournament.”



could not in a normal class, like meeting with their counselor or scheduling extra help sessions with a teacher. Now, that has become harder, specifically for those with after-school activities or responsibilities.

Gabbay mentioned that the types of students who benefited the most from the program were those who “participated in sports, had to look after their siblings, or had a job” because then they had built in time into their schedule at school to get assignments done, compared to doing it at 11 or 12 at night.

“When I had a study, I found it very helpful and found school to be less stressful. For me, it was because I had so many other things to do outside of school, and having a period of class to finish all the missing assignments helped me a lot, and I’m

sure it helped many other students,” voiced sophomore Meybelin Guadron Nieto. She continued, “If I had a question or needed help, I was allowed to go ask my teachers, and I felt less drained and more motivated to stay on task.”

Some students genuinely do not have the time outside of school; therefore, having a period during school allows them a chance to be productive. “I felt so much more sane knowing that throughout the day I had a chance to sit down and get things done,” added Upadhayay.

Furthermore, some argue that only providing students enrolled in AP classes an opportunity for study undermines the workload of those in honors or college prep. Challenging course loads look different for each student, and designating

an advantage to only a certain population of students is unfair to the rest. For example, one individual could be in all honors classes, but also be playing field hockey and have a job, compared to a student taking just two AP courses. In this situation, the all-honors student would have fewer opportunities to get work done outside of class, initially benefiting from a study too.

New Spanish hire, Allyson Patrie, also happens to be a monitor for an AP study, and claimed that she “understands if kids that are not in AP are frustrated” for having been denied a study due to their course load not being “deemed rigorous enough.” She added that a CP or Honors “student’s course can be just as hard” for them as an “AP course is for an AP student.”

One of Gabbay’s concerns was that the other alternatives were only applicable to certain student populations. Only juniors and seniors can apply to School-to-Career and Early College—sophomores can apply to EC, but it’s rare—while work experience outside of school is exclusively available to seniors.

To counter this issue, Berryman proposes to have a “breadth of options for students” to participate in and to promote equal representation. This could be seen in the future as having more “language offerings” or “science academies dedicated to one-on-one tutoring and making up labs or tests,” he offered.

The removal of directed studies at Malden High marked a significant shift in how academic time is structured and valued. While the decision was driven by legitimate concerns—state requirements, staffing shortages, and misuse of the time—it sparked a broader conversation about equity, support, and flexibility in student schedules. The introduction of targeted alternatives reflects a commitment to rigor and opportunity, yet also highlights gaps for students outside those programs.

As the school moves forward, balancing structures with compassion will be the key—ensuring that every student, regardless of their academic track or personal responsibilities, has the time and resources they need to thrive.

THE ROARING RETURN OF THE 20s:

Continued from page 1.

such as masquerade masks, striped ties, bows, champagne glasses, and crowns for attendees to pose with. Students formed a line, eager to capture the night to reminisce later. Meanwhile, the Holland Gallery was being used to sell food and drinks, with tables and chairs readily available for use.

There were three stations in the Gallery: one for drinks, one for hot dogs, and one for snacks. Junior Angela Lam and senior Social Media Coordinator Amanda Retamero Granja sold colorful Gatorades and Shirley temples, using lemon-lime soda, cranberry syrup, and maraschino cherries. In front of them, seniors Destiny Leon and Volunteer Coordinator Oscar Luc were selling hot dogs with freshly grilled sausages on standby. At the last station, seniors Secretary Gabriela Parini Cordova—also Head Copy-Editor of Print and Social Media for The Blue and Gold—and Caden Toomey sold candies and snacks, while a popcorn machine kept hot-off-the-press popcorn warm in black and white boxes.

Sophomore Lillyanna Keogh described homecoming as an event that “brings people together” and that “every student should at least attend it once in their high school career.”

As the night progressed and moonlight replaced the sun, more students were comfortable, and gradually a dance circle formed. One or two students would go into the middle and dance to a song, while students on the outside loudly cheered for them. Most, if not all, of the students danced when the “Cha-Cha Slide” by Mr. C The

Slideman blasted through the speakers, encouraging students to follow the choreography sung in the lyrics. Every time a well-known song circled through the playlist, such as “Call Me Maybe” by Carly Rae Jepsen, “Look What You Made Me Do” by Taylor Swift, or “No Role Modelz” by J. Cole,

Homecoming Court. Just like every year, a Google Form was sent out, asking Malden High students to vote for Homecoming King and Queen. This year, the title was awarded to seniors Editor-in-Chief of The Blue and Gold, Chouaib Saidi and Jaziarra Antoine.

ideas for the event; however, some aspects that they had discussed were cut from the final execution due to budget constraints. Do continued, “we wanted to make sure the event wasn’t boring and lame,” all while ensuring that they could still make a profit. Fortunately, they were

Youmell included that they “had over 200 ticket sales and many more were purchased at the door,” highlighting the event’s triumph. Looking back, the senior officers recognize how far they have come from their sophomore year. Do commented on how “everyone has gotten so much better with communication. Everyone is there and puts in as much effort as they can to help set up, be there to sell food, and upsell our events.”

With the success that came from all their hard work, the council believes they could not have made it where they are without the help of their class advisor, Nancy Wentworth. Being there through each moment to support her officers, “she’s truly an inspirational woman and the keystone to all of our council events,” Do concluded.

In a single night, Malden High’s student body was able to explore both the 20s—1920s and 2020s—hang out with their friends, and enjoy warm food and colorful beverages. The Class of 2026’s homecoming was marked as memorable, a great success, and approved by the ghost of Fitzgerald—wherever he may be.



Junior Angela Lam and Class of '26 Social Media Coordinator Amanda Retamero Granja selling Gatorade and shirley temples. FATIMA HUSAIN

a gasp of recognition, followed by “this is my favorite song!” would be heard.

