

## Hallway Clampdown Has Proven Effective ‘Corrupt and Corrosive’

by Ziv Golan '26

Like many high schools throughout Montgomery County and the rest of the country, Sherwood for years has confronted the problem of students skipping classes by wandering the halls and hanging around corridors and in school bathrooms. Such behavior hurts those students academically, but also it raises concerns about school security and safety when there are people roaming the building who are unsupervised. This school year administration is addressing the problem by vowing “to take back the hallways.” Part of this effort began last school year with some bathrooms being locked due to students using illicit substances in those spaces.

Over the summer, the school’s administrative team created a strategic and comprehensive plan to address the many issues.

“The staff will communicate the expectations and if they are not followed, the following steps will occur,” explained Assistant Principal, Heidi Vermillion. “Step 1, teacher and student will have a one on one conversation to reinforce expectations. Step 2, the teacher will contact the student’s guardian and log the communication in Synergy. Step 3, the teacher will contact the guardian again, assign a detention, and log the communication in Synergy. Step



Head of Security Dominique Dixon patrols the halls during class.

4, Administrative referral, and the admin response will vary based on individual cases.”

According to Vermillion the plan has been effective so far but will continue to be re-evaluated throughout the year.

The new policy includes new actions teachers have to take to stop kids from skipping. “We’re supposed to stand out in the hallway in between classes to make sure students are not wandering the halls, and we’re also supposed to contact home about excessive absences,” said English teacher Patricia Jasnow.

The new policy has seemed to alleviate many concerns that teachers had. “I’m happy we have some better measures in place as students will get more information when in class, and it is less of a distraction to students when

kids aren’t wandering the halls. I think this year’s been better,” said Jasnow.

The students that skip take up a disproportionate amount of security’s time. “When we catch students skipping it’s normally the same students for the most part and we assign lunch detention or after school detention,” said Head of Security Dominique Dixon. “When it’s the same students a phone call home to the parent is made.”

The Security Team has been utilizing different methods that have proven to be effective, according to Dixon. “The security team has been checking student passes and if a student can’t produce a pass they will get a lunch detention or after school detention as we walk the student back to class,” explained Dixon.

## MCPS Confronts Systematic Failures in Light of Investigations into Farquhar Principal

by Evelyn San Miguel '26

MCPS is currently under fire for the promotion of former Farquhar Principal Joel Beidleman, whose years of alleged bullying and harassment were made public in August in a lengthy investigative article by the Washington Post. In the following weeks, the county responded by hiring Jackson Lewis law firm to investigate the allegations, whose full, though heavily redacted, report was released in mid October. Both MCPS executive staff and the elected Board of Education have faced backlash, with members of the community left wondering how Beidleman’s promotion in June to principal of Paint Branch happened in the first place, and how far the cover-up of his harassment, misconduct, and bullying goes.

MCPS had been found to have significant systematic issues that went unresolved until the Washington Post went public with the allegations into Beidleman, Jackson Lewis’ report concluded. “Key decision makers did exercise enough diligence to ascertain important details about the investigation,” they said, adding that the county “has long standing practices and processes in place that resulted in some of the complaints against [Beidle-

man] not being formally investigated.” The firm also found foul play by an anonymous senior staff member who, in tampering with the investigations during the promotion process, prevented the Board from knowing about the allegations against the former Farquhar principal. However, Jackson Lewis found that the Board hadn’t been aware of Beidleman’s misconduct prior to or during the process of approving his promotion. The firm concluded that for every member of MCPS leadership they interviewed, they expressed “genuine remorse, accountability and indicated that they have learned from [the] situation.”

MCPS Superintendent Monifa McKnight responded at the October 12 Board meeting, “There are many holes in the system, and we need to fix them, and there needs to be accountability.” The Washington Post, in their scathing exposé, initially reported 18 complaints of sexual harassment, bullying, and inappropriate conduct over the span of twelve years across two schools, Roberto Clemente Middle and Farquhar Middle. In a later article following the release of the redacted report, the Post updated that there were 25 complaints.

see FARQUHAR, pg. 3

## Seniors Tackle College Applications after Affirmative-Action Ban

by Hannah Mushawar '24

Affirmative action was a pivotal process included within college admissions. It was viewed as a breakthrough in the advancement of educational equality, recognizing the unequal access to education throughout history. The June 29 Supreme Court decision on affirmative action effectively ends race-conscious admissions practices in higher education.

“Affirmative action is one way to contextualize the opportunities that a student had during their K-12 experience and the disadvantages in access to high-quality teachers and high-quality advisers that they may have had during high school,” explained Katharine Meyer, a fellow in the

### Affirmative Action

The practice of considering student background characteristics, most specifically race, as a factor of deciding whether or not to admit an applicant.

governance studies program for the Brown Center on Education Policy, in U.S.News.

Many college admissions officers state that they use a holistic process when looking at a applications. This includes paying attention to academic records, high school course rigor, extracurricular activities, essays, and letters of recommendation. Affirmative

action practices permitted race to be another consideration. In response to the Supreme Court ruling, various colleges have responded by emphasizing their commitment to creating a diverse environment. In the summer, universities posted across social media how they are planning to move forward in order to continue promoting educational equality

### Supreme Court Ruling

By a vote of 6-3, the justices ruled that the admissions programs used by the University of North Carolina and Harvard College violate the Constitution’s equal protection clause, which bars racial discrimination by government entities. Writing for the majority, Chief Justice John Roberts explained that college admissions programs can consider race merely to allow an applicant to explain how their race influenced their character in a way that would have a concrete effect on the university. But a student “must be treated based on his or her experiences as an individual - not on the basis of race,” Roberts wrote.

ty and diversity.

University of Maryland President Darryll J. Pines and Senior Vice President Jennifer King Rice released their statement on the ruling expressing that, “Excellence and diversity are an essential part of the Terrapin experience. To ensure our community continues to live up to these expectations, in addition to other efforts, we will

multiply our recruitment efforts focused on what Maryland offers its students—a commitment to inclusive excellence where all have the opportunity to succeed. Increasing the diversity of our applicant pool can have a tremendous impact on the diversity of our student body.”

see COLLEGE APPS, pg. 3

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See what Seniors are feeling about college applications. Page 7

### Spotlight

Explore the impacts of abbreviated class schedules. Page 8-9



## news brief

current events

### Testing Platform Issues Lead to PSAT Shutdown

by Katie Ng '25

The College Board built a month-long testing window for administering the PSAT. Sherwood planned to administer the test on October 11 but had to reschedule it for October 24 due to challenges on the College Board's testing site. The College Board released a statement apologizing for the late start to testing and inconveniences to school operations. Luckily, the makeup PSAT went smoothly.

On October 11, the College Board PSAT testing platform began experiencing issues. A surge in traffic caused schools to delay testing or remain unable to start. Consequently, MCPS central office reached out to schools and advised them to stop due to the issues with the testing platform. At 9:15 a.m., other schools in the nation resumed testing. The majority of MCPS schools did not resume testing.

"Based on the guidance from [the] central office, and continued difficulties accessing the testing platform by both students and teachers, Sherwood leadership determined it was necessary to shut down testing on the morning of 10/11," said Assistant Principal Graham Lear.

### MCPS Joins Lawsuit Against Social Media

by Liam Trump '24

Frantz Law Groups announced MCPS has recently joined more than 500 different school districts in suing social media companies such as Snapchat, TikTok, and Meta. Surrounding Maryland school districts such as Prince George's, Cecil, and Carroll counties have since become involved in the suit. The lawsuit alleges numerous social media companies have caused mental and emotional harm as seen in higher proportions of anxiety, depression, thoughts of self-harm, eating disorders, body dissatisfaction, and low self-esteem among children and adolescents.

The suit seeks financial damages to go towards staffing and resources to lessen the costs that school districts are experiencing due to the crisis. In response to the lawsuit, social media companies have pointed out how they have features and parental controls meant to mitigate these problems. TikTok, for example, has noted their age-restriction features, YouTube has pointed to how it allows parents to set time limits, and Meta, which owns Instagram, mentioned how it has more than 30 tools that support teens through age verification software and notifications that take regular breaks. Just in May of this year, however, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek H. Murthy issued a statement that went over how extensive social media usage can lead to a child having a higher risk of poor mental health.

### MCPS Paying for All AP Exams

by Aspen Weinberg '25

For the first time beginning this school year, MCPS is now covering all fees relating to the Advanced Placement (AP) exams. The decision comes at a time when the cost of AP exams has been rising in recent years, with the College Board currently charging \$97 per exam. At such a sticker price, some high-achieving students could pay nearly a thousand dollars for AP exams by the time they graduated.

Many students have found the recently rising exam fees to be inaccessible even with financial aid. Concerned that students would opt out of taking the exam solely because of the costs, MCPS made the decision to fully fund AP exams for students enrolled in one or more courses.

When students previously paid for their AP exams, a portion of those funds went back to schools to help offset the costs of paying for support staff and proctors to give the exams. It is unclear at this time how MCPS will provide other funding for these efforts. Math teacher Rebekah Byerly, who is the AP coordinator for Sherwood, said that the school has funding reserves from previous years of testing and will have enough money to pay proctors for the exams in May this school year, as well as paying substitutes for covering classes that teachers proctoring will miss.

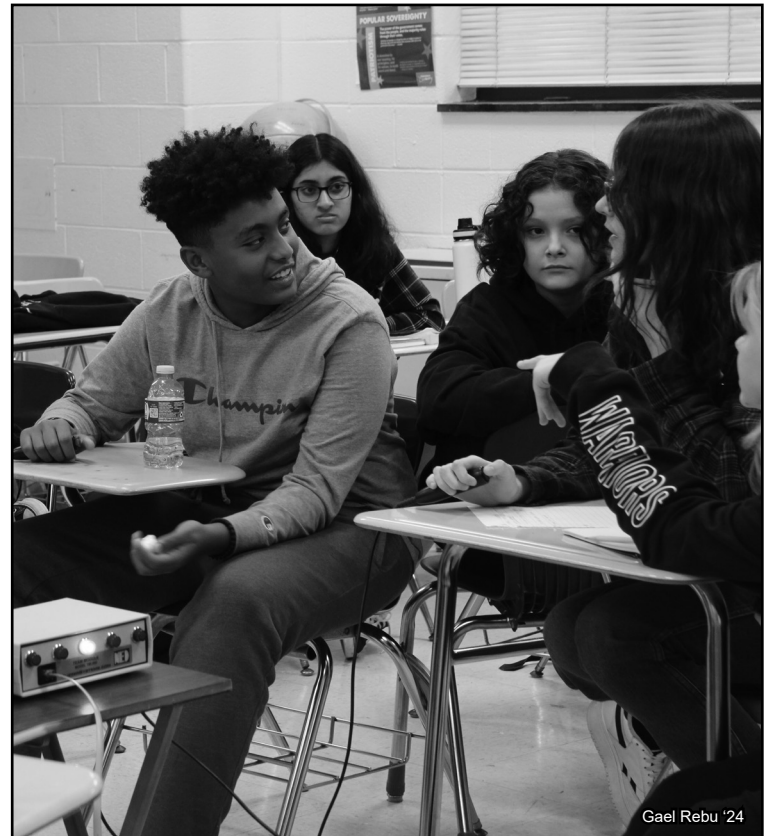
### It's Academic Tests Students Knowledge

by Randy Wang '24

With no requirements such as GPA or specific classes, students from all grade levels can compete and answer trivia questions in the It's Academic club. These competitions are often featured on TV, with Sherwood facing off against different schools within MCPS and around the area.

The club meetings are held every Wednesday after school from 2:30 to 4:00, where the club applicants go through practice questions for their competitions. The TV competitions are held on NBC4 Washington, where 81 schools compete in the single-elimination tournament in groups of three. Only three schools compete each show. The goal of the show is to answer correctly and quickly to the questions given by the show's host. Some questions include guest questions, where notable people in the government, business, sports, or arts may come onto the show to ask a question. The club also participates in off-TV competition, the MCPS Academic Beltway League, where there may be an unlimited number of contestants competing four at a time. Sherwood won the 2020-2021 season, beating Rockville.

"It's Academic's purpose is to give students who like trivia and game shows a place to compete against other like-minded students," said Scott Allen, a social studies teacher who has sponsored the It's Academic club for ten years. Social studies teacher Michael King is also a sponsor of the club. Allen hopes It's Academic is a place where students may appreciate the different topics they learn while participating in the club.



Members of It's Academic deliberate during a practice after school.

According to club member senior Joseph Hartlove, It's Academic is beneficial for members' academic performance and college applications. In the club, students are encouraged to work together and gain collaborative skills, helpful in many academic and working environments.

Practices are structured to be similar to the competitions they compete in. Members simulate the games and watch videos to look at strategies for the competition. To help build knowledge, the club does specialized questions for specific subjects.

As explained by Allen, students eventually will be able to recognize common answers to questions with "Pavlovian clues." One example of this is if a ques-

tion asks for a European Grand Duchy, Luxembourg is almost always the right answer. During the competitions, only two factors are required to win: the answer to the question and a fast finger on the buzzer. "So much of the games come down to who is the fastest buzzer," explained Allen.

Students shouldn't be afraid of joining. "When I encourage other students to join this club, I often hear nervousness, with responses like 'I don't think I'm smart enough to join,'" said Hartlove. When starting something new, many people struggle with the new environment. Over time, students will improve and learn new things throughout their season in It's Academic.