“My first homecoming was a fun and exciting experience. I was joyous to represent my grade and appreciative to be selected by my freshman class,” shared freshman Ruth Mekonnen, who was voted for ninth-grade

The Co’26 Student Council had been preparing for this night months in advance so everything was “organized and planned as soon as possible,” explained President Linh Do. Meetings were held consistently, sorting out all of the details needed to make the dance a success. The officers had many

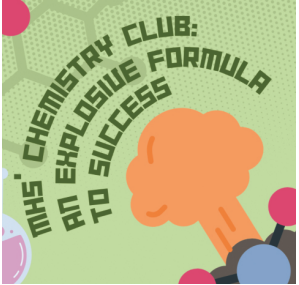
able to make a bigger profit than they had expected with the surprising number of attendees. Luc compared homecoming to their previous dances, like the Spring Soiree, which “didn’t end up so good.” He expressed how glad he was that the night “was a huge success with the food, attendance, and participation.”



Students excitedly watch others on the dance floor. FATIMA HUSAIN



To read Kyle Dang's article, "Bonding and Baking: MHS Baking Club Has Recipes for Success", scan this QR code!



To read Kyle Dang's article, "MHS Chemistry Club: An Explosive Formula to Success", scan this QR code!



To read Emily Weihs's article about The Sustainable Development Club, "Reviving the Mission to a Better Community with SDG Club", scan this QR code!



Grilling Up Korean Cuisine

BBQ CHICKEN OPENS IN MALDEN

Evelyn Ruan
Head of Sports

As you leave school, the pizza you ate earlier did not fill you up, making your stomach grumble loudly. Looking around the busy streets of Malden Center, the different options of restaurants do not seem to satisfy you yet. Smelling the salty and fragrant air, you instantly realize that you are craving something savory, crispy, and delicious.

What is something that is savory and crispy, yet can satisfy your cravings and fill you up? There is only one thing that can satisfy you this afternoon: fried chicken. Not just any fried chicken,

but specifically Korean fried chicken, known for its wide variety of flavors ranging from traditional classic golden chicken to mouth-watering spicy chicken with extra-crispy skin that is not too greasy.

A restaurant that hits all of your cravings is BBQ Chicken, a chain restaurant that started in Seoul, South Korea, and had their grand opening in Malden on September 2nd. Not only do they serve fried chicken, but also classic Korean dishes like spicy rice cakes called ddeok-bokki, kimchi fried rice, and many kinds of side dishes to pair with the main course.

In just a couple of days after its grand opening, the restaurant’s popularity had already reached the halls of MHS, making many students eager to try out this new restaurant. Senior Christina Robinson-McCaskill, who had heard from a

friend and had seen the big sign upon its arrival, shared that the environment of the restaurant is “very lovely, it has a comfy ambiance with a modernized look,” adding the kind hospitality from the staff, it is “a great place to eat out with friends and chat!”

Robinson-McCaskill enjoys the dishes that are served, but highly suggests getting the golden fried chicken, stating, “it’s a classic and I can never go wrong with it. As someone with a low spice tolerance, I’m really grateful for a restaurant with such a variety of flavors. They still include an option for the ‘picky eaters’ like myself.” Overall, she recommends this restaurant to anyone willing to try something new around Malden.

Similarly, junior Vicky Chen also stated that the restaurant’s environment was “very lively.” Chen

had heard about BBQ Chicken from her brother, but had also seen its opening while walking around Malden Center. Chen shared that she “was excited when BBQ Chicken opened because I love fried chicken,” and would recommend getting the “galbi boneless fried chicken... if it’s your first time at BBQ Chicken.”

Junior Camila Ramas also enjoyed her experience at BBQ Chicken, commenting that she felt excited when they opened. Hearing about this restaurant from her cousins who went to the one in Boston, she felt “the environment overall was very nice and clean and presentable, the employees are really friendly and they provide quick service.” Ramas’ favorite on the menu was the galbi chicken and would “recommend this dish to people who like sweet



The front entrance to BBQ Chicken. EVELYN RUAN

and savory.” Not only has this restaurant impacted students at MHS, but its popularity has also made its way to teachers as well. Health teacher Patrick Healey and Media and Film teacher James Valente, who went together to check out this restaurant, both enjoyed the experience.

Healey shared that the inside of the place “felt like it was designed for socializing and kind of quick bites, bringing peo-

ple together...I liked the vibe there.” He also added, “It’s great for there to be restaurants that are affordable, accessible, and welcoming...I think the more places that can embrace unique flavors can also meld traditions.” He highly recommends this place and stated his favorite menu item was the cheesling fries.

Likewise, Valente was familiar with BBQ Chicken since he had gone to

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MADE IN BOSTON FESTIVAL

Small Businesses Present Big Dreams



What you see as you're walking into the festival at Faneuil Hall Marketplace. HASET TESFAW

Continued from page 6.

take care of my mom," he explained.

That was his first time in Cambodia. Yin didn't know a single person there and was not capable of speaking the language. He only had family, whom he'd never even met. "Arriving in Cambodia and being there for nearly six weeks was a life-changing experience. There was this feeling of cultural familiarity. Sounds, smells, and tastes that felt comforting," Yin began. "But at the same time, I realized I was deeply American. I was a person who walked both worlds, and for one reason or another wasn't completely one or the other."

Being there sparked something inside of him. Yin wanted to pursue "the understanding of this cultural conflict, this feeling of two worlds ebbing and flowing with and against one another. The idea of what

it means to be part of a diaspora born from incredible trauma and shock."

With Sun Bear, Yin hopes to tell his story and express his "painful confusion that echoes in my generation of Cambodian Americans born to parents who survived genocide and started life over again." He wants to tell his story and give people an unforgettable experience through food.

Custom jewelry maker Katie Lee, artist Megan Tran, and author Tracy Guan are other vendors who came to showcase their hard work to the people of Boston.

"I'm promoting my business here. I do pop-ups only, so this was a great opportunity for the Asian community to get together and present our businesses and support each other," Lee stated. "This is custom-fit jewelry every time, and we weld it on for our

customers."

Lee began her business two and a half years ago, after realizing that permanent jewelry services were uncommon in the area, believing it would be a "good trend to bring to Boston."

Tran then expressed her passion for her artwork and the ways it connects to her identity was a key to her business. "I'm a Bostonian, born and raised in Boston. I'm an upcoming artist, and personally, I want to feel valued."

This "Made in Boston Festival" reminded everyone of the creativity and talent existing within their own city. Thanks to every vendor, every business brought something unique to the table and shared their stories through their work, all while connecting with others.



Nancy Daniel's chai company, Madhrasi. HASET TESFAW



Megan Tran (right) sitting at her stand with her artwork. HASET TESFAW

Malden's First Successful Farmers Market Leaves a Lasting Impact on the Community

Continued from page 6.

Dr. Sippel, who read the proclamation in both Portuguese and Spanish, who then passed the microphone to Egra Pierrette, Malden Catholic Dean of Community, who read the proclamation in Haitian Creole. The microphone was then given to Ana Tse, who read in Cantonese, and finally followed by Mei Hung, Executive Director of the Chinese Culture Connections, who read the proclamation in Mandarin.

There are over 60 different spoken languages in Malden, and Martinez believed that having this proclamation read in multiple languages would help people from different backgrounds feel welcomed. "I saw some people smiling and nodding their heads in acknowledgement or surprise that the Superintendent was speaking in two languages," Martinez continued.

"I like the whole concept of welcoming everybody. I'm very into unity through diversity, which is bringing people of different backgrounds together and celebrating the diversity of that mix. Malden is that mix, Malden's got the mix," shared David Weigert, an audience member of the Welcoming Week celebration.

Overall, the farmers market has been successful in further bringing the community together. However, Mayor Christenson worries about where its funding would come from in the following year. This year, the market was funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), a block grant the city received during Joe Biden's presidency, which is now running low.

With the abundance of support from the community this year, Mayor Christenson hopes that this funding issue will be resolved and that the farmers market will continue to make its mark on Malden.

Continued from page 10.

other locations around the Boston area; he was excited that Malden had opened a location. "I think that having this right near a high school where kids are looking for a different type of menu item, it can introduce them to the idea that this is going to be the type of restaurant that's going to be in the area that they go to school in, especially if they stay around here. So I think it's a great place for it."

Valente's favorite go-to items were the kimchi fried rice and soy garlic wings, but he also has

been getting the cheesy fries, commenting that "they're so good" and that "they taste like a cheese puff."

Amusingly, when that specific place was empty, someone had told him that they were looking for a place to open BBQ Chicken but could not find the right location. Valente said, "Wouldn't it be great if that's where they went?" About 3 weeks later, he saw a big sign that said "Coming soon." "I kind of wished it to happen, and it happened," Valente continued.

As a big fan of BBQ

Chicken, he surely recommends students to check it out. "I think that if you are a student and you're on a limited budget, they have some items that are not that expensive and obviously really tasty and really filling... I think that if they just open their palate, something new and different, they're gonna find something they really like."

The next time you feel hungry and need something to fill you up, grab your friends and check out BBQ Chicken's kind environment, easy access, and delicious food on 8 Pleasant St.



Tasty corn cheese side dish to pair with the chicken wings. EVELYN RUAN



Alexia Lima
Managing Editor

Promotional image of members of the cast of *Passengers* in performance.
Photo from Grace Gershenfeld.

Defying the bounds of athleticism and physicality through a transformative journey of acrobatics and music, the 7 Fingers circus troupe’s production of *Passengers*, directed by Shana Carroll and presented by the American Repertory Theater (ART), immersed students in a depiction of life’s ever-changing landscape through a train ride.

Malden is one of the six public high schools that is a part of ART’s Levine Learning Lab—a collaboration-based initiative that fosters inquisitiveness and social-emotional learning through student workshops on ART productions, entering its third season with the program.

Commencing the 2025-26 season, *Passengers* visits Boston through the ART with its third cast of the show. By analyzing the development of complex relationships between the ten passengers on the same train, the student workshops strive to answer the show’s essential questions: In what ways does life happen while in transit, and is the journey truly more important than the destination?

A week before the show, on Wednesday, September 17th, ART students were excused from their third-period classes to participate in an immersive workshop hosted by Learning Lab Lead Vahdat Yeganeh. Held in the Jenkins Auditorium, Yeganeh led the students through various exercises that focused on a key aspect of the show—the importance of building an ensemble.

“Our workshop...taught us a lot about trust and working with those around us, which I think would help alleviate some anxiety we would have when watching the show, because that show was all about trust,” sophomore Minerva Davenport explained.

The introductory workshop aimed to enlighten students on how significant eye contact, body language, and vulnerability are within an ensemble, especially while working on a show such as *Passengers*. Senior Noha Ahmed described how performers “couldn’t really talk” to communicate cues during intricate acrobatic scenes.

As students reflected on the skills they acquired together, the day of the show snuck up on them. On the afternoon of September 24th, students boarded a shuttle bus that would be taking them to the Loeb Drama Center at Harvard University, where the show would be displayed later that evening.

Upon arrival, students had the opportunity to brief-

ly observe the cast of *Passengers* rehearsing their skills before the show. Christelle Vitupier, Resident Director and Tour Manager, greeted the students and explained the show’s history on tour as well as the current cast’s preparation process in the days leading up to that night.

Students were then directed to a dance studio where they would be eating a complimentary dinner and participating in another workshop before the show. Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School (CRLS), another high school that is a part of the Levine Learning Lab, joined Malden for the pre-show activities, and after many boxes of pizza were consumed, the second workshop began.