### Court Ruling Impacts Admissions

from COLLEGE APPS, p.1

Neighboring schools such as Towson University – which does not use race as a factor in its admissions decisions – have implemented other strategies over the years to enroll and retain more students of color. Boyd Bradshaw, the school's vice president for enrollment management, released his statement that this includes going test-optional; focusing outreach in certain areas of the state, like the city of Baltimore; spending more than 50 percent of their aid on need-based grants; and having resources in place to help with the college transition.

As many Sherwood seniors will complete their applications through the Common App, it is important to know what differences will occur due to the elimination of affirmative action. The Common App partners with universities across the country. The Common App organization has stated that all member colleges are able to hide the self-disclosed race and ethnicity information from application PDF files for both first-year and transfer applications. That means when they

receive an application PDF from Common App, the race and ethnicity data isn't visible.

Though this practice is what the Common App must abide by in order to adhere to the affirmative action ban, the court ruling is vague about whether students can identify their race. For instance, should applicants personally decide to describe their experiences with race and racial identity, schools can consider such information if it is "concretely tied to a quality of character or unique ability that the particular applicant can contribute to the university," according to the ruling.

As it is unclear what a concrete tie to quality of character means, this opens the opportunity for students to describe the impacts of their race in their essays. For instance, a supplemental essay prompt in the 2023-24 University of Maryland application states, "Because we know that diversity benefits the educational experience of all students, the University of Maryland values diversity in all of its many forms... In a few sentences, will you please describe how you have

learned, grown, been inspired or developed skills through one or more components of diversity." Although there may no longer be a self-disclosed race box, students have the opportunity to highlight their race in various essays, which are now increasingly important components to college applications in the US.

"Being surrounded by a diverse environment has allowed me to gain a comprehensive understanding of subjects," said senior Lily Mosisa, "Moving forward from the ban, I hope that college campuses still embody a strong sense of diversity and that whichever school I commit to, I am surrounded by people with all types of backgrounds, varying opinions, and those who possess a strong appreciation for different perspectives - much like myself."

As colleges such as the University of Maryland and Towson University declare their continued pursuit in creating a diverse student body, just because affirmative action is banned in college admissions, does not mean that diversity on college campuses is completely gone.



## Fallout Continues Following Farquhar Principal Scandal

from FARQUHAR, p.1

The MCEA, the union that represents the district's teachers, has publicly questioned how it was possible that the MCPS had no knowledge of Beidleman's misconduct prior to the publication of the allegations. They criticized the firm's report, saying that "Despite all the blank spaces in the redacted report, it's appallingly apparent that MCPS' central office culture is corrupt and corrosive." The union's president, Jennifer Martin, demanded that staff members feel respected, safe, and empowered in their work environment and that MCPS students "deserve no less."

Discontent with the Board's process has come not only from the community, but county leaders as well. On September 28, the Montgomery County Council held a hearing where they reprimanded the Board for their negligence in which they found the Board's lack of transparency in Beidleman's investigation troubling, largely due to its reluctance to release full reports and investigation details. "I find that very frustrating in trying to restore the public's trust," said County Council member Marilyn Balcombe (D-District 2). Distrust with the Board and Jackson Lewis' report has also come from County Inspector General Megan Davey Limarzi as well, who announced on September 20 that she would begin her own independent investigations in the coming months.

When the article detailing Beidleman's harassment was published, members of the community reacted in shock, concern, and disgust. Thousands of comments from outraged parents flooded the comment section of the first Washington Post investigation that enumerated Beidleman's misconduct. Several parents voiced concerns about the safety of their children, and how MCPS was going to handle the incident moving forward.

Many teachers, however,

stated in the comment section and on social media that they weren't surprised. "There's a real fear that there's no one above you that you can go to," Jean Cashin, a veteran teacher who had left Farquhar in June 2021, told the Washington Post. Several former Farquhar teachers spoke about Beidleman on the condition of anonymity, out of fear for their jobs. Others reported that they had felt no one would listen.

The reporting by the Washington Post identified MCPS supervisors who appeared to not pursue the allegations against Beidleman. Former Sherwood Principal Eric Minus was Beidleman's direct supervisor before becoming the principal at Sherwood from 2018-2020. The Washington Post reported that Minus told parents that he was a "close personal friend" of Beidleman when they came to him with complaints. Additionally, Khalid Walker, formerly of the Office of Compliance and Investigations, was the lead investigator in some of the teachers' allegations against Beidleman. However, the Post reported that Walker found the investigations into the complaints inconclusive and no action was taken. Recently on October 7, the Washington Post reported that Walker was promoted and given a raise of \$11,983 despite his involvement in Beidleman's case. After inquiries from Post reporters, MCPS spokesman Chris Cram texted the Post three hours later that Walker had once again been moved to the Office of Human Resources and Development at his previous \$132,166 salary.

McKnight, immediately after the release of Jackson Lewis' full redacted report, sent an email on October 12 to principals regarding leadership changes. "Dr. Patrick Murphy, deputy superintendent, is no longer employed by the district," McKnight said. She also mentioned personnel members absences, whom the Post confirmed had been purposefully placed on administra-

### Timeline of Events

**June 27** - Joel Beidleman, former principal at Farquhar Middle School, is promoted to principal of Paint Branch High School. This new position would have given him a raise of \$32,000, equalling to an almost \$200,000 salary.

**August 4** - Beidleman is placed on extended leave without explanation.

**August 11** - Washington Post releases bombshell article detailing the history of Beidleman's decade of sexual harassment, bullying, and misconduct, as well as the blind eye MCPS turned to many allegations. Beidleman is put on extended paid leave and MCPS promises an investigation into the matter using the private law firm Jackson Lewis.

**August 14 and 15** - MCPS Superintendent Dr. Monifa McKnight sends a letter to families of Farquhar Middle School and Paint Branch High School promising to get to the bottom of the situation. McKnight, also at this time, appointed Pamela Krawczel as a temporary principal for Paint Branch.

tive leave. "Dr. Redmond Jones and Dr. Eugenia (Jeanie) Dawson are currently on leave," she said. Prior to their absences, Jones and Dawson were school supervisors assigned to Paint Branch and Farquhar respectively. Additionally, the Post reported that Diane Morris, former Farquhar principal and person in charge of Beidleman's standard five-year evaluation, was also placed on administrative leave.

MCPS also failed before Beidleman's promotion to notice worrying numbers in the annual staff climate survey for 2022-23, where 40.6 percent of Farquhar teachers last Spring responded "Not at all" to a question regarding how positive the tone is

**August 17** - MCPS comes under fire for their choice of the law firm Jackson Lewis, which has worked with MCPS in the past and could compromise the "independent, external" investigation due to it working as an MCPS client.

**August 21** - Dawn Luedtke and Evan Glass, two members of the County Council, release a statement calling for the involvement of county and state investigators to have a truly independent investigation from MCPS.

**August 23** - MCPS Board of Education President Karla Silvestre replies to county council members affirming it's staying on course with Jackson Lewis.

**September 14** - MCPS releases a summary of the report provided by Jackson Lewis to the Board of Education about their investigation, finding "significant and troubling failures by senior management in MCPS."

**September 20** - The Montgomery County Inspector General, Megan Davey Limarzi, announces through a letter to the School Board President that her office

will launch two investigations. One being into the allegations of misconduct into Beidleman and MCPS' response to the allegations, and the second looking into MCPS' sexual harassment and complaints system.

**September 28** - The Board of Education is reprimanded by the Montgomery County Council over their failure in transparency and accountability during a hearing held by the County Council Education and Culture Committee.

**October 12** - The heavily redacted report by Jackson Lewis investigating misconduct in MCPS is released to the public, illustrating the vast scale of failure within MCPS leadership that goes beyond Beidleman.

**October 12** - Superintendent McKnight sends an email to principals regarding personnel changes. Deputy Superintendent Patrick Murphy has left the county for unspecified reasons, and Eugenia Dawson, Redmond Jones, and Diane Morris have been placed on administrative leave.

-Connor Pugh '24

that leadership sets for staff. For comparison, at Farquhar's neighboring school, Rosa Parks, only 2.7 percent of teachers responded "Not at all" to the same question.

"This situation is a reflection of the fact that MCPS needs an entire culture change," said Sherwood English teacher Shelley Jackson. Jackson, who has been following the Washington Post's coverage of Beidleman closely, said that she was appalled but not surprised that such an incident could happen in MCPS. Jackson said she had heard rumors of Beidleman long before his misconduct was exposed, and heard about other instances of sexual harassment in the county. She was disappointed in the lack of

communication, and believes that the county owes an apology to the community for allowing Beidleman to get away with his behavior in their system.

Jackson said that to remedy the damage, MCPS needs to implement "clear and transparent processes ... for dealing with complaints and investigations into [those] complaints." In this case, Jackson said because the investigators had been friends of Beidleman, an objective process was impossible. However, Jackson believes that with hard work, transparency, and communication to constituents the MCPS Board can be held accountable. "It takes will to do the right thing," she said.

## MCPS Monitoring Air Quality and Temp in Schools

by Cliff Vacin '25

Around Sherwood, there has been an increase in the monitors that assess air quality and specific air pollutants as well as measure environmental factors such as temperature or humidity. The Indoor Air Quality Sensors were placed in all MCPS schools over the summer in classrooms, media centers, all-purpose rooms, and in some hallways.

According to an MCPS FAQ page, the sensors are created by Attune, a company that is an industry leader in wireless monitoring. Sensors are placed in strategic locations of enclosed spaces that record temperature, humidity, and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), and can detect the presence of airborne pollutants such as particulate matter (PM), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>),



One of the many Indoor Air Quality Sensors present around Sherwood.

and carbon monoxide (CO). The data is then transmitted wirelessly and collected for review to see if there is a need for corrective action or to coordinate repairs.

The FAQ on the MCPS website states the ideal conditions for comfort and health as between 68°F and 76°F, with the humidity

being between 30 percent and 70 percent. Montgomery County is not the only county holding Attune sensors in their buildings, as 6 different school districts in 5 different states and the District of Columbia have placed them in every school.

One of the challenges that

Sherwood faces with air quality is that its current HVAC units are older and more frequently require county maintenance to make sure the temperature controls are functioning properly. Linda Berkeimer, the school's business manager, explained that the large portable ventilation units in the main office at the beginning of the year were supporting the school's HVAC system while it was getting maintenance repairs.

Better ventilation and air quality are considered by experts as critical to lessen the transmission of Covid-19 and other airborne illnesses. "I do believe improving ventilation improves air quality as research has proved. The more dispersed contaminants are in the air the lower the transmission of pollutants and viruses," explained School Nurse Irene Gumucio. In the Spring of 2021

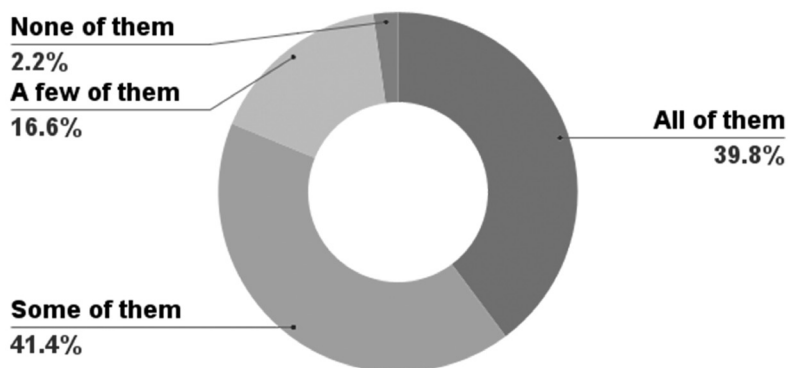
when students had the option to return to school or remain virtual, classrooms in MCPS received Room Air Purifiers (RAP). These bulky plug-in machines remain in Sherwood's classrooms but are rarely turned on by teachers or other staff.

Gumucio emphasizes the importance of precautions and practices that students themselves can do. "I encourage students and staff to get flu and covid vaccines as needed," she said. "Be vigilant about getting plenty of sleep, eat healthy, and practice self-care. Practice good hand washing throughout the day. If you have a fever, stay home until fever-free for 24 hours and follow up with your doctor if symptoms persist ... Viruses are here to stay so having 'tools' to manage our coexistence will promote better outcomes in the future."





## How many of your teachers enforce the policy of no phones during class instruction?



## How have phones in classrooms affected your or other students' learning during class?

**"I don't use my phone during class, but I have heard students' phones dinging an annoying and distracting amount, and the students with bad grades appear to be the ones consistently using their phones in class."**

**-Samantha Poston '26**

**"Phones have not significantly affected my learning besides when teachers tell students to put their phone away. If someone is sending a quick text, it does not interrupt the class; however, the teacher stopping instruction to tell that student to put their phone away disrupts class more."**

**-Rhys Edwards '24**

## What is your opinion on the school's no-phones policy?

**"I think phones are needed in some classes, and I also believe that phones are tools to complete work. I don't think the policy should be strict because some of us need to have contact with our parents, and I'm still able to get my work done."**

**-Richard Murphy '24**

**"I think it makes sense, but I don't think it's fair if I'm doing independent work to have to do it in silence when I could listen to music, etc, or if I need a picture of notes or something on my phone for an assignment and can not use them."**

**-Janet Abramson '25**

**"I think it is beneficial at times for some people who have struggled with paying attention in class because of their phones, but I feel like sometimes it makes class more boring. Phones are sometimes used as a distraction because of boring lessons and such and the no-phones policy makes class even more boring."**

**-Lindsey Cruz-Gutierrez '24**

**"Personally, I think that we should have the option to be on our phones because at the end of the day it is our fault if we are on it and miss an instruction."**

**-Emily Ruane '26**

**"Although we probably want to use our phones, I think it is a good habit to break and a good way to stay productive."**

**-Claire McHugh '24**

**"It's kind of dumb. Students are going to go on their phone no matter what the teachers say. They will just learn how to hide their phones better."**

**-Kennedy Bonner '24**

Survey of 181 students  
Compiled by Liam Trump '24



### Sherwood's Food Truck Chaos

by Hannah Mushahwar '24

Sherwood's homecoming spirit week was full of various activities, ranging from pep rallies, homecoming halls, clothing themes, and Friday night football games. But, as the end of Friday's pep rally signaled a transition into food truck palooza, Sherwood students turned into animals. With almost 15 minutes left in the Powderpuff game, the students rampaged down the bleachers in attempts to be first in the food truck lines. The mass chaos of pep rallies and food trucks has not only ensued this year, but several other times in the past.

For a school awarded "best sportsmanship" last year, Sherwood students lack any sort of civility at their own events. As their peers were in the midst of the Powerpuff game, the cheering and support came to a complete halt. The food truck lines looked like a madhouse with many students pushing and shoving just for an overpriced lemonade. There is no excuse for abandoning the students who have worked hard to create a fun activity for everyone else. The sportsmanship award is not exclusive to how students treat other schools; it starts with how they treat their own peers. In order to truly maintain best sportsmanship, Sherwood students must start by cheering on their own.

### Support LGBTQ+ Youth

by Katie Ng '25

Moms for Liberty protested against gender-affirming care and LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculums and books outside Gaithersburg High School recently. The parents protested because they believe gender-affirming care is "psuedo-scientific nonsense." They also believe that "children cannot consent to puberty blockers" and have been challenging books that feature transgender characters. However, providing access to these medical services and books is necessary.

The Trevor Project reported in 2022 that "nearly 1 in 5 transgender and nonbinary youth attempted suicide," while the Endocrine Society noted that data show "gender-affirming care can be life-saving for a population with high suicide rates." Essentially, being supportive of transgender youth who want to medically transition could help lower these statistics because gender-affirming care allows transgender youth to feel comfortable in their bodies, present the way they want to, and find inner peace. Banning books about gender is discriminatory and sends the idea that LGBTQ+ people are inferior. These parent activists should be tolerant of LGBTQ+ youth and allow adolescents to learn about gender identity and sexuality.

### Trumps Owns the GOP

by Connor Pugh '24

After Representative Kevin McCarthy was ousted from his position as Speaker of the House by fellow Republicans, the election of the new speaker Mike Johnson finally brought almost a month of chaos in Congress to a close. A radical member of the Republican party who parrots 2020 election denial talking points among other contentious opinions, Johnson illustrates the stranglehold Former President Donald Trump still has over the party long after being in office.

The Republican party has had trouble moving on from the presidency of Donald Trump, especially after his election denial claims incited an insurrection on January 6. Some Republican leaders wish to move away from the controversial figure and reestablish the party's legitimacy in the eyes of many turned off by Trump. But many more elected Republicans still idolize Trump and his policies, repeating many of his positions and keeping him and his ideas in the mainstream. This sharp divide in the Republican party over Trump illustrates just how important of a figure he is to the modern Republican coalition, and despite many efforts by politicians to move on from his presidency he always finds his way back to relevancy.

## Breaking Amazon's Monopoly Would Pay Off for Consumers

by Marceline Meador '24

The goal of any company is growth, which is a principle that is the basis of capitalism. What happens, though, when just a few companies take up all the room and do not leave space for any others? Massive corporations that play a part in our everyday lives are ever-expanding, pushing out their competitors, stomping out smaller businesses, and further integrating themselves into every aspect of our lives. While some would argue that their greater reach allows for greater conveniences for the average consumer, the detrimental effects of monopoly activity on our socio-political and economic landscape are dire in comparison.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has come to the conclusion that one such corporation, Amazon, has violated the laws put in place to prevent such unfair practices, known commonly as Antitrust Laws, and has followed through with a lawsuit against Amazon on such grounds. The FTC, as well as 17 state attorneys, maintains that Amazon has unfairly stifled its competition in order to generate and wield monopoly power. Monopoly power potentially allows a company to unfairly gouge prices, cut worker pay, underpay sellers, and massively scale back quality. Being that Amazon is in certain places a consumer's only affordable option when it comes to purchasing goods, this has proven to cause detrimental effects on fair competition, innovation, and affordability.

The development of this lawsuit creates the likelihood of two possible rulings, each with its own unique repercussions and precedent. The first possibility



Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos remotely testifies during a House Judiciary subcommittee on antitrust practices on Capitol Hill on July 29, 2020.

is a ruling in favor of Amazon, which would be absolutely detrimental to the average consumer, competition within the U.S. economy, and the affordability of everyday products. Not to mention that such a ruling would set the precedent that Amazon's current activities do not violate antitrust laws and that corporate activity such as price gouging, stifling competition, exclusionary conduct, and degradation of service is legal and permissible in the United States. This would create an open season for Amazon to not only continue but ramp up its monopoly activity. Furthermore, this would affect the overall U.S. economy detrimentally, as less affordability and worker pay on the part of the largest online retailer in the entire country means more money flow into Amazon, but a significantly smaller flow of capital back into the economy.

The other, more positive outcome of this lawsuit would be a ruling in favor of the 17 State AGs and the FTC. Such a ruling

would set a positive and opposite precedent, one that states activities such as dominating competition in a great many industries as opposed to one is classified as monopoly activity under federal law. This would also result in a potential dissolution of the Amazon corporation, mirroring that of the historic Standard Oil dissolution under the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1911.

Amazon's detrimental activities cannot be allowed to continue, and a ruling in favor of the FTC would prevent future corporate entities from engaging in activities such as price gouging, major online retailer pay cuts, intentional degradation of quality, and the stifling of competition. This could affect other large corporations such as Google, Meta, and Aliexpress from attempting to engage in their own brand of monopoly activity in other industries such as data collection, social networking, and advertising, in an overall positive turn of events for the average consumer.

## Lax Discipline Policies Encourage Misbehavior

by Seph Fischer '25

Recently, the system of student accountability across MCPS has made a drastic shift. This new set of principles--with "restorative justice" placed first and foremost--do not produce expected results, as is illustrated by the September 1 fight between Walter Johnson and Bethesda Chevy-Chase High School students at a Metro station after a football game. The violence displayed by these students in the released video is disturbing: the fight morphs into an attack, tens of students kick and beat a single student. MCPS has responded to this troubling incident through a series of vague policies, like requiring a school ID to attend football games (despite the fact that the fight occurred off school property), which don't actually resolve the base issue of misbehaving students, instead hampering well-behaved students. This presents the illusion that MCPS is doing something substantial to combat these incidents.

These incidents aren't isolated. A violent brawl between Gaithersburg and Northwest high schools erupted in September of last year, too. During the 2021-2022 school year, MCPS' Safety and Security At a Glance reported nearly 500 instances of deliberate attacks, as well as 800 instances of fighting. Though the number of attacks are similar to the 2019-2020 school year, the number of fights has increased by 150. Whatever the intention of MCPS' restorative justice programs, the data doesn't support their effectiveness. When students are not shown correct disciplinary action, they naturally push things further and further until all-out brawls occur at football games.

In 2019, the Maryland state

legislature passed House Bill 725, mandating "restorative justice" models in the punishment systems of all the state's school districts. MCPS embraced this change, stating that, "Montgomery County Public Schools has worked diligently to incorporate restorative justice [...] in all of our schools to better serve the needs of our students." Restorative justice programs promote restrained discipline to resolve conflict healthily and encourage change. However, based on the high--and in some cases increasing--levels of school violence in recent years, this system isn't working if the aim is to change student behavior. MCPS hasn't published full data on school violence incidents prior to the 2019-2020 school year, so it's impossible to tell exactly what effect restorative justice has had since implementation.

Some may argue that MCPS' recent policy implementations don't negatively affect those who follow the rules. This new form of justice only makes life better for all students, they might say. Even if one ignores the psychological impact of attending a school in which this behavior is left to happen without any clear consequences, this is simply untrue. While Sherwood and MCPS as a whole has loosened many restrictions and punishments on misbehaving students, it has tightened them for those who are generally good students. Instead of punishing those who use bathrooms for illicit purposes, Sherwood security has begun locking some of them altogether during lunch. For the advancement of our schools and the betterment of education, it is very imperative that Sherwood and MCPS return to policies which punish rulebreakers and allow well-behaved students to rise.

## School Phone Policy Not as Bad as You Think

by Katie Ng '25

In the 2022-23 school year, MCPS created guidelines supporting putting personal mobile devices, including phones, away during instructional time. At the high school level, personal mobile devices were permitted before and after school, during lunch, and principals had the discretion to determine if devices could be permitted during class and in between classes. However, these guidelines were not strongly enforced at Sherwood.

This school year, Sherwood is cracking down on phone usage with its new policy and more teachers are regulating phone usage. But although the new phone policy is generally unpopular among students, it has the potential to be beneficial by promoting productivity in class, student connection, and mental health.

First, the school limiting phone usage could help students focus on their academics. If students must put away their phones, it would force them to do their

classwork. And when students complete assignments in school, they feel relieved to have one or two fewer subjects of homework to worry about after school. Therefore, staying off of phones during the school day to get work done gives students a greater chance to relax and get sleep after school. In addition, the school's new phone policy will teach students how to not multitask. This is important because "a growing body of research has found that it's far less efficient to try to do two (or more!) things at once than to focus on just one task at a time. Multitasking can interfere with working memory, cause students to do worse in school, and could possibly even create potentially long-term memory problems," according to a Stanford University article. Learning to turn the phone off and put it away promotes better work habits and success.

It may also bring students together. Teachers have noticed that at the end of class, when they are

finished teaching instruction, students sit quietly on their phones until the bell rings rather than talk to each other. The new phone policy may encourage teachers to push their students to start conversations with their classmates and get to know them and their interests. Classroom discussions could improve and become more meaningful as well. The students who would not otherwise participate might start tuning in more and possibly talk.

Lastly, some students' mental health could benefit from having to put phones away for class instruction. It is no surprise that there are many negative interactions on social media platforms including cyberbullying, trolling, and nasty comments. "Social media can affect adolescents' self-view and interpersonal relationships through social comparison," the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) reported. This emphasizes how scrolling on social media can leave teens feeling poorly about themselves and



the need to take a break. Teens do not always need to know what other people are doing. They need to be aware of who they are following and how they are spending their time.

These phone habits the school wants to address arose and have stuck with students since the coronavirus pandemic, when

students were stuck in their own homes and isolated from each other. We need to return to a sense of normalcy in which classrooms are places for learning. Overall, the new phone policy may be imperfect, but it may help students become the best versions of themselves and improve the learning environment at this school.





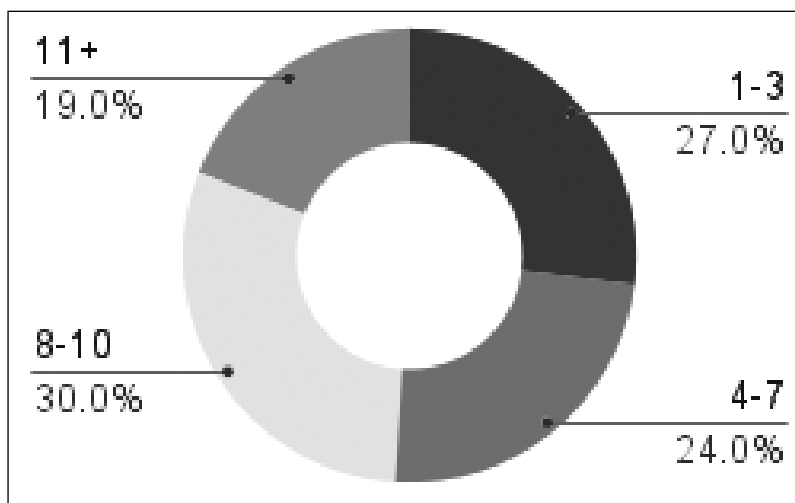
## The Pulse

With the start of November, seniors are in the middle (or the end, if they're lucky) of college applications. After a busy period of completing application forms and writing college essays, seniors are closer than ever to the next chapter of their lives.

### Do you plan to attend a four-year college or university next school year?



### How many colleges have you applied to?



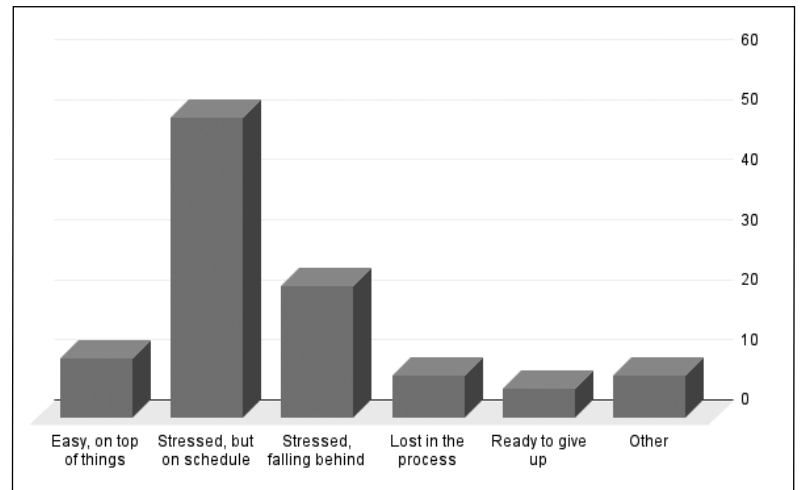
### What is most exciting for you at this point about applying to colleges and universities?