In this workshop led by Learning Lab Assistant Ariella Kasmer-Jacobs, students were asked to walk and “fill the space” of the studio while making intentional changes in their tempo, topography, and spatial relationships. Davenport described the purpose of this exercise was to “show us how you might all be going to the same place, but how you get there is different.” Students were also prompted with different circumstances while filling the space so they could observe how their motivations affect their physical choices.

Shifting the focus to the theme of the different journeys we take through life, students split into groups where they were prompted to create two tableau scenes depicting any journey, while paying special attention to how they transitioned between still images. Ahmed expressed that this exercise “really resonated with ‘*Passengers*’ because we did something similar to what they did in a way,” as tableau was commonly used throughout the show.

The time to see all of the workshop preparations come to fruition finally arrived as students were given tickets and escorted back into the theater. In the ART tradition, two Learning Lab students introduce the show to the audience by presenting a brief “welcome.” Senior and ART Teen Council member Julia Cardoso represented Malden as she completed the welcome alongside a student from CRLS.

A singular breath—in and out, in and out, transformed into a chorus of synced rhythmic breathing, introducing the ensemble of passengers swaying to the lull of the train assembled of chairs. The music swells, and the stage is struck to now display a bustling train station; passengers crossing each other via tumbling train passes with carry-ons in hand and performing hula

hoop illusions.

While each passenger frantically organizes their carry-on, an aerialist removes silks from their bag and ascends into the air, easing into an intense and emotionally packed routine supported by a beautiful soundtrack.

Transitioning back to the train, the passengers seem to be individually focused on their own tasks and pastimes, until one rises from his seat and begins juggling throughout the aisle. Irritated at first, his fellow passengers complain, yet provoke him by rolling more balls his way. Despite the increasing number of balls, the passenger seamlessly juggles them and leaves both his audience on the train and in the theater in awe.

Two characters who were previously bickering on the train ride then embark on a trapeze together to perform a passionate duet depicting the complexities of their relationship. “I was scared out of my mind, especially in the trapeze scene because of that drop,” Davenport exclaimed.

As the storyline had been driven mostly through music, the only dialogue-driven scene was nothing but intentional to the message of the show. The passengers assemble, and a performer delivers a monologue to the rest of the group about Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity. He references Einstein’s “Relativity Train” thought experiment, where two lightning strikes are observed from the front and back of a train by someone on the train and someone on the platform.

The finding of an observer’s motion altering their perception of time is connected back to the show and the ensemble’s performance of gravity-defying superhuman motions, displaying how their perception of time as they move through their journeys is constantly shifting based on each performer’s impact on one another.

While it’s impossible to capture an appropriate description of the intensity and emotion of each spectacle during the 90-minute show, ending just as it began, the passengers arranged their seats in a semicircle and fell back into their rhythmic breathing before the lights blacked out, signaling the end of the show.

The audience erupted in applause, giving praise to the ensemble troupe and the spectacle they had just had the pleasure of seeing. ART Teacher Leader and Play Production teacher Ariana Messana described the show as “absolutely mesmerizing and, as a teacher, very inspiring. Getting to see a show that had so many different talents being displayed for an audience was not just impressive, but it also helped me as a director get ideas about things that I could do in my theater with my students.”

Yeganeh returned to MHS for a third and final reflective workshop on Wednesday, October 1st, where students participated in physical exercises that channeled the emotions they had while watching the show. In a final group discussion, each student went around the room and explained what their journey would look like and answered the show’s essential question.

The group came to the consensus that the journey is more important than the destination for a plethora of reasons; the journey is most impactful through the lessons one learns and the connections one makes with those they encounter, rather than reaching a definitive destination.

Passengers teaches us that while you may be going in the same direction, we each have our own motivations for our individual journeys and indirectly impact the journeys of those around us.

So next time you take the T, think twice about your fellow passengers.

Stay Tuned Tour: The STAYC Concert Experience



Left to right, top to bottom: STAYC performing their second song “1 Thing”; STAYC taking their final bow in front of the MGM Music Hall stage; STAYC dancing to their most popular song “ASAP”. EVELYN RUAN

To read Evelyn Ruan's concert review, scan this QR code!



Cross
Country
Senior Night:
Leaving a
Trail for the
Future

Victor Cortez
Reporter

Abyan Ali
Lead Reporter

With senior night bringing the 2025 Cross Country season closer to an end, the runners don't let the uncertainties of racing on unfamiliar ground in the near future drag them down. Instead, the seniors chose to end the season by looking back on the fond memories, having as much fun as possible, and focusing on making their last race for Malden memorable.

Arriving early to the field, Malden celebrated before the beginning of the Senior Night Race: music boomed from the benches, runners and captains teased and laughed while sporting their bibs, and they smiled for the camera together like a family. The senior boys also made posters, proudly lifting them while wearing grins on their faces. Senior and Captain, Nam Le, firmly believes the team is in good

Continued on page 14.

Field
Hockey's
Senior Night
Ends Season
on a New
Chapter

Beatriz Oliveira
Lead Reporter
Evelyn Ruan
Head of Sports
Aliana Lloyd
Lead Repoter

This year, Malden High's field hockey team closed its rebuilding season with a night full of emotion, reflection, and team spirit as they faced Everett at MacDonald Stadium under bright lights on the turf.

"We might not have the best record right now, but the team is very close with each other and the vibes have stayed high despite everything," shared assistant coach and alumnus Blue and Gold Editor-in-Chief, Daniel O'Toole.

Before the game, underclassmen decorated the field with posters and flowers to honor seniors Kenny Diaz Osorio, Ryan Cheung, Audrey Nguyen, and Ace Showstead. Before the game, Malden's field hockey team set up their sticks to create an arch. As the seniors on Everett's team were introduced by O'Toole, they proudly ran through the tunnel, some high-fiving Malden players. Each senior was then given a flower from head coach Tiffany Cane at the end of

Continued on page 14.