"Just the thought that I'm moving forward and have the potential to go to school at these higher institutions is something new and exciting. It's also really satisfying knowing that I'm done with a college application."  
- Zainab Hussain

"Getting the results of my acceptance/rejection letters from the schools, being done with the college application process, and having a fresh start at college after my high school graduation."  
- Hannah Jeong

"The most exciting part is to imagine myself in these colleges and to try and figure out if I would be a good student at this new place."  
- Owen Mascott

### Which best describes how you're doing with getting college applications done on time?



### What do you find most stressful about the college application process, and why?

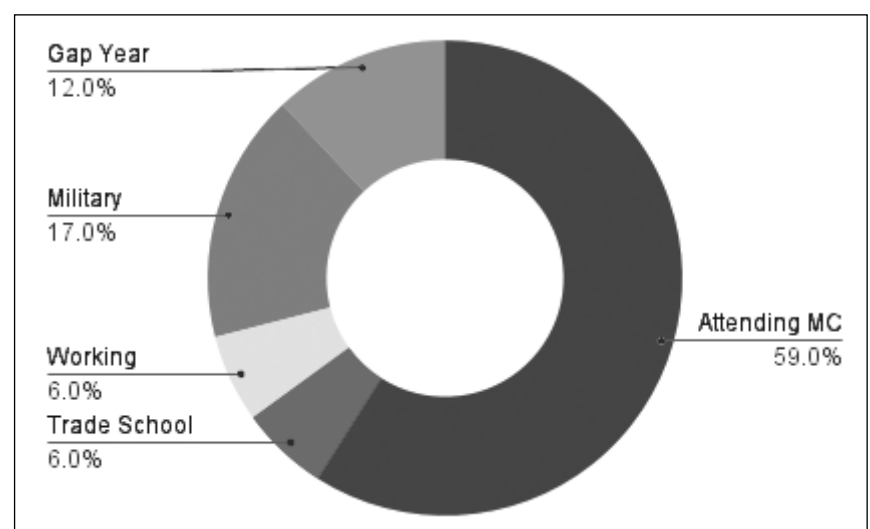
"Having to navigate Common App has been challenging, because there are so many waivers that you need to sign and agree with, but you aren't even sure what the terms and conditions are explaining."  
- Danielle Sun

"The essays - the programs and schools I am applying to are very competitive, and thus, require multiple writings, including supplemental essays, short answer questions, a personal statement, etc."  
- Davina Canagarajah

"Writing the really hard supplements. Sometimes I feel completely stuck and am unsure where to go with my writing especially when schools require multiple essays of that sort."  
- Andrew Papalia

"The amount of websites you have to use; and how it's kind of expected that you know everything about college applications even if no one in your family has applied to college recently."  
- Ava Yates

### If you do not plan to go to 4-year college, what is the reason for your decision?



# THE VANISHING SCHOOL DAY

## Dual Enrollment Now a Free Option at MC

by George Awkard '25

The Dual Enrollment program offers a gateway to college that all students enrolled at MCPS high schools can experience. Both MCPS and Montgomery College (MC) work in synergy to provide a hybrid or full experience of college at MC with students who attend regularly. Dual Enrollment through MC allows students to earn college credit and even an associates degree depending on the pathway students follow. Aside from the General Dual Enrollment Program, MC includes pathways students may take depending on a need basis, and there currently are 40 students total at Sherwood who are taking Dual Enrollment classes.

Early College is a pathway that students in 10th grade can apply to and immerse themselves in a full college experience with no requirement to attend any Sherwood Courses. In addition, Middle College slowly introduces 9th grade students to college coursework and eventually immerses them in a full college setting at MC as seniors. Jumpstart to College provides college course opportunities at MC while taking courses at Sherwood as well. To qualify for these pathways, students must have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 for a senior, and a 2.75 for students in grades 9-11. Alissa Margolis, who is a Dual Enrollment Program Assistant

(DEPA) at Sherwood, states that students are also required to meet several prerequisites and need to submit SAT, ACT, or placement test scores to qualify. Sherwood also requires that interested students speak to their parents, counselor, and the DEPA and get them to sign the forms for approval necessary to attend and apply.

MC previously required tuition payments for a student to take a course at their campuses; however, beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, MC no longer charges MCPS students to take a class at their campus, even though summer courses still require payment. Students who were previously enrolled and charged for their courses taken during the 2022-2023 school year were forgiven of their tuition.

Likely, the main appeal of Dual Enrollment is that it jumpstarts a more affordable path to a college degree. "It gives access to people who may not be able to afford regular college," said Jayden Jordan, who is in the Early College program at MC. "It also gets rid of the fact that people are scared to go to college because of the student loans that come with it."

Dual Enrollment at MC comes with benefits and disadvantages. Adjusting to a new experience can be hard but allows for students to complete college ahead of their peers and allows them to get a valuable college experience. It also allows them to earn

college credits and transfer them over to most colleges. However, Dual Enrollment, depending on what program students are in, may lead to feeling isolated in a new environment. Failing a class at MC also would damage both high school and college transcripts.

Additionally, transportation is not provided for students. "You're in charge of your own transportation; however, if we do get enough interest at this school for 20 or more, we can offer classes at the school" said Margolis. "I think Dual Enrollment is an amazing program. Although it's not for everyone, it's definitely something everyone should look at and see if it's right for them."

## Colleges Are Unsure on Modified Schedules

by Connor Pugh '24

The main draw to doing internships or a dual enrollment schedule is the promise of future success in academic pursuits beyond college. If a student has their heart set on a specific major and profession they want to specialize in, dual enrollment or internships gives them a head start in developing specific skills for that field. But what exactly do the colleges think?

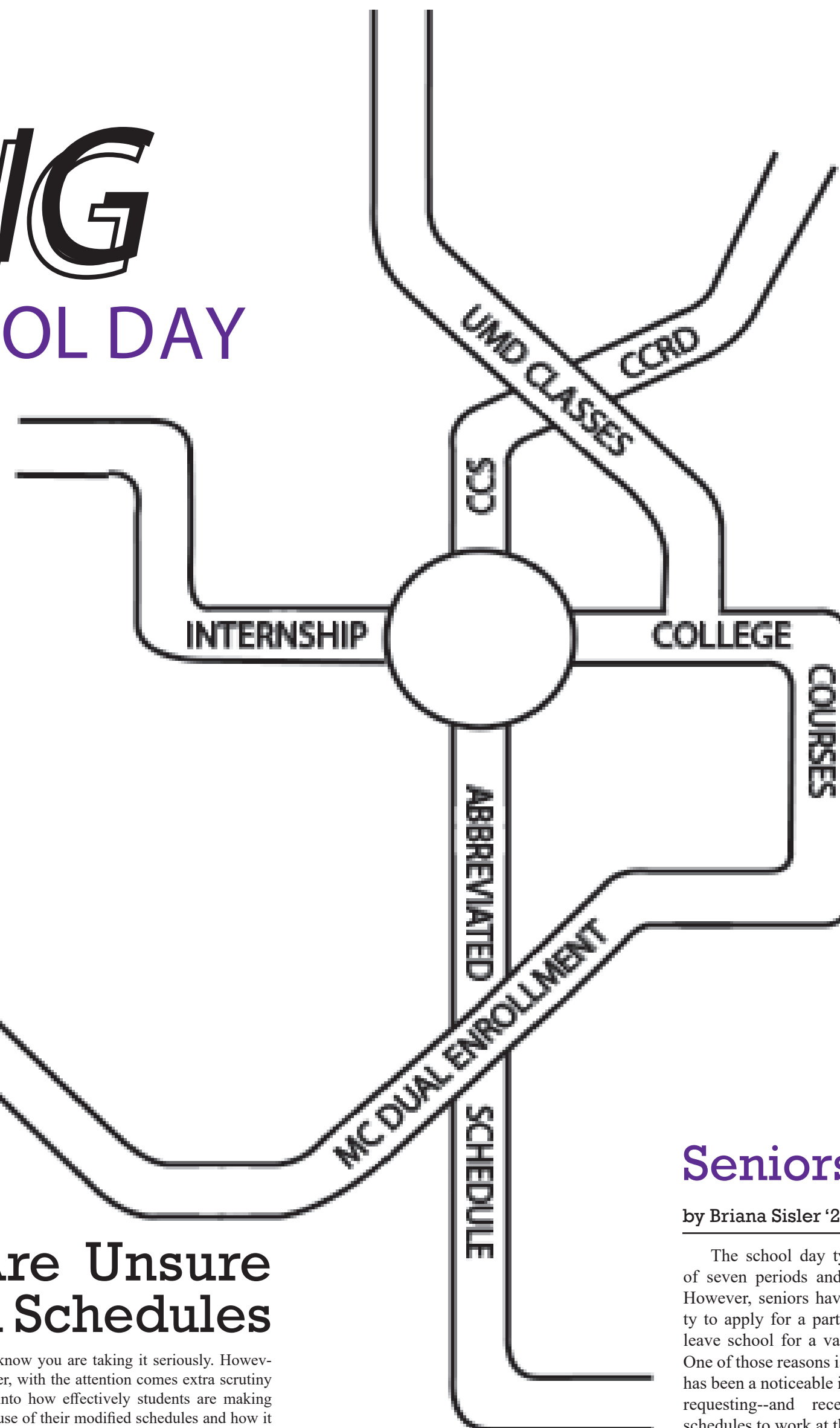
"When it comes to college applications, when [the colleges] are seeing internships align with possible majors or future careers; or they're seeing dual enrollment, where students are extending themselves beyond the classes we offer here, I think it looks favorable," stated Kelly Singleton, Sherwood's resource counselor.

Colleges pay attention when a student chooses a modified schedule because it signals the student has a plan already in motion for what they want to do in the future, a security that many colleges find valuable. Because of this, a modified schedule is a great way to get on the radar of colleges focused on your ideal profession and let them

know you are taking it seriously. However, with the attention comes extra scrutiny into how effectively students are making use of their modified schedules and how it helped them in ways a traditional schedule couldn't.

"Colleges want to see if you're doing the half day properly," suggested Jenny Davis, the Sherwood Coordinator for College and Career Information, adding that they want to see you "taking the initiative to do these college-level classes and that you're prepared for that."

Ultimately what colleges look for in most applicants is a resumé that holds value. If a student begins their journey towards a profession they know they want to be in through a modified schedule, it shows to the college their commitment towards their own career path and their early dedication. However, taking a modified schedule only holds meaning to both the college and the student if such a goal is already in mind; otherwise, a college might be left to conclude that the student simply is looking for a way to avoid a seven-period school day.



## Electives Affected by Alternative Schooling

by Audrey Farris '25

This school year there are an increasing number of alternative education opportunities for upperclassmen, mainly early college dual enrollment through Montgomery College or University of Maryland and half-day/abbreviated schedules for students with jobs or internships. More and more students are taking advantage of these opportunities, which has decreased enrollment in Sherwood's elective courses and raises the possibility that Sherwood will stop offering courses that are currently running.

The largest contributing factor to this issue has been the rising number of seniors with abbreviated/half-day schedules. Principal Tim Britton corroborated a figure from a school database showing that approximately 390 seniors have a first period class, while only 260 seniors have a seventh period class, meaning that a third of seniors do not have full day schedules.

These numbers do not account for at least 15 juniors or seniors who attend MC full-time and take no classes at Sherwood. Additionally, there also is a smaller number of juniors participating in dual enrollment.

Lynnette Evans-Williams, the head of the English department who also teaches the new elective African American Literature, explained that the combination of many elective options and the appeal of abbreviated schedules/dual enrollment programs have contributed to a large decrease in enrollment throughout many different English electives. Specifically, she noted that "Creative Writing, which is a semester-long course, is only running for

one semester this year," while in previous years having been able to run during both the fall and spring semesters because of higher enrollment. "Other electives have been dropped entirely due to low enrollment," she added.

When enrollment drops in electives, the impact also can be felt on Sherwood's extracurricular programs in areas such as music, theater, and publications. "In band classes you look for something that's called a complete instrumentation, so with the lower enrollment numbers that means you are not going to have that," explained instrumental music teacher Alex Silverbook, who teaches five elective courses. "I might not have enough players even on one instrument. Right now in Jazz Band we are at two trumpet players, where really I was hoping to have four. One of the trumpet players I would have had is now doing an abbreviated schedule so that took him out of Jazz Band. It affects the quality of the ensemble as a whole."

Loss of electives and lower participation in school activities haven't been the only impact that abbreviated schedules and dual enrollment have had on Sherwood. "We have lost teaching positions over the years because of students not doing full schedules here," explained Britton.

A full-time teacher teaches five classes per day, and when Sherwood drops the number of elective courses offered, teachers will have to teach more core classes. When enrollment drops or when students are taking core courses elsewhere that could be offered at Sherwood, the number of full-time teachers needed shrinks since there will be less core course class periods to fill each teacher's 5-period requirement.

**1st Period - 390 Seniors in class**

**7th Period - 260 Seniors in class**

## Seniors Leaving School Early To Work

by Briana Sisler '24

The school day typically consists of seven periods and a lunch break. However, seniors have the opportunity to apply for a partial schedule and leave school for a variety of reasons. One of those reasons is working. There has been a noticeable influx in students requesting--and receiving--shortened schedules to work at their jobs.

In order to acquire a partial schedule a student needs to meet with their counselor, request a Request for Approval for Part-Time Secondary Schedule form, and demonstrate a need to leave school early. In practice at Sherwood, proof of a job is considered enough of a "need" for an abbreviated schedule. Counselors will guide students through the process gathering the necessary materials and altering their schedules. Counselors may ask a student for a pay stub, time slip, or the hours worked as proof of a job. Students will also outline how many periods they wish to drop, the maximum being three periods. Counselors will not recommend seniors who are not on track to complete all their required credits for graduation.

After the application is recommended for approval or disapproval by the counselor, the form is sent to administration to be officially approved. Currently it is not recommended for seniors to apply for a half-day schedule this late into the year due to potential issues it could cause with transcripts and college applications. The best time to apply is by October 2 or during the previous year.

The aim of the partial schedules is to allow students to develop the skills necessary after high school and in the real world, such as being responsible enough to retain a job and earn money. It is unclear why students would not be able to develop such skills at jobs they work outside the regular school day.

Counselor Jamii Avery said that counselors very rarely disapprove requests for abbreviated schedules for the purpose of working. However, she shared some of her concerns about seniors with shortened schedules. "If students aren't taking more rigorous classes in school and are taking the time instead to leave early and go to work, colleges might see that and ask why," said Avery. "Students shouldn't be taking an easy senior year, and the

concern is whether students are keeping up the rigor even though they have less periods." Another concern, according to Avery, is whether students will breeze through senior year and then struggle with their first year in college, similar to how many students struggled after they returned from a year of virtual learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Principal Timothy Britton said that the school will approve students for partial-day schedules if their job "is something they want to make part of their future." He said the factors that the school considers is similar to what parents would want to know: "Safety, what type of job they are doing, how many days of the week are they working, and how many days of the week are they sitting at home when they could be in school."

After Sherwood counseling and then administration approves students for a partial schedule for working, the school does not track what days or hours the students are at the job during regular school hours. There also is not a process in place to know that students keep the job for which they were approved throughout the school year.



Montgomery College's mascot, the Raptor



November 2, 2023

**HUMOR DISCLAIMER:** This section is intended as satire and uses the tools of exaggeration, irony, or ridicule in the context of politics, current trends, recent school events, and other topical issues.

## Sherwood Implements Brand New Ten-Step Plan To Take Back the School

by Declan Rooney '25

With a new school year comes new rules for students to follow. Last year, the zoo we call Sherwood High School was rampant with off task behavior such as smoking, skipping class, and in-class phone usage. That is why the school needs a shepherd to put these animals in place, and I think I'm just the man for the job.

**1. Vape Detectors.** This year as part of MCPS' new initiative to increase student safety in schools, Sherwood installed vape detectors in classrooms and selective parts of the halls. This may sound good until you realize not a single bathroom in the school has one of these vape detectors, which is the primary location for a mid-class smoke session. But fixing this isn't as simple as putting detectors in bathrooms because if you know this school you know that the detector, within a week, will be taken off the wall and placed in some rando's backpack. Instead, I propose we organize medieval peasant mobs in collaboration with the security guards and make those found guilty wear cages on their face for the rest of the semester. Like a hall sweep but with pitchforks.

**2. Surveillance cameras.** Part of the same MCPS initiative to increase student safety, is an implementation of a security camera upgrade. But once again this safety measure does not go far enough for me. Who knows what tomfoolery students may engage in if they break into vacant classrooms. That is why I suggest putting cameras in every hallway, classroom, staff room, or other space. These

cameras will have TV screens on them too, so that students can understand the rules better, and so they understand that they are being watched at all times. There is no escape!

**3. Security Guards.** Walking around the school you will see some students casually conversing with the security guards as if they were friends. But the guards at Sherwood should not be friends with any of their prey. These guards are not scary enough; they don't inspire fear in me or any other student, which is why so much rule-breaking continues. To remedy this, I propose a uniform update. Guards will now have to wear spiked tungsten armor around the school at all times.

**4. Teachers.** Unlike the security guards there are teachers that truly inspire fear in the students they teach; however, this is the vast minority. To fix this, I will again be introducing a uniform update in order to make these hooligans do their homework. Teachers will now be forced to wear a big red nose and a rainbow wig to class, simulating something every child is afraid of, killer clowns. Balloons will also be distributed to really sell the idea.

**5. Bees.** To further exaggerate the intimidation and fear of the security guards at school we need weapons. Unfortunately, due to dumb stupid liberal laws, I can't give our knights what they need to do their jobs right. Instead, hives full of angry bees will be placed in retractable panels in the ceiling and walls all around the school. If a kid dares to run in the hallway or do anything else to endanger the integrity of our great

school, security will flip a switch and the bees will attack, giving that dirty criminal what they deserve. Bees are also so good for the environment.

**6. Bert.** A lot of rule breaking also happens around our glorious campus, far away from our wonderful police and their bee hives. To combat this, we will purchase a falcon to patrol the school. The falcon's name will be Bert, and the next time you leave campus to get a slurpee or pack of gum, Bert will come swooping in with his sharp talons. He may also attack innocent strangers but that is the cost of justice.

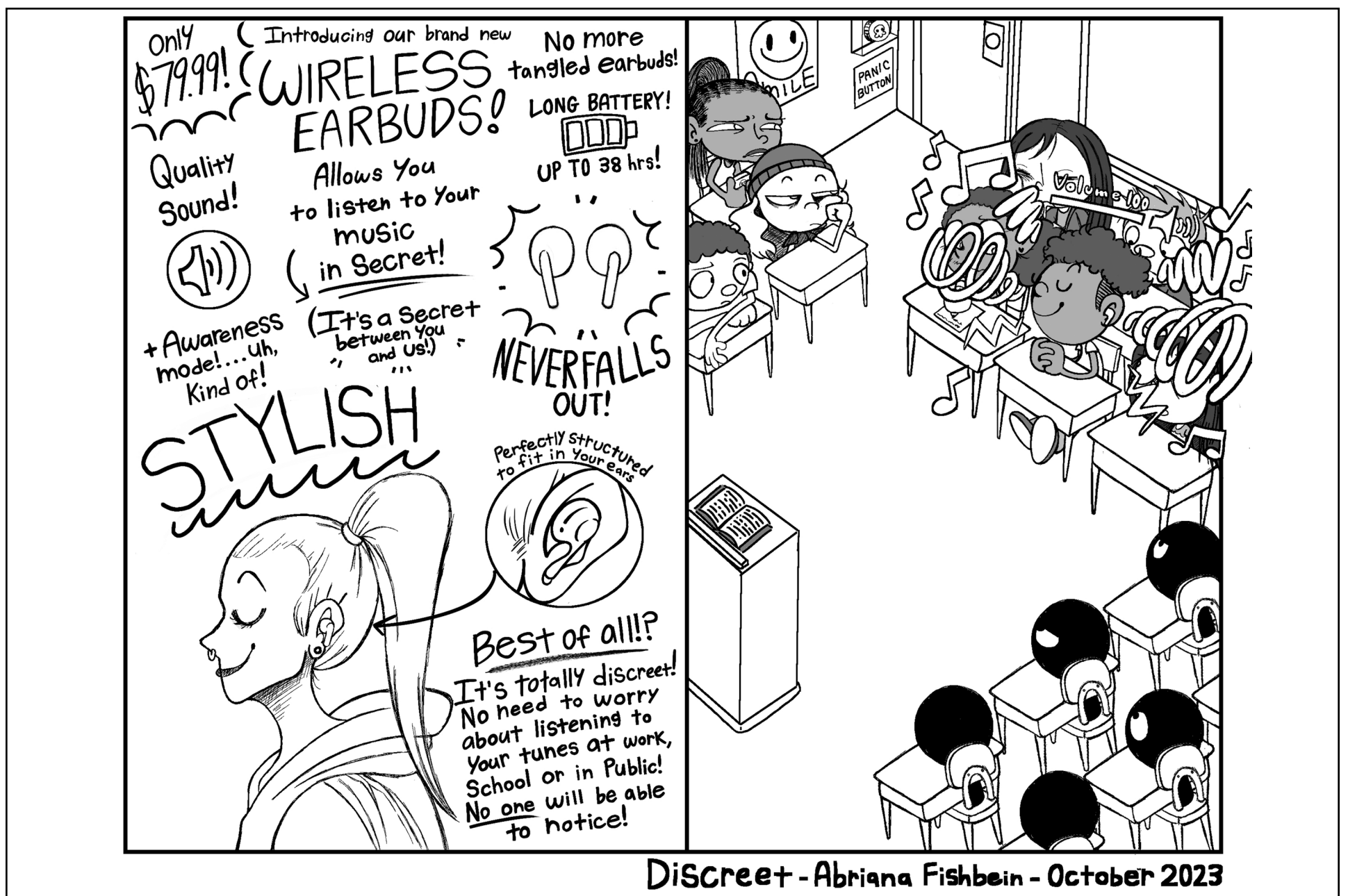
**7. Phone Vaporizer 9000.** This goes with the previous attempts to make the staff scarier, but this time there is a lot more functionality to it. A scary staff needs a scary principal to lead them, and while Mr. Britton is an intimidating figure as is, we can do better. I propose we equip him with a robotic cyber cannon that he will use to destroy students' precious cell phones that they won't put away during class. It's kind of like Cyborg from Teen Titans Go except it's real and flipping epic.

**8. A-10 Warthog.** There is one flaw with my sixth change. Bert sadly cannot stop students from hiding in their cars. That begs the question: What happened if one of them got into their vehicles and drove off, avoiding the dark arm of justice I worked so hard to create? No that won't do, we need to stop these motorized teens before they get away. Introducing the Fairchild Republic A-10 Warthog; a cheap alternative to my other idea of bringing dinosaurs back. The Warthog comes equipped with three mis-

sile mounts per wing, two General Electric TF34 engines, one GAU8 Avenger minigun loaded with 1,174 rounds of explosive bullets, and 0 runaway hooligans. Your mom's minivan never stood a chance.

**9. Dungeon.** All of these previous improvements are good for terrorizing, catching and terrorizing the misbehaving creatures of Sherwood, but what happens when we catch them? Not to mention how will we terrorize them? Well, just as anybody who has ever worked at Field of Screams knows, you shall never miss an opportunity to traumatize children. Maybe you rev the fake chainsaw a little more, scream a little louder, or jump out at them a little faster. I throw them in the dungeon. Unfortunately, I cannot give the location of the dungeon away, but just know there will be something down there with you, and I am taking suggestions on what.

**10. Giant Spike.** Sitting at his desk all the way back in 1700, pondering the universe, Issac Newton came to an ingenious realization that would revolutionize the way we understand the world to this day; everything would be so much cooler if it had spikes on it. I plan to carry out Newton's ideas by making one small, teeny tiny change. I will be putting spikes on everything. Walls, ceilings, floors, flat surfaces, curved surfaces, the secret room in the media center where the creature is kept—you get the idea. Additionally to finish off my incredible plan, one huge spike will be placed in the center of the football field that is 500 feet high. This will also add a little bit more excitement and another level of difficulty to the football games.



November 2, 2023

## Fall Frenzy

Ben Schoenberg '24 and Gael Rebu '24

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|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Black Friday | 5. Fall Arts Festival | 9. Grease      | 13. Napoleon      | 18. Pumpkin Spice   |
| 2. Board Games  | 6. Five Nights At     | 10. Halloween  | 14. Pep Rallies   | 19. Sweater Weather |
| 3. Cornmazes    | Freddy's              | 11. Homecoming | 15. Powderpuff    | 20. Thanksgiving    |
| 4. Day Of The   | 7. Food Trucks        | 12. Homecoming | 16. PSAT          |                     |
| Dead            | 8. Football           | Game           | 17. Pumpkin Patch |                     |

Visit [thewarrioronline.com](http://thewarrioronline.com) for answers.

### Sherwood Expands Parking Spots for Students

by Jordan Costolo '25

Attention Juniors and Seniors: It has come to the attention of Sherwood administration and staff that the student parking is not the best. The parking lot is disorganized, rampant with students taking other's assigned spots, filled with bad parking jobs, and littered with spots that are in direct sunlight or on uneven ground. So to respond to student complaints (and there have been many), the school has opened up new areas of the school to be used for parking. Students have spoken loudly and clearly, and we hear your voices!

The courtyards are nice and isolated, and they make a perfect place to park your car. However, they are difficult to get into for a person, let alone a vehicle. No obstacle is too difficult to overcome. The lower H and G halls will be open to auto traffic from 7:20-7:40 and from 2:50-3:10 for those students lucky enough to get a parking pass to the lower courtyards. Just remember to watch out for students and teachers as you drive your way through the school.

Near the football field, the bleachers can be used for parking from now on. Make sure to have your parking brake engaged, as a spot like this requires you to be



Sherwood's neverending hellscape often referred to as the student lot.

careful getting in and out of the car, making sure you don't tilt it the wrong way, as it could start falling onto the field.

If you have a friend that would not mind sharing a spot, then parking on top of other cars is a good solution to conserve space. However, the students will have to use their own mechanized lift or towing system, and will not be able to use the staff lift. It is advised to make sure the car on the bottom has a stable sunroof.