MALDEN PLAYS FINAL DRIVES
TORNADOS NEAR THE END WITH TWO OCTOBER GAMES



Matthew Candelario Da Costa #3 and Josh Bly #4. VICTORIA DOMICIANO

Aundrea Cifuentes
Head Of Sports

Victoria Domiciano
Lead Reporter

On October 16th, the Malden High Tornadoes secured a 22-8 win against the Chelsea Red Devils, showcasing strong teamwork and energy on both sides of the ball. The victory marks another step forward for Malden as the team continues to build strength late in the season. With their hard work and dedication, the Tornadoes add another victory to their record. Now, as they look forward to their annual Thanksgiving game against the Medford Mustangs, preparations begin in the classroom and post-school practices.

On Thursday, October 30th, the Malden Golden Tornadoes football team returned to their home field, but unfortunately, faced a rough loss against the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Wild Cats, resulting in a score of 40-22.

Senior captain Kenny Turcios-Melgar believes that it was a "challenging game for the seniors as they were emotionally prepared for senior night and not just expecting

AFTER A MONTH FULL OF ACTION, MALDEN FINISHED OCTOBER WITH TWO HOME GAMES AGAINST CHELSEA RED DEVILS AND WHITTIER TECH WILD CATS

the game head-on and on a hard rainy day, that kind of messed us up."

On Whittier Tech's first play, they scored a touchdown. "The Linebackers were having trouble filling the gaps, which was ultimately our downfall due to not mentally being in the game," senior Jahiem Francillon explained.

The Golden Tornadoes started to initiate a stronger defense, not allowing Whittier Tech to earn their 2-point conversion, when senior Matthew DeCosta was able to make the tackle. The ball then ended up being returned after the kickoff by freshman Arthur Sewell.

Following this return, Francillon made an important pancake block on Whittier Tech's player, allowing senior captain Billy Gavin to complete a pass for 35 yards to senior captain and Blue and Gold Reporter, Manny Perez, resulting in a first down and a rowdy audience jumping in joy.

With the second quarter starting, Whittier scored a touchdown, followed by DeCosta blocking the 2-point conversion.

But McGuffie ended up scoring a touchdown for the Tornadoes, and with the help of his defense, the score was 20-8, Whittier Tech.

In the fourth quarter, they demonstrated a strong offense with a completed pass from Gavin to Perez, running a successful 20-yard post route. This led to a first down and set the tone for the rest of their fourth quarter.

Then, senior Ismail Elbahlawan left his block to pick up a fumbled ball and ended up making a touchdown, helped by the rest of the team who were blocking every Whittier Tech player who was attempting to make the tackle on him. The whole team ended up running to Elbahlawan and lifted him in triumph, congratulating him.

The whole audience was riled up and had hope for the rest of the game, but it was too late for the Malden Golden Tornadoes to make a comeback. "We locked in too late in the second half, and we just didn't have enough time to make a whole turn around," voiced senior Elbahlawan.



Left to right: Ismail Elbahlawan #52, preparing for play against Chelsea. VICTORIA DOMICIANO; During the second quarter, Malden Golden Tornadoes sophomore running back Jayden McGuffie (2) sprints up field after swerving through the Whittier Wild Cats defensive linemen in hopes of turning the tables for Malden after being down 20-0. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA



CHEER TEAM STUNTS INTO 2025-26 SEASON

CHEERLEADERS
RALLY SPIRIT,
INSPIRE FOOTBALL
VICTORY

Haset Tesfaw
Lead Reporter

Victoria Domiciano
Lead Reporter

The MHS Cheerleaders kicked off their first home game on September 18th, with surging energy and enthusiasm as

they cheered for Malden's football team, who were up against the Somerville Highlanders. After long, hard, but productive practices, they were excited to present their routines and stunts during the game.

Determined to start the first home game on a strong note and have a perfected routine, captains Alexia Maciel Lima (Managing Editor of The Blue and Gold), Carolina Rosa De Oliveira, Claudia Hernandez Es-

cobar, and Taliyah Laature have been working extremely hard during their practices. Rosa De Oliveira shared how it's been, "halftime, halftime, halftime, every single day. We have been really trying to get it done so we can perfect our routine, especially because we have a lot of new girls and we're really pushing them to get to high school level, because a lot of our

Continued on page 14.



Juniors Reva Upadhayay and Gloria Alexis posing for a photo. VICTORIA DOMICIANO

maldenblueandgold.com

CHEERLEADERS RALLY SPIRIT, INSPIRE FOOTBALL VICTORY

Continued from page 13.

friends have never cheered.”

“I went into high school not knowing anything about cheer, so I was in the same boat. So seeing these girls do things that took me one to two years to learn, it’s really impressive and I’m really proud of them,” Rosa De Oliveira continued.

The team has been looking forward to this upcoming season and believes that “there are so many things to look forward to,” Lauture expressed. “I’m going to try my best to really take on the captain role.”

When halftime came and the cheerleaders took the spotlight, their skill and talent kept the crowd engaged and cheering throughout the whole routine. Maciel Lima explained how their halftime routine was “on the simpler side” compared to most of their previous routines, but for many of the girls, it was their first game performance and she believes, “the rush and adrenaline of going from start to finish, as well as getting the whole routine together, is an experience that is really valuable to a team because it teaches them about the work they have to put in for that minute and thirty seconds.”

“It was definitely nerve-racking cheering again, after taking a break from sideline cheering, but I’m excited for what’s to come,” Hernandez Escobar shared.

Hernandez Escobar believes that in the future, the team needs to focus on their time management, “because sometimes we rush things and learn things only a couple of days prior, and it’s difficult for some people to get on the same page because some learn slower than others.” On the other hand, Rosa De Oliveira expressed that they need to present increased animation. “We’re supposed to be the entertainment during the games, so we really need to up our energy. Although we haven’t been handed the same opportunities or resources as other cheer teams in our area, we’ve still



Left to Right: Flyers Blue and Gold Head of Sports Aundrea Cifuentes, Rafaella Coelho, Gyovanna Gomes. VICTORIA DOMICIANO

persevered to be better, and we continue to chase that.”

The team’s unity is stronger than ever this season, as they held multiple team bondings to strengthen the connection between the girls. Throughout their practices, they never stop motivating and cheering each other on, even for smaller achievements. Maciel Lima commented on how, “there have been various points during practice throughout the last couple of months

that someone has hit a new skill, and the whole room erupts. We love to clap and really motivate each other because we know how hard it is to do some of the things that we do.”

“As of right now, for the amount of time we’ve been together as a team...our bond is really strong, and when the bond is strong, the team is strong,” Hernandez Escobar concluded.

Final Swings
Bring
Roses: Field
Hockey
Senior Night

Continued from page 13.

the arch, where they took pictures with family and friends.

After the Everett team was introduced, it was time for Malden’s seniors to walk down the arch of hockey sticks as O’Toole introduced them. Lastly, the team grouped up to take a photo, and players then went to their coaches for a pep-talk before the game began.



From left to right: Head coach Tiffany Cane, Seniors Audrey Nguyen, Ace Showstead, Kenny Diaz Osorio and Ryan Cheung, and Assistant coach Daniel O’Toole (also 2024 Editor-in-Chief of The Blue and Gold), taking a group photo. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA

Four-year veteran player Showstead highlighted, “Listen to your elders. Listen to the seniors. Listen to the people who have been on the team because they know what’s best for you. Mostly, just work together as a team. Space out. Listen to your teammates.” Showstead also reflected on the special traditions that make high school sports meaningful: “Mostly I

liked the out-of-practice hangouts. It was really fun. I really wish we did that more this year with the whole team.” His reflections show how senior leadership extends far beyond the field and fosters long-lasting memories amongst teammates.

Within two minutes, Everett scored the first goal and then ended the first quarter with a 3-0 lead. Coaches explained

that the team lacked communication and should be working together on passes. Quarter two, unfortunately, continued with the same issues. “I felt the team struggled during the game, oftentimes losing focus on what the goal is,” explained Cane. Coach O’Toole highlighted Nguyen’s passes and Osorio’s stick work, but recognized they weren’t received by the team.

Showstead expressed how meaningful the night was. “Senior Night is just a way for all the seniors to get together and celebrate with each other,” he said. “It’s important to be together as a team.”

Although junior goalie Yawen Zuo had many memorable saves, quarter three ended with Everett in the lead 7-0. Ultimately, the game ended with a 9-0 score, leaving Everett

with a win. Although the Malden lost, they were able to recognize their mistakes and work on improving them throughout the game.

While this season was full of obstacles, both Cane and O’Toole see it as a foundation for the future. “This was a rebuilding year,” O’Toole noted. “Next season, the goal is to return to form and bring Malden Field Hockey back to championship standards.” As the night ended with pizza, laughter, and photos, the team celebrated not just their seniors but the unity they built together. Cane summed it up best. “It’s difficult to think about a season without them, but I know they’re all going to do great things. All four of them are wonderful and deserve the best.”

Toward the end, however, the team was faced with the realization that soon, they would have to say their goodbyes to the seniors.

“I’m so happy for them: they are such role model players and often are the ones who step up to the plate when something needs to get done. It’s difficult to think about a season without them, but I know they’re on to do great things in college or wherever else they decide to go. All four of them are wonderful and deserve the best,” shared Cane.

Showstead commented, “Senior Night is just a way for all the seniors to get together and celebrate our seniors, and the other team’s seniors.”



Senior Kenny Diaz Osorio going against Everett player to get the ball. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA

Cross Country
Senior Night:
Leaving a Trail for
the Future

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hands for the upcoming years after the seniors’ departure.

“They are unique and exceptional individuals. We have an amazing team this year, and a bright future for the upcoming years,” shared Coach Sean Weldon. He continued that Cross Country has had a “big turnout,” and although it takes them a “little bit longer to get the season going,” the large numbers “right

from the beginning” are a sign to keep going in the face of challenges.

As the race commenced, Senior Captain Lincoln Boswell took the lead. The race was simple in concept: run two full laps around Pine Banks Park. However, the toll it takes on many runners from both sides started to show near the middle of the race, with many slowing their pace. Yet, not a single runner gave up and continued on toward the finish line. As runners finished their laps one by one, Everett’s numbers started looking better than Malden’s. While the race, unfortunately, ended in a



Malden High School’s Cross Country team poses before the race. VICTOR CORTEZ

loss for the boys, the girls managed to score a victory, in contrast to their previous game against Medford.

The captains also con-

sist of juniors Keira Celicourt, Yingyan Xia, and Ian Ho. Ho, Xia, and Celicourt have described the team as “a family” that “always supports

each other.” With the conclusion of the final home race, the audience began heading to their homes one by one; eventually, the seniors followed

along. While the boys may have lost this time, this race has helped prove the familial bond everyone shares and the seniors’ unwavering spirit.

Growth, Grit, and Goals:
Boys Soccer Season Recap



Senior midfielder, Matteus Martins, accelerating upfield, keeping tight control of the ball as a Lynn English defender closes in from behind. FARRIS QRANFAL

Adam El Fatihi
Reporter

William Yu
Reporter

After a 1-0 win for Varsity against Gloucester High School, the Malden Boys Soccer Season has officially ended. Ending the season with a 6-7-5 record, the team was unable to make the MIAA State Tournament, tying a game against Lynn English that cost them their opportunity to make States.

Varsity Boys' Soccer Coach Jeremiah Smith shared his opinion on being unable to make States, "It kind of hurts that we came up kind of short of our goal of qualifying for the state tournament." But he positively reflected on "how much improvement we showed over the last couple years."

During the season, the team scored inconsistently, highlighted by Smith. "We've been averaging less than two goals a game, and that has been a challenge in generating more scoring opportunities." Smith added that the team could have "played a little bit more consistently."