Parking in the front of the school could result in a special shout-out to your car, "Pardon the interruption, There is a Toyota Corolla in the bus lanes; whoever owns this car, please move it. Thank you."

The roof of the school has recently been renovated to add new parking spots on the roof. This will be a perfect place to park during the 4th quarter, as it is right next to the Sherwood's famous outdoor pool.

If you have not noticed, a portal to Hell has been opened near the student parking lot, which you are free to use without a parking pass. As you park here, watch out for gaping pits full of screaming mouths, bleeding eyes, and arms clawing their way out, and remember to stay within the first three circles.

Hopefully these new parking spots will help mitigate the issue of subpar parking until we are able to successfully renovate the actual parking lots in 2055.

### Mock Trial Ready To Do It for Real This Time Around

by Mauricio Altamirano '24

By popular demand, the Mock Trial Club (MTC) has returned to Sherwood. In the courtroom where people's lives are at stake, emotions run high and people may say things they later regret. Imagine what might happen if a couple of utterly inexperienced lawyers are thrown into the mix.

The club's return can be credited to its veteran members, who were the victorious competitive Mock Trial team champion team two years ago. Combining naive arrogance with a passion for the law, they are convinced that they are ready to tackle something bigger: being part of an actual court case.

These Mock Trial veterans are sick and tired of spending hours preparing for trials that are pretend. The MTC has two meetings per week, which is double any other club. Sometimes, a meeting might even last longer than an hour. "Sure, I get that it's less than what students do in real law school, but we are definitely putting in more time than other Sherwood students are in their clubs," explained senior Mark Connors. "I've also spent a lot of minutes googling things like,

'what's the difference between murder and manslaughter.'"

Connors has put together a legal dream team consisting of himself, junior Tom Kenison, and junior Evie Peake. "If I'm going to read all this evidence and testimony, I want it to be about a real crime that a real person has been accused of committing," said Kenison, who said that the team is looking to defend someone who seems like he is absolutely guilty. "It would be so cool to get a guy off for murder! It would really show everyone that we belong in an actual courtroom."

When asked about MTC members trying an actual case, the club sponsor, social studies teacher Katie Jaffe, said that she had not been consulted about the idea. "On the one hand, it's great that they're passionate," remarked Jaffe. "On the other hand, I'm certain that I've told all the club members that you have to be granted a license to practice law."

Connors said that the group is not worried about not meeting any requirements to be in an actual courtroom. "We're not giving up," he said. "We'll appeal all the way to the Supreme Court if it means a chance to defend a killer."



## Dumb Money Is a Tonally Confused Underdog Story

by Liam Trump '24

Taking place during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, director Craig Gillespie's latest feature, *Dumb Money*, tells the story of the GameStop short squeeze of 2021. The film goes over the main events of how one man, Keith Gill (Paul Dano), used Reddit to rally the internet to buy stock in GameStop to make a statement against big hedge funds. The premise here is almost inherently absurd even if it is a true story, and Gillespie takes full advantage of that aspect. As a result, *Dumb Money* is still an entertaining portrayal of a very interesting part of recent history even though the film struggles to maintain a consistent overall tone.

Even while focusing mainly on the character Keith himself, the film boasts an impressive ensemble cast. Other Redditors including Jenny (America Ferrara), Marcus (Anthony Ramos), and Riri (Myha'la) are on Keith's side. Through these characters, the film takes a look into how an entire community can be formed around seeking opportunity. Opposing them are the hedge fund higher ups, such as Ken Griffin (Nick Offerman), Gabe Plotkin (Seth Rogen), and Steve Cohen (Vincent D'Onofrio). They all give serviceable performances, but the main highlight of the film is the relationship Keith has with his brother Kevin (Pete Davidson). Their characters bounce off each other naturally and whenever the two of them are on screen,

it usually makes for an enjoyable scene.

The overall pace of the film is concise, with very few scenes going on for too long. As there is such a large cast, the film can jump around to different characters before any individual storyline becomes too stale. But a major caveat of framing the story in such a way is that there isn't much screen time to give any one side characters much depth.

The biggest issue, however, is that the main story comes across as almost too simplistic for its own good. As the stock market is given a lot of focus, it would be expected that much of the inner workings would be explored in depth. Instead, the throughline of the movie is a simple 'good vs bad' conflict between the good redditors and the evil higher ups at the hedge funds. Having a more exaggerated outlook on the conflict wouldn't really be much of a problem, but the film never commits either way. This leaves some of the more emotional and sentimental beats coming across as hollow and unearned.

*Dumb Money* mainly suffers from the fact that it has to balance showcasing the harsh truth of how the economy has been rigged against the little guy, and an absurdist comedy aiming for laughs. While it is certainly entertaining, *Dumb Money* seems to lose sight of the nuances that come with the subject matter it's portraying.

**Grade: C+**

## Killers of the Flower Moon Masterfully Examines America's Violent History

by Ben Schoenberg '24

In the early 1920s the Osage Native American tribe were the richest people per capita in the entire world as a result of finding oil on the land they were forcibly placed in by the U.S. government. This fortune turned to tragedy and throughout the next decade more than 100 Osage people were murdered for their oil money through a conspiracy carried out by jealous white townfolk. In *Killers of the Flower Moon*, based off of the novel by David Grann, director Martin Scorsese masterfully depicts the true story of the horrific atrocities that occurred in Osage County, Oklahoma.

For this film Scorsese decided to focus on telling the intimate and disturbing story of Ernest Burkhart (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his relationship with his wife Mollie Burkhart (Lily Gladstone), opening with Ernest arriving back in Oklahoma following the first World War. From then on, Ernest is manipulated by his uncle William Hale (Robert De Niro) into plotting and committing the murder of rich Osage, including Mollie's own family.

Combining elements of both love and betrayal, *Killers of the Flower Moon* simultaneously is

a story about America as whole and the despicable violence perpetrated against Native Americans. Many of Scorsese's films focus on the corrupting nature of greed and violence but with *Killers of the Flower Moon*, he gives a much deeper look into how it personally affects the people that fall victim to those atrocities. The heartbreaking emotional toll the murders have on Mollie and her people following the graphic slaughter of her family and other Osage serve as an informative look into how the United States has gotten away with its ethnic cleansing of indigenous people for centuries.

The film's star studded cast helps engross the audience in the disturbing and unsettling story. DiCaprio and De Niro once again give phenomenal performances that send chills down the audience's spines due to how casually evil they can be. But the standout performance of the whole movie is Gladstone as Mollie. She is able to perfectly encapsulate the grief and swirling emotions that are felt throughout the film just through her facial expressions alone and owns every scene she's in.

Now entering his 80s, Scorsese continues to prove why he is a



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master at his craft and applies the same level of care and heart into his films that he has his whole career, but now with an added maturity and even greater understanding of the art form. Scorsese films *Killers of the Flower Moon* with next-level cinematography that coincides perfectly with his longtime collaborator, Thelma Schoonmaker's, precise editing that is able to highlight the bru-

tility of the stomach churning murders being shown and give intimate moments their needed emotional value.

While the nearly three and a half hour long run time may seem off putting to more casual moviegoers, the film's length serves its purpose to have viewers feel the excruciating time between the tragic murders and when justice might be brought to the per-

petrators. As a whole, *Killers of the Flower Moon* is a triumph in filmmaking that educates Americans on its dark history while also providing another Scorsese masterpiece of filmmaking.

**Grade: A+**

## What We're...

### Watching

Although soccer isn't as popular in the United States as it is in most other parts of the world, **Welcome to Wrexham** provides an in-depth look at a Welsh team that works towards being promoted to a higher league. As majority owners, actors Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney use their fame and money to attempt to provide the city of Wrexham with their club's long-awaited success. Even for viewers who are not soccer fans, they will cheer the progress that the owners are making on the club and the community.

~Noah Bair '24

For more than a half-century, **Rebel Without a Cause** has been lauded as one of the best films to portray teenage angst and frustration. After watching the film it is clear to me why. Through James Dean's phenomenal performance as the film's lead, Jim Stark, Dean takes the audience through an emotional journey that makes a one-day journey feel like a lifetime. Personally, this story still holds up as a definitive teen movie and is capable of delivering an emotional punch nearly seven decades after its initial release.

~Ben Schoenberg '24

### Reading

Considered one of the most influential books of all time, Dante's **The Divine Comedy** from the 14th century follows his journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven with numerous cameos from famous historical figures (most of whom Dante fawns over) and detailed accounts of eternal suffering. Dante's work provides a fascinating insight into how late medieval Europe perceived sin, salvation, and Christianity. Additionally, the epic poem provides a unique perspective on the social, political, and religious situation of Medieval Florence through Dante's flaunting of his own biases (Dante would often feature people he didn't like as one of the many souls damned to eternal suffering in Hell). Overall *The Divine Comedy* is a great if extremely dense read, and something I would recommend if you like history and reading.

~Connor Pugh '24

An arduous journey, **One Piece** is an action packed, emotional adventure about pirates finding a treasure that belongs to the Pirate King called the One Piece. It has been a part of my life since my elementary school and has made me who I am today. Currently on my fourth reread, I have read up to Chapter 600 as of now. It is notable for being very long, with both its manga and anime adaptation being over 1,000 chapters and episodes respectively. While it can be consumed through many different mediums, like anime, and now a live action TV show, reading the manga, in my opinion, better immerses you in the story.

~Dasun Panapitiya '24

### Listening To

Tyler Childers' sixth studio album, **Can I Take My Hounds to Heaven?** is my favorite of his releases. *Hounds* contains three versions of each song. First is the "Hallelujah" version which focuses on Childers and his core band, The Food Stamps. "Jubilee" version follows, representing more of a big band sound with prominent horn and string sections. The final is the "Joyful Noise" version, a combination of his traditional folksy sound and electronic club-esque beats. Listening to three distinctly different versions of the same eight songs compiled into one album is a wondrous example of how expansive music can be.

~Audrey Farris '25

November 2, 2023

## Payday 3 Lives Up the Hype in Spite of Flawed Release

by Thein Dinh '26

Throughout the past decade, Overkill Software has become stale in the game development scene, and the company's current games are pretty dry. Their publisher, Starbreeze Nebula, also has been in a game drought. Thankfully, *Payday 3* is a breath of fresh air into the *Payday* series.

Other than working a nine-to-five, dancing in clubs, and being beaten by police, one can become a revered international criminal. After the melancholy ending to the *Payday* gang's crime spree in *Payday 2*, they are back with a vengeance. In *Payday 3*, a cooperative first person shooter, the crew has to pull off heists in the streets of New York.

The game has gone over a few different reworks as most in-game mechanics have changed. All of them are exciting now, and an example is *Payday 3*'s interaction system. In previous games, lockpicking took up to fifteen seconds. Nothing is really exciting about a timer going down. *Payday 3* fixes that tedium with more interactivity and speed. Gameplay wise, playing stealthily is more fun since time isn't wasted waiting for something to



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happen, and you are given greater assistance because there are new skill sets for committing burglaries.

On the other hand, hostile takeovers force cooperation and are more enthralling. Previous heists in the series were either too

strenuous or effortless. There is a cycle of constantly demolishing enemies or losing to them. To balance this, the game requires unity amongst players, and enemies are more challenging, but fun to play against.

Despite Overkill's efforts,

*Payday 3* still has some problems. Occasionally, the game would stutter while playing. The poor optimization foreshadowed the terrible start up on release. If this continues it could negatively affect people with lower-end computers. Before, *Payday 2* required

average computer requirements to play, but *Payday 3* emphasizes an upgrade on your hardware and with this, it puts that demographic on the fence. Another drawback when heisting is it can take twenty or thirty minutes to take everything but you only receive minimal rewards in cash and experience for progressing your skills. The repetitive nature can be annoying but if you focus on having fun, you don't need to worry.

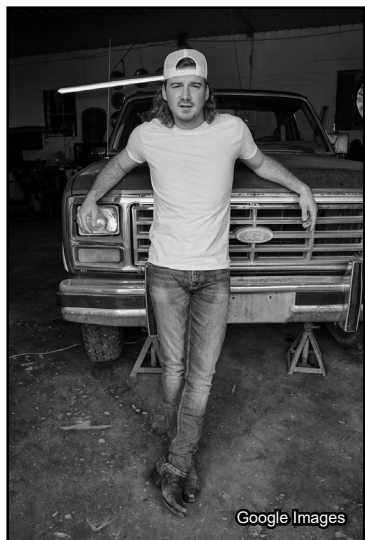
All things considered, *Payday 3* is great but it's priced four times higher than *Payday 2*. This is because Starbreeze Nebula wants to create a stronger relationship with their patrons and reduce the price to hook in future customers. This doesn't appear to be profitable, but *Payday 2*'s paid downloadable content could work for monetizing *Payday 3*, even though it is disliked by the community. Overall, even though *Payday 3* is a janky robbery game and feels weird, it is still worth your money, because it has more entertainment value than traditional games in this genre.

**Grade: B**

## Country Music Continues To Explode in Popularity

by Andrew Rosenthal '24

Within the last two years, the rise of country music has erupted throughout the music industry. Country music has quickly spread to people of all ages across the United States, from kids in middle school to adults in their 50s. In 2021, country music had an 8.6 percent-share of album sales, closing in on pop's 10.7-percent share of albums sold that year. According to the Country Music Association (CMA), more than 50 percent of adults in America were listeners of the genre in 2021. This growth has only continued, and country music saw a 20.3-percent increase of listeners just in 2023. In the coming years, there is a good chance that country music could become the most popular genre of music in the country.



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what drives their popularity as listeners--particularly teens and young adults--easily relate to the lyrics. Artists such as Wallen, Combs and Luke Bryan are some artists with more of a happy vibe, while Zach Bryan and Thomas Rhett are more known for their more serious and nostalgic tunes.

The growing popularity of country music can be seen among Sherwood students. More and more students have been listening to country music with students posting about their favorite artists on their social media platforms, or attending concerts. Country music is in the best position it's seen, in part due to the pandemic when people of all ages started venturing out of their usual comfort zones and listening to new genres of music. "Ever since my brother would play the music in the car on the way to school I've started to like [country]," said senior Connor Asbacher. "I just see it as music and I don't really take anything from it. I do notice my take on music kind of follows which kind of country I listen to."

Popular singers such as Morgan Wallen and Luke Combs, and stars on the rise such as Zach Bryan, have contributed to the explosion of country music. Combs released his song "Hurricane" in 2015, and it sparked his fame as it climbed the charts over the next year and now is 8x certified platinum. Wallen gained his popularity by going on the T.V. show "The Voice," while Bryan broke through on his YouTube channel where his songs went viral. Wallen's most recent album, *One Thing at a Time*, sold the equivalent of 501,000 units. Bryan's album *American Heartbreak*, which was released May 20, 2022, sold for the equivalent of 702,000 units as of October 2022.

Many observers of country music believe that the stories that these artists tell in their songs is

## Boygenius, Lana Del Rey and Other Acts Make Musical Waves at Merriweather Post Pavilion

by Audrey Farris '25

The area's biggest indie music festival, All Things Go, just got bigger. The festival took place on September 30 and October 1 at Merriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia, Maryland. This year was the first that All Things Go was a two-day festival. Featuring some of the biggest names in indie music, All Things Go was a jam-packed weekend full of beautiful weather, incredible outfits, and exhilarating live performances.

Headlining Saturday was singer/songwriter Maggie Rogers, who played alongside Carly Rae Jepsen, Mt. Joy, Lizzy McAlpine, Dayglow, and Suki Waterhouse as well as other performers. Sunday's lineup included indie giants Lana Del Rey and Boygenius, among smaller artists like Alex G, Alvvays, Arlo Parks, and MUNA. This year hosted some of the most prominent artists in the festival's history, competing with headliners Mitski, Lorde, and HAIM in previous years.

All Things Go, now in its ninth year, has flourished into a thriving festival. Starting in 2014 as small, intimate performances at D.C.'s Union Market, the festival has transformed into one of the leading Indie festivals, a large feat for an independently owned festival. Over 20,000 tickets sold out just hours after the general sale started in late April, with presale tickets following the same pattern a day earlier.

The most notable performance of the weekend was easily Boygenius' set. Indie rock supergroup Boygenius, formed in 2018



Charlie Scholl '25

"All Things Go" attendees watching indie artist Lizzy McAlpine perform on Merriweather's Chrysalis Stage on Saturday, Sept. 30.

by Julien Baker, Phoebe Bridgers, and Lucy Dacus, performed almost the entirety of their two album discography, a set that mesmerized the audience with ethereal harmonies and reverberated chord progressions.

Lana Del Rey followed closely in the ranking of best performances, playing an even mix of her most popular songs and deep cuts. Del Rey's set was purely elegant, mystical, and angelic. Some honorable mentions include sets by indie rock band Alvvays, capturing the feeling of pure nostalgia in a mix of airy guitar and a solid pedal board, and singer/songwriter Alex G, whose performance felt the most intimate and genuine of the night.

Even though the festival went smoothly, there still happened to be a few hiccups throughout the weekend that put a slight damper on the experience. Merriweather Post allows attendees to bring one empty reusable water bottle or one factory-sealed plas-

tic water bottle. The problem is that for a festival of over 20,000 people, they only had two water filling stations with about 4 spigots at each. This led to extremely long lines to fill water bottles at the beginning of the festival, but they eventually shortened as the day went on. On the note of long lines, the bathrooms had even longer ones. In addition to the bathrooms that Merriweather Post already has, the facility had numerous portable toilets scattered throughout the festival grounds. Unfortunately, there weren't enough bathrooms for the volume of people there and lines stayed consistently long.

Despite these minor issues, All Things Go was one of the most magical live music experiences. Thinking ahead to next year it's exciting to think about what the possible lineup could be, considering how stacked this year's was. If you like indie music in any capacity, you can't miss All Things Go 2024.

## Girls Soccer Falls Short in the Second Round Volleyball Prepares for Regionals

by Noah Bair '24

On October 27, the girls varsity soccer team was defeated by Wootton in the second round of the 2023 Maryland Girls Soccer State Championship by a score of 2-1. The defeat comes after the team defeated Watkins Mill by a score of 2-0 in the first round of the playoffs just two days before on October 25.

The loss to Wootton was a disappointing ending for the Warriors, especially after a very successful season that included a 2-1 win against Wootton earlier in the season. Coach Kristina Bryn noted that Wootton is a "very skilled team" and "it was going to be a real fight," but Sherwood was unable to pull away in what ended up being their final game of the season.

After winning only five games last year, the girls varsity soccer team finished 8-4 in the regular season this year. In addition to having an impressive record, the Warriors clinched a division title after beating Blake 4-0 on October 9.

The team had a strong group of captains that played an integral role in the team's success. Senior captain Katie Roecklein emphasized that the captains play a large role in "regulating practice, making sure everyone is focused to help make it more beneficial, organizing fun team bonding activities, and making sure our team is always on our best behavior and good sportsmanship."

Captain Marley Hillman attributed this success to an increase in team chemistry compared to last season. "The main difference I believe everyone has noticed is



Girls soccer celebrates their divisional championship win over Blake.

the team dynamic," noted Hillman. "Last year our team chemistry was not strong ... However, this year we found a way to work as a team and be coherent."

Coach Bryn echoed the same sentiment. "I believe our success this year has a lot to do with our team's chemistry," she noted. "You can have all the talent in the world but unless you have the team companionship and the trust in one another it doesn't necessarily matter."

While the team was successful this season, they faced a number of tough opponents in the back end of their schedule. On October 9, the team's senior night, the Warriors defeated Blake by a score of 4-0, a team that beat Sherwood last year by a score of 4-3. "Our team is a lot stronger

than we were last year," said senior and captain Josie Segó. "We are all comfortable playing with each other, and we [were] hungry for [that] Blake win."

After the Blake game, the team met their most challenging foes of the season, with games against Churchill and Quince Orchard in a span of just three days in late October. QO finished 12-0 this year and outscored opponents 63-6 this season, the largest margin of anyone Sherwood played this year. Coach Bryn noted that QO is a "powerhouse" and a "great team," and that compared to last year, "this time we were excited for competition, not anxious." Despite the confidence by the Warriors, the team lost 4-0 to Churchill and 5-0 to QO to finish the regular season.

## Boys Soccer Suffers an Early Loss in Playoffs

by Noah Bair '24

After a 4-7-1 finish in the 2023 regular season, the boys varsity soccer team saw their season come to an end at the hands of Kennedy on October 25, losing 2-1 in their first round playoff game. The team had beaten Kennedy 1-0 in the regular season.

Despite the disappointing end to the season, the team was competitive throughout the season, led by their senior captains Andy Ruiz and Johnny Markos. Both used their experience and maturity to lead the team in the right direction. Ruiz was aware that "many of the other players look up to [his] style of play," so he "always pushed others to be better by keeping a positive attitude on and off the field."

By keeping this mindset in the forefront during the season, the team worked together and blended into a team with strong chemistry, something coach Paul Homon preached throughout the season. "The biggest challenge for the team was getting familiar with each other as players," Homon noted. "We can't be 24 players playing for 24 different teams; we have to all be playing for one Sherwood."

Even though the team was able to come together and expand

Varsity volleyball graduated the core of last year's team but whilst having a new, more inexperienced team, the dream remains the same: winning the state tournament. The loss of Meghan Wessling, Gabbi Casaus, Audrey Strosnider, and Camryn Lineberger to graduation meant that the next group of players had to step up. The team this year is relying on seniors Ellie Russell, Savannah Weisman, Olivia Hardy, and Megan Milke, as well as junior Vlada Costenco to maintain Sherwood's reputation as consistently being a top volleyball team in the county.

"Every day at practice, the team gives 100 percent and as a result, we continue to improve. They work as a team and want to play for each other," said Coach Kaitlyn Jain. "We have a great group of seniors who have been leaders so far."

After a loss to Wootton in the second game of the season, the Warriors bounced back and notched wins over tough opponents such as Magruder. The team finished the regular season with a record of 11-3. Big games at the end of the season included the annual 'Dig Pink' game, which was at home against Damascus on October 18. The Warriors were triumphant in that game, topping the Hornets 3 sets to 0 and clutching a big late-season win in their stylish pink jerseys to show support for breast cancer awareness. The Warriors played another difficult game at home on October 23 against Clarksburg. Clarksburg was ranked third in the county, just ahead of Sherwood, but un-

fortunately Sherwood failed to prevail on their senior night. "The game could have gone either way," said Jain. While Sherwood has a very solid squad, they will face significant challenges in the playoffs. Opponents like Wootton, who share a region with Sherwood, will be the main obstacle towards having a shot at advancing to the state playoffs. "The winner of the Region [in the playoffs] has a great shot of winning the state tournament," said Jain. The Warriors still have a lot in front of them before the regional final. "We're not looking past Magruder, who we will have to beat to reach that final [regional] game," said Jain. "We played really well the first time we met and they will want revenge."



Senior Megan Milke goes for a difficult spike against Clarksburg.

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## Field Hockey Falls in Playoffs

by George Awkard '25

With a record of 7-5, the girls field hockey team performed significantly better than the previous year; however, the season proved very difficult over the final games of the season.

The team suffered the biggest loss against Quince Orchard, 6-0 on October 12, despite 10 saves by senior goalies Lilah Boig and Amaya Williams. The Warriors lost five games in the second half of the season because of a much more demanding schedule as well as injured players. The team also struggled with marking on defense, and this gave other teams an easier chance to score.

The playoffs ended in the first round with a loss against Reservoir High School, 2-0, on October 26. Reservoir is a school Sherwood field hockey had never played before and did not know what to expect.

Going into the game, the team had a positive attitude and remained strong knowing they could rely on their hard work. According to Coach Walter Vasquez, the Warriors tried to communicate and pass effectively, but Reservoir was able to outthrust the team and had very strong aeri-als. The team engaged in regular discussions and a positivity circle

to strengthen their spirit before the playoffs. Reservoir played Atholton High School in the Regionals.

With the season coming to a close, the team had some players who made a difference in the record because of their harmonious play style and fierce leadership. "Both goalies, Amaya Williams and Lilah Boig, have been amazing in taking a leadership role in the back field, directing players, calling out to mark open attack players and taking ownership of that part of the field," said Vasquez.

The girls worked tirelessly, practicing plays over and over again to execute them in games. There was pressure on not only playoffs but on every single game these girls played. "Pressure definitely increases as you know any one of these games could be your last for the season," said junior Ella Woodside about the playoffs.

The team had gone through challenges during the season but continually worked hard together. "I'm really proud of this team," Vasquez said. "They have grown so much as players and are a really fun group. In the end, it's about connecting with people, and I'm proud to see how they have connected on and off the field."



Senior forward Christian Mathieu dribbles past a Watkins Mill defender.

off each others' skill sets, it was not without a loss of many seniors from the 2022 season. "After losing the 12 seniors last year, I feel like the seniors this year helped to account for the players lost from last season," said Markos. With the majority of the team being non-seniors, he pushed the idea that the seniors had to "encourage all the non-seniors, to always play with all their heart on the field."

The team had multiple impressive streaks during the season, including a span of two weeks from September 27 to October 6 where the team went 3-1 with monumental wins against Wootton, Kennedy, and rival Blake. Despite this momentum

going into the end of the season, the team finished with tight losses against powerhouses Churchill and Quince Orchard to close out the regular season.

With eight seniors set to graduate this year, the Warriors will certainly need to make up for minutes and leadership lost in the offseason, but they have a wealth of young talent in the form of juniors and sophomores throughout the roster. Additionally, the boys junior varsity team finished 6-3-1, a superb record that features many young players that Homon will certainly look forward to introducing to the varsity team next season and in upcoming years for the future of the program.