With the team having players from different backgrounds and cultures, soccer here is not played like soccer "everywhere in the world," shared Smith, making it a challenge for Coach Smith to get the players on the same page.

Although the team had new players from different backgrounds and playing styles, they got along when they first played together, even during the first practice in August. With Smith noting that the "team chemistry was awesome."

Despite the challenge of the inconsistent scoring in various games, each player of the team was expected to play at their best. In some games where the team suffered tough losses, the team "played up to their potential," praised Smith.

Though there were some devastating losses during the season, Yasser Belatreche, Senior Captain of the team, reflected positively on their improvement from last season, where the team had "one win and 12 losses." Belatreche also noted how their 6-7-5 record for this season shows the team's willingness to improve knowing that they "didn't do good last season."

"I always told my team that a loss doesn't define us because if we're going to lose, we have to know that next practice has to be even better so the next game has to be even better," Belatreche shared.

Motivation for the team was a key driver of their success this year. "How can we improve the next game?" or "How can we do better the next game?" Belatreche continued.

During a period when the team lost "three games in a row," a change was needed. Belatreche shared that after that talk had happened, they had won "three games in a row, and they were on a streak."

Moving forward, with the Seniors leaving, more than half of the team being made up of them. The Seniors set expectations for the Junior Varsity that are moving up to the Varsity level, creating a new chapter for MHS Soccer.

THE FINAL WHISTLE

GIRLS SOCCER HONORS THEIR SENIORS ON SENIOR NIGHT AGAINST REVERE



Varsity girls' soccer gathering together with family and friends for a photo after the senior night celebration. KAMANI GOMES

Chelmie Hyppolite
Managing Editor
Yen Nguyen
Head of Local

Kamani Gomes
Lead Reporter

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In a thrilling match against the Revere Patriots on October 21st, 2025, the Malden Girls' Soccer team demonstrated their communication and teamwork skills through a 4-1 win, while highlighting their seniors: captain Brenda Darisse, Mercedes Costa, Maria Martins, Abigaëlle Leconte, and Thalyta Andrade.

Throughout the match, Malden was offensively strong, easily stealing the ball from the opponents and having countless scoring attempts. The energy on the field reflected clearly onto the stands as the crowd of students and parents immersed themselves in the game, cheering and shouting as Malden dominated the match.

This win against the Patriots helped build the team's confidence as they prepared for their State Tournament Game against the Grafton Gators on November 3rd. Making States was the main goal of the team from the start of this season; achieving this goal solidified how hard the team worked through hardships.

Soccer hasn't been just a sport for the team, but a life lesson. "I've learned that being a good leader doesn't always mean you have to be the loudest or meanest person in the room," Darisse mentioned. She

continued, "it taught me how to lead on and off the field, mainly by example, while also knowing when to use my voice to guide my teammates."

The seniors reminisced about their past 4 years of playing with the team. Costa remarked, "One of my favorite moments was during my freshman year, and it was a home game against Chelsea, and I scored my first 2 goals ever on the team"

"During my senior season, the few minutes after getting that last win needed to make it to States was my favorite," Darisse added. "I remember feeling a true sense of accomplishment, and it really proved our growth as a team."

After this season, the girls left with sentimental smiles on their faces. "I'm really going to miss the practices where all we did was laugh and the bus rides, especially the ones after our wins," described Costa.

Unfortunately, the match against Grafton resulted in a loss for the Tornados. Despite this loss, the team is certainly proud of this season. "Something I will miss most about this team will be how dedicated every single one of us was to accomplishing our goal for the season, which was making States," mentioned Darisse. The Girls' Soccer team is already preparing for the 2026 season with the announcement of new captain junior Sofia Vargas, accompanied by junior Amelia Berliner.



Girls' soccer seniors Mercedes Costa, Brenda Darisse, Maria Martins, Thalyta Andrade, Abigaëlle Leconte smile with bouquets of flowers. KAMANI GOMES

"One lesson that I think will really tell the tale for next season is that we all can win games and improve, and Malden can be something great once we just put in the work in the off-season. We did that this year, and we didn't do it enough as we should've, and we were just off the hinge of making States, so I think if they

just do those workouts, go to the field, get those trainings in, I think they can be great," Belatreche shared.

The Junior Varsity team ended their season off with a 13-2-2 record, with the two losses being from non-league opponents. Smith believes that the MHS Boys Soccer future is 'bright for the team.'



Varsity boys' soccer pose for a photo together. ADAM EL FATIHI

Volleyball Senior Night Finishes Strong with 3-0 Win against Medford Mustangs

Continued from page 1.

would be playing their last home game of their Malden High School careers. As Coach Daniel Jurkowski gathered the silence of the crowd, a total of eight seniors were being celebrated and walked out with their friends and family: Danielle Harrington, Avani Chhetri, Gabriella Lemus, Katelynn Vo, Sorin Mamouzette, and captains Sania Chen, Rashmi KC, and Namaicka Jeune.

Upon entering the gym, blue and gold balloons as well as ribbons wrapped around the bleachers' railings, could be seen, and the aroma of popcorn from the Class of 2026's concession stand could be smelled. As one continued to scan the area, the back wall of the gym, which houses the mural of Nedlam, was decorated with athlete portraits, customized posters, and hampers filled with gifts for all eight seniors.

Jurkowski shared heartfelt memories and praises for each of his players, creating a bittersweet atmosphere among the crowd and the varsity girls. Between every tribute for the seniors, families and friends gathered for a dedicated photo session, holding flowers, gifts, and signs in support of the players.

"It's been a long journey with this group; one thing that definitely sticks out for this year was Namaicka's return. After her injury last year, we were unsure whether she would join or not. When she told us she was playing, everyone had a sigh of relief, and we knew this season would be great," expressed Jurkowski.