## Kim Takes Home U.S. Junior Amateur Title

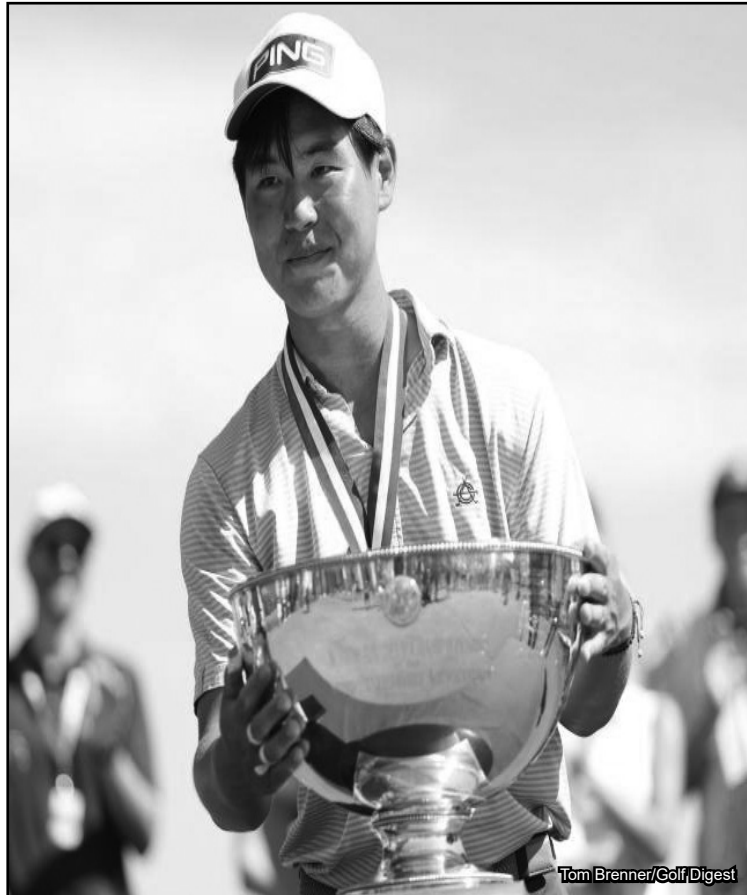
by Thomas Fenner '24

Sherwood graduate Bryan Kim made his mark on the golf world in July when he won the U.S. Junior Amateur Championship. Headlined by some of the best young golfers in the world, Kim became the second lowest-seeded competitor (#52) to win the Championship since Charlie Beljian (#56) back in 2002. The nationally televised event has put some of the game's greatest golfers on the map. Kim adds his name to the illustrious list of past winners, including golfers who went on to compete in and win "Majors" such as the Masters.

Kim, who graduated from Sherwood this past June, had a legendary career as a Warrior, leading the school's golf team to a second place finish in states last fall. Individually, Kim was stellar in the state of Maryland, finishing second. Additionally, Kim was named to the 2022 Fall All-Met first-team by the Washington Post.

In the Junior U.S. Open that took place over six days this past July, Kim was a severe underdog going into stroke play but displayed an impressive performance and earned himself a spot in the final of the match play round. Kim went head-to-head against Australian golfer Joshua Bai in the 36-hole final. The two outstanding young competitors went back and forth in the match. Kim finally outlasted Bai over a long day and claimed victory as Bai conceded the championship on the final hole.

"I try to play matchplay and stroke play the same. Usually, if



Sherwood graduate Bryan Kim raises his trophy after being victorious.

you beat your opponent, you will probably beat them in the match. Just one shot at a time and play good golf," said Kim. "I just tried my best to stay in the moment. It was a long week, but so was it for all my other competitors, so just staying present might've given me an edge over my opponents."

Kim, who now plays golf collegiately at Duke, received the gold medal and ownership of the Junior Amateur trophy for a year. Kim also earned an exemption into the 2024 U.S. Open at Pinehurst Resort and Country Clubs in North Carolina. There, he will play with professional golfers

who are the biggest names in the sport.

The Junior Amateur Championship is just a stepping stone to a bright future for Kim and his career as a golfer. Kim will play Division I golf for the next four years while competing in various professional and amateur tournaments at the same time.

"It just gives me a lot of confidence that I'm on the right path, and if I keep working at it, hopefully, I can be as successful," Kim said. "Putting my name next to all those guys like [Tiger] Woods, [Jordan] Spieth, and [Scottie] Scheffler, it's really cool."

## Evin Thompson Is Sherwood's Rising Star On and Off the Basketball Court

by Hannah Mushahwar '24

Sherwood's boys varsity basketball program has been completely transformed over the past two years and a crucial player in that change has been junior Evin Thompson, who brings unrivaled talent and a vibrant personality. Thompson came to Sherwood last year as a transfer and was a starter as a sophomore and the spark for the team's historically great season. After a disappointing 5-14 season in 2021-22, the Warriors started last season with a 53-43 road win against BCC in which Thompson had 11 points, 5 assists, and 4 steals. That contribution, both offensively and defensively, became a mark of Thompson's play for Sherwood as the team finished the regular season 17-5 and made it to the state semifinals.

Now entering into the 2023-24 season, the team has the potential to be one of the top competitors in the county and maybe in the state. Sherwood had the opportunity to play in highly competitive summer and fall leagues in the offseason where Thompson took full advantage of the competition to improve his skills. "This offseason, I've spent a lot of time working on becoming a more efficient shooter and scorer," said

Thompson. "More importantly, I'm focusing on my mindset. Oftentimes in the past I would doubt my ability on the basketball court."

If Thompson comes into the new season with more confidence, that could prove a big benefit in close games when the team often relies on him for clutch performances in the fourth quarter. "On the court Evin makes a significant impact on our team," said senior Kobi Gyan. "His scoring, ball-handling, and defensive effort makes everyone else's job on the court much easier. Evin's ability to take over games down the stretch with his shot-making makes him a great player and gives our team the extra push we may need to win close games."

With other highly competitive teams around the state participating in these leagues, it forced Sherwood basketball to play to the best of their ability every game, which will hopefully prepare them for the upcoming season. With numerous younger players and transfers joining the team this year, Thompson stressed the importance of not only improving the team's game strategies, but the culture of the program as a whole. Before each game and practice, he ushers in reassuring words of encourage-

ment to his team, dedicated to creating an environment of positivity and team sportsmanship.

Serving as a role model for the younger players, not only does Thompson dominate on the court but he is known for his relentless optimism, generosity and bright personality in the community. "This is who I strive to be. I aim to treat everyone the same, no matter if it is a person in the hallway or a teammate; everyone gets treated with the same love and respect they deserve," said Thompson. "Everything will transfer from how I am in the classroom to how I present myself on the court." Noting that Sherwood won the county's "Best Sportsmanship" award last year, Thompson is the embodiment of what it means to be an outstanding player and an uplifting teammate, and is undoubtedly one of the big reasons why Sherwood was honored with the award.

Now approaching the 2023-24 season, his goal for this year is to "keep getting better individually and collectively, and to all have the same mindset going into the season, which is to win states," said Thompson. As he has been a chief player and role model, his hard work and determination has been gaining recognition by college recruiters. "I'm very interest-

## Perspective Howell Is Not the Future

by Dylan Sondike '24

Through the first eight weeks of the NFL season, the Commanders have had another roller coaster of a season. With second-year year quarterback Sam Howell under center this year, the looming question of whether he is here for the long haul is on the minds of many fans. The Commanders currently sit at 3-5 with disappointing losses against some of the league's weaker teams, suggesting that the Commanders will spend yet another offseason searching for a new quarterback.

As Howell pushes through his first full season starting in the NFL, he has certainly had to battle through significant adversity. Through the first eight games, Howell has been sacked 41 times, which is currently the most in the NFL and is on pace to break the NFL single-season record of 76 sacks taken. Despite a horrendous offensive line, Howell's ongoing problem is holding onto the ball too long. There is always a learning curve for a new starter, but this issue should have been improved by now. Although Howell is young and inexperienced, there is a certain point where he needs to learn how to read defenses and scramble. All teams and quarterbacks face obstacles in their careers, but that cannot be a continuous excuse for simple mistakes.

Howell has also had accuracy problems most of the season. Howell threw 4 of his interceptions in one game against the Buffalo Bills. Through the first eight games, he is tied for second in the NFL for most interceptions with eight and is in the bottom half of the league for passer and QB rating. These numbers are why the Commanders have lost to weak opponents such as the New York Giants and the Chicago Bears, who have a combined four wins all season.

Howell has especially struggled early in games except for their most recent performance against the Philadelphia Eagles. Before this game, four of Howell's interceptions have come in the first half of games. Heading into the week 8 game, he only threw for four touchdowns in the first half, which forced the team into difficult situations later in the game. However, in their most recent game, Howell and the team jumped out to a lead in the beginning with two early passing touchdowns, but a late interception and a couple of mistimed throws helped the Eagles hand the Commanders another one-score loss by a score of 38-31.

With tough opponents on the horizon including San Francisco, Miami, and Dallas, the Commanders organization must take a hard look at the QB situation in Washington. So far, Howell has struggled with turnovers, rather than simply throwing the football away, which has cost the team wins. A successful QB in the NFL can't continue to make these errors. The Commanders must look to make another change as Howell isn't the franchise quarterback they desperately hoped he would be.



Evin Thompson dribbles up the court in a playoff game against Blair.

ed in Dartmouth," said Thompson. "However, I am open to all options as far as which program to play for." It is safe to say that Thompson will continue to be a bright member of his community and whatever team he chooses to play for in college and beyond if he chooses to take that route.

Now, students will anxiously await to fill the stadium for the first home game against Whitman on Tuesday, December 5. After a 16-6 season last year and a trip to the state semifinals, expectations

are sky high for the Warriors this coming season. Players and fans expect the team to produce results similar to last season, with hopes and dreams of potentially playing for a state championship at the Xfinity Center at University of Maryland in March.

One thing for certain is that Thompson will display the same positivity in the community, bright spirit throughout the school, and leadership on the court whatever the results may be.



November 2, 2023

## Warriors Take On South Hagerstown Tonight at Home in Playoffs

by Dylan Sondike '24

After a slew of losses, the Warriors turned heads in the county with their hard-fought win against Damascus on the road on October 6. Facing the defending 3A state champions was certainly no easy task for the Warriors. Freshman quarterback Matthew Larsen made his first career start, and senior cornerback Leo Cantor had a game-sealing interception to help cap off their 28-21 victory.

"We had to up the intensity in practice [that] week. We realized that the two teams [Blake and Gaithersburg] we previously lost to were hungrier than us, and we needed to set a tone that Friday night against Damascus," explained Cantor. "I think the win gave us some spark again."

The Warriors carried the momentum from the Damascus win into Homecoming and walloped Poolesville by a score of 61-28, improving their record at that point in the season to 5-2. Larsen had another efficient performance as he made his second career start under center. Junior Brendan Heyer, who started the season at quarterback, has now fully moved back to his previous positions of running back/receiver and safety.

"Larsen showed enough in JV games where we felt like we could get a 3-for-1. Heyer filling



Junior running back Van Mahoney runs for a big gain in Sherwood's 28-21 win over Damascus on October 6.

in on both offense and defense, and Larsen taking over at QB," said Head Coach Andrew Fields.

"We love Heyer's leadership and competitiveness, while Larsen shows the poise of a senior and his football IQ is outstanding."

After a blowout win against Poolesville, the Warriors defeated Walter Johnson in a nail-biting matchup by a score of 14-10 on

October 19. That added to the Warriors' impressive wins in recent weeks as Walter Johnson was previously undefeated with a 7-0 record before losing to Sherwood on the road.

The Warriors moved on to unimaginable challenges as they visited Quince Orchard on October 27. The Cougars headed into the game with a record of 8-0

while outscoring opponents 299-50. They are the defending 4A state champions, and according to MaxPreps, rank 6th of all the private and public teams in the state this season.

Quince Orchard is a physically intimidating team and has dominated opponents on both sides of the line. The Warriors came out of the gate flat, going

down 20-0 in the first 10 minutes of the game. Sherwood struggled the rest of the game, allowing 64 points total and 50 in the first half. The only apparent bright spot of the game was the Warriors' only 6 points which was an 80-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Larsen to wide receiver Alex Lacey in the second quarter.

"This loss shows us how much we as a team have to improve if we want to play on the level that Quince Orchard does," said Larsen. "This loss is a key turning point in our season. We can either go home or make a run for the state championship."

Larsen added that practice will be crucial heading into playoffs. After poor performances on all parts of the field against Quince Orchard, he adds that there are definitely things that need to be worked on and corrected to keep their season alive.

The Warriors finished with an overall record of 6-3 and a conference record of 4-0, which was the best of the 8 teams. As a 4 seed, Sherwood will face the 5 seed South Hagerstown at home tonight at 6:30 in the first round of the 3A west region. The winner of that game will face either 1 seed Oakdale or 8 seed North Hagerstown in the regional second round for a spot in the state quarterfinals.



Senior captains Johnny Markos and Andy Ruiz prepare for a free kick in their game against Watkins Mill.



Senior Megan Milke sets up the ball for senior Savannah Weisman in a match against Richard Montgomery.



Senior Parker Freed hits a shot from the fairway during a match at Hampshire Greens on September 1.

### Fall Sports Recap

#### Varsity Football:

Regular Season: 6-3  
First Round vs South Hagerstown on November 2

#### Girls Varsity Soccer:

Regular Season: 8-4  
Lost 2-1 to Wootton in Second Round

#### Boys Varsity Soccer:

Regular Season: 4-7-1  
Lost 2-1 to Kennedy in First Round

#### Girls Varsity Volleyball:

Regular Season: 11-3  
First Round vs Rockville on November 2

#### Varsity Field Hockey:

Regular Season: 7-5  
Lost 2-0 to Reservoir in First Round

#### Varsity Golf:

Evan Bonnett: 11th at 4A/3A states  
Corey Abod: 12th at 4A/3A states

#### Cross Country:

Regular Season Record: 2-1  
Regionals on November 2  
States on November 11



Girls varsity soccer huddles during halftime of their 2-1 win against Wootton on September 27.



Girls varsity field hockey poses for a team photo after their Pink Out home game against Quince Orchard.



Senior Sean Gravell runs in the lead in an October 12 divisional meet against Richard Montgomery.