Sophomore and JV player Hadassa Pierre-Rene shared how the seniors this year showed her "what determination truly is." Despite being down a few points or losing a set, the seniors' drive "to get those points or even that set back" is through the roof. "I feel sad knowing that next year I won't be able to play with this year's seniors, because they made this season enjoyable with their skills and personalities, but I hope that next year's seniors bring that same energy," Pierre-Rene continued.

Shifting from the ceremony into the first set, the Golden Tornados began to face the Medford Mustangs, where Medford gained a head start, with a score of 4-1. However, Malden refused to let this small fluke stop them, as Chen would tie the scoreboard at 5-5 with a picture-perfect spike.

"Knowing it was my last home game, I felt satisfied. We've had a very successful season and ended it with a winning streak," Chen proudly stated.

As the set continued, Malden's unwavering



Sorin Mamouzette with her friends and team members on Senior Night. **FATIMA HUSAIN**

determination rose, but it would slowly cost them as their next few spikes—full of energy and passion—would hit several out-of-bounds for the following three rallies. Despite their falter, Malden's defense and offense would work hand-in-hand, eventually closing the gap while Medford paused at 15-14.

The first set would enter a brief intermission with Malden in the lead by just one point as the score paused at 18-17, allowing both teams to gather themselves.

Consistent offensive attacks advanced the set in Malden's favor. Ultimately, the round would end 25-21, granting Malden their first point, after Medford had failed to serve the ball over the net.

"I had so much fun, and the energy coming from the crowd was amazing. Having everyone come in

for my senior picture was so heartwarming. I felt so supported. Nonetheless, I still felt sad knowing that I'll never play with these amazing girls again, but the memories made with them will never be forgotten," remarked Mamouzette.

Advancing into the second set, both teams switched courts, and unlike the previous set, Malden redeemed themselves, beginning with a head start of 3-0. Medford did not let this slide past easily, as they began to make a comeback, leading the match 5-3.

Malden found themselves slowly trailing behind Medford, as the score advanced 9-11, slowly coming back as they tied the score at 11-11. This tie would gradually break, with Malden leading as Medford failed to serve over the net. From then on, both sides

continued to tie with one another for every two rallies.

As Medford received a serve from Vo, the ball was sent flying over the net, where Chen delivered a block from mid-court with a slamming spike, causing the crowd to erupt into roars of excitement, advancing the score to 17-17.

From this point on, the Tornados gained a sense of newfound ambition, counteracting attacks from the Mustangs with many defensive blocks, which would lead the match to 22-19, ultimately concluding at 25-22, as the Mustangs failed to save themselves from Malden's serves, defensive plays, and resilience—setting the score to an outstanding 2-0 Malden lead.

Although the Mustangs were fighting just



Senior Captain Rashmi KC with her family, friends, and team members on Senior Night. **FATIMA HUSAIN**



Senior Captain Sania Chen with her family on Senior Night. **FATIMA HUSAIN**

as hard, staying neck and neck with the Tornados, Malden's energy was at an all-time high, as the gym echoed with cheers and chants, driving them to win despite any setbacks, especially with KC's digs and dives.

"I was excited and nervous knowing that these would be the last moments that I would ever be stepping foot into the gym to play a sport that shaped me throughout my high school experience," expressed KC.

As the first two sets were mainly senior-centric so all available varsity players, except Harrington, who was healing from an injury, had a chance to play at their last home game. The third set allowed sophomores Hadassa Pierre-Rene, Xiaohui Li, and junior Maliya Kazadi to step on the court.

Harrington voiced how "spraining" her an-

kle towards the end of the season was a "bummer," stopping her from participating in Malden High's last volleyball match before the season's conclusion.

Just as the set began, in a remarkable play, the Mustangs received a serve, sending it flying out of bounds; however, the Medford girls showed their determination and arm strength, rushing towards the ball, attempting to send it to Malden's court, and succeeding; however, despite the perseverance, Medford lost the rally, granting Malden their first point of the set.

A strategy employed by the players was to confuse the opposing team by, instead of delivering their signature hits, Kazadi or Chen would "tip" the ball over the net, earning them key points that would lead to their victory.

Similar to the last two

sets, Malden slowly advanced towards Medford, where they continuously trailed with a one-point difference or tied for many consistent rallies in a row. Later, junior Sherley Jeune and sophomore Alexis Lee would be subbed in, and then, finally, at 17-17, junior Ly Nguyen stepped onto the court.

The game's streak of tying and one-point differences would eventually end in a score of 3-0, after Medford failed to send Chen's serve over the net, capping the set at 25-20.

"Take everything you've learned in your past four years of high school: being a part of a team, collaboration, and interacting with different personalities, and observe how everyone can come together for a common goal, whether it's for school or sports," concluded Coach Jurkowski.

Malden Boys' Soccer Showcases Improvement from Last Season



Boys' Varsity team breaks it down as they prepare to dominate against the Medford Mustangs. **FARRIS QRANFAL**

Read Elijah Etienne and Manny Perez's article "The Malden Boys' Varsity soccer team is back and better than ever after ending last year with a record of 1-13-4" by scanning the Qr Code:



Girls' Volleyball Stays Optimistic Despite State Tournament Defeat



Girls' Varsity Volleyball team lines up after concluding their last game of the season against Chelmsford. **JACOB FUENTES**

To read Jacob Fuentes' article scan the Qr Code:



Malden Football Scrapes by in 14-12 Thriller against Somerville



Malden Varsity Football Team triumphantly raise their helmets before kick off. **CHOUAIB SAIDI**

To read Victoria Domicianos' article scan the Qr Code:



Field Hockey Puts an Emphasis on Team Building This Season



Junior Captain Frankie Marengi-Pellino battling a Peabody player to get possession of the ball. **EVELYN RUAN**

"Although we have lost our games so far, our team has been working on staying positive and recognizing the growth that every player has shown throughout the season," Head Coach Tiffany Cane commented.

To read Beatriz Oliveira and Evelyn Ruan's article, scan the Qr Code:

