The Preparatory Press

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SENIOR SUNRISE

Anata Bezman

September 4, 2026, was a day many in the senior class had been looking forward to. After school, Stratford Prep's second senior class gathered for an overnight Senior Sleepover, spending the evening together before watching the sunrise the next morning.

From 6 p.m. to 9 a.m., seniors spent the night playing games, enjoying catered Chipotle, and making new memories with friends. Students played capture the flag at 11 p.m., using flashlights as the flags, plus Impostor and charades, while others made friendship bracelets and tie-dye shirts. As the hours passed, seniors retreated to their tents across the quad, ready to rest before waking up for sunrise. In the morning, everyone gathered to watch the sky slowly brighten. After a fun but tiring night of laughing, playing games, and making memories, seeing the beautiful sunrise together made the experience especially memorable. The Senior Sleepover event gave the senior class a chance to celebrate the start of their final year at Stratford Prep and make new memories together before senior year got even busier. It was a fitting start to their last year together. Here's to the rest of their senior year!

WELCOMING SPB'S 2ND SENIOR CLASS!



OUR HOSA LEADERS IN WLA

Emma Yu

From August 18th to the 22nd, some of our HOSA leadership officers attended the annual Washington Leadership Academy in DC. Through this event, both state and chapter officers across the country gathered together to form connections and improve their leadership qualities.

On the first day, all members were welcomed with a grand opening ceremony that introduced the new international executive council team as well as provided information and activities in collaboration with the National Marrow Donor Program.





The group activities over the following days also helped our officers strengthen their skills in collaboration, communication, and innovation. After days of arduous lectures, all participants were rewarded with a tour of the National Mall and exploration of a few memorial parks. Overall, it was a really insightful experience that all future HOSA leaders should also take advantage of.



COMING UP...



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School News

The Drama Club's Next Production: Seussical Jr!



Ronav Ahuja, Antarip Ghorai, Ananya Kale

As the curtain opens on a new year and a new play, the much anticipated cast list for *Seussical Jr.*, this year's drama club play, has been released! With a huge amount of effort, and an incredible thanks to Mrs. Zankewicz (Mrs. Zank), Ms. Brenna, and Ms. Stover, we are ready to take off! An enormous amount of effort was put in by the cast and the directors, and everybody who made it into the play deserves a huge round of applause.

After a tough selection process, around forty-seven people made the drama club, including stage crew members. The first day of callbacks began in E3, and it was focused mainly on singing capabilities, starting with callbacks for Cat In The Hat, and continuing with characters like Horton, and the Kangaroos, with strong performances from JoJo, Gertrude, and Mayzie. On the second day, a select few were asked to do some singing, followed by the majority of the acting trials. Then for the first time ever, a third day of callbacks was announced, with focus on the characters of Horton, Gertrude, and Mr. and Mrs. Mayor, so Ms.Zank could get the castlist just right. Then the moment we had all been waiting for came: the cast list was announced! Congratulations to everyone who made Drama Club and showed off their talent, and we can't wait to see how this year's production turns out!

MS Student Elections Has Concluded!

Ronav Ahuja

There has been a lot of buzz about something lately, with posters in the halls, videos in advisory, and campaigning all around. You guessed it! The MS Student Council elections has come! Now this year featured new selection categories and a new process, so let's get into it.

Candidates attended an informational meeting, and then submitted a google form stating their intention to run for office. After that, the grueling work began of getting teacher recommendations, creating posters, and recording speeches, all of which had to be completed by September 4th. This year, there were five director roles up for grabs: President, Vice President, Spirit and Media Director, Athletics Director, and Events Director.

Then, after all the videos had been recorded, the campaigning started the following week, with many gazing at all the posters on the bulletin boards. On Thursday, the campaign videos were watched during advisory, and the voting occurred. Soon enough, it was the moment of truth! At 3:05 p.m., amidst Advisory on Friday, the results were announced over the intercom, starting with the winner of Athletics Director, Adhya Madhu (8E); then Events Director, Aditi Rangarajan (7E); and Spirit Director, Doris Hu (7G). Finally Vice President and President were announced, with Alannie Liu (8E) and Haun Yeoum (8H) winning the respective positions, meaning that for the first time, there is an all-girl-led student council! Congratulations to all those who ran in the election, as doing so is not an easy feat.

As of the time of writing this, class representatives have not been elected yet, so I am unable to discuss that, but congratulations to all those that successfully attained that position!

A special thanks to Mrs. T, Ms. Nevarez, and the administration team for making the whole thing possible, and for running our Student Council.

Data Science Club: Rising High in World of AI

Krrish Gayash

The Data Science Club has gotten off to a great start this year. In a world where code is being written by AI agents and models are a dime a dozen, the main leverage we humans have is data. We need to understand why data is so important in this future race of AI. The Data Science Club teaches us exactly that, and prepares and sends us to different competitions to represent our school as the Stratford CS team. Run by our amazing Mr. Thaker and a fabulous high school CS team, we have started to understand machine learning and how data really impacts it.

We first learned the basics of machine learning, neural networks, and AI in general. The first few weeks focused on how AI models learn, why data is so important, and how those concepts can be applied to everyday life. After maybe a few weeks or months, we'll enter our first competition, with many more to come!

Are we overwhelmed by the explosion of AI around us? Yes, we definitely are. What is the best way to deal with it? It is simply staying informed. That's why the Data Science Club can help us stay ahead of the curve at Stratford Preparatory. Maybe in the future, we'll build something big enough to help the community as Stratford's Data Science team!

SPB's Annual MS Open House is Coming Up!

Shreyas Kulkarni

When and where will the MS Open House take place? - The Middle School Open House will take place at the SPB campus on Saturday, October 24, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

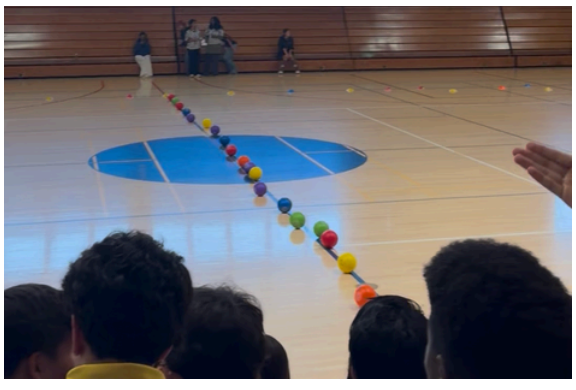
What can students and families expect to see or do at the Open House? - Students and families can tour the campus and visit classrooms to see what the learning areas feel like. New families can also meet the teachers and some student members of the Admission Ambassadors Club. To get familiarized the academic rigor, visiting families may also be acquainted with the school curriculum and for athletic achievements, explore the student showcase.

Are there any special activities or events planned for the Open House? - According to Stratford's Admissions Director, Ms. Rahmani, "Yes, we will have teacher presentations, a club and sports fair, and Q&A with student ambassadors." This will give visiting students and families an opportunity to know get familiar with the school and current students' experiences. This is one of Stratford's largest events beyond even the annual PrepFest. With over 1,000 visiting members, the Stratford Admissions Ambassadors team will help direct and inform new families in the school.

What is the most important reason for families to attend? - Ms. Rahmani says that the most important reason for families to come to this event is that this is the best time to meet all the teachers and staff, as they won't be able to do that during a regular school tour.

Is there anything families should know or prepare before attending? - Finally, for easier check-in, we ask all families to RSVP if they plan to attend. In summary, Open House gives the new students and their families an opportunity to experience the campus, meet teachers, learn about the curriculum, and discover student clubs before joining the school. Last but not least, a special thanks in advance to Stratford's Admissions Ambassador Club for managing this event and we hope they will do as great a job as they did last year.

The Annual HS Dodgeball Tournament!



Palaksi Pagare

The high schoolers just had their Annual Dodgeball Tournament, a well-anticipated tradition from prior years. Students signed up for their respective grade to participate in dodgeball games against other grades. After some weeks of settling back into school, or easing into high school for freshmen, the game was a fun way to relax and enjoy the flex day. And of course, we can't forget about the Otter Pops distributed to all HS students at the end of the day!

School news

SPB Has a New Lunch Provider This Year!

Kiaan Daxini

What's for lunch? That will likely be a much anticipated answer for all of Stratford Prep Blackford students this year thanks to a change at the school that puts a new name behind our lunch program. This year, Stratford Prep Blackford will begin working with Choicelunch instead of Epicurean.

With the beginning of this school year, Stratford Prep Blackford will now utilize Choicelunch for all school lunches, a move that school officials say will allow families greater choice and a broader range of options for school lunches. For those ordering lunches online, parents will also have access to a new system for their convenience through the Choicelunch online platform.

For students, the main concern is: Are these new lunches any better than the old ones? Time will tell.

New Year, New Schedule

Akshara Inguva, Athula Rajan, Danial Eskenasi, and Avantika Chakraborty

The 2026-2027 school year has officially begun, marking its 4th year open. This year's bringing new teachers, schedules, classes, and experiences for all students. Let's make this year great so that when we look back at our memories from this school year, we will smile. This is the time we can reunite with friends, make new friendships, and make the most of every experience.

This year, SPB has launched a new and expanded format for students. If you have been in SPB before you know that the past years were all cohort-based, meaning that there were multiple cohorts all with the same classes except language class, which included Spanish and Chinese in sixth grade. Seventh and eighth grades would have different math classes, electives, and language classes.

However, Stratford has implemented individual schedules meaning, even if you are in a cohort with your classmates in that group and have your list of teachers, it does not necessarily mean you share all of the same teachers, with Advisory and ELA being some exceptions.

Stratford's new system has ensures that no student will have all the same teachers or classes as another student. However, this format is not necessarily seen as a bad thing as you can make new friends, meet new people, or talk to friends that you don't usually have in your classes. Some students can have the same teachers, but that does not necessarily mean you will be in the same class at the same time.

So, to conclude, the 2026-2027 year at Stratford Preparatory Blackford will be a special year because it will be the first time that everyone has a different schedule, and new teachers will be joining us to experience this wonderful school year.

Welcoming Our New MS English Teacher, Mr. Aranas

Advaith Nallan

Please join us in welcoming Reggie Aranas, our new ELA teacher! Growing up, physical education was always Mr. Aranas's favorite subject, and that same love of movement carries over into his free time today — whether it's hitting the gym or unwinding with some video games. As a kid, Mr. Aranas was actually pretty quiet, but that didn't stop big dreams from forming early on. Having struggled a bit in school himself, he decided to become a teacher out of a genuine desire to help others the way he wished someone had helped him.

When it comes to the classroom, what matters most to Mr. Aranas is connection. His best classroom moments happen when every single student is engaged, and nothing beats the sound of kids excitedly talking about what they're learning. Mistakes aren't something to stress over in his room — students are met with patience and encouragement, with just the right balance of support to help them learn and grow. And if a student is having a tough day, Mr. Aranas believes in taking the time for a one-on-one conversation to check in and help them feel better.

Outside of teaching duties, you might catch Mr. Aranas snacking on Gushers while grading papers! As a kid, he spent recess playing Ballwall, and to this day, "Green Eggs and Ham" holds a special place as his all-time favorite children's book. If given a superpower to use in the classroom, Mr. Aranas would choose the ability to detect lies — handy for a room full of curious kids! And if given the choice to be any animal? An eagle, of course, for the simple joy of being able to fly.

If Mr. Aranas could make one fun rule for the whole school to follow for a day, it would be simple: everyone, everywhere, should just have fun. Please join us in giving a warm welcome to this wonderful addition to our school family!

Business Elective Has a New Teacher, Ms. Miller

Sahngyu Yim, Palaksi Pagare

Ms. Miller is the new business teacher for AP, Intro to Business, and other sections. Before coming to SPB, she taught Business Education classes in Georgia and Texas. Growing up in a family business, she was inspired by her grandparents, lifelong entrepreneurs, leading her to pursue business. She decided to come to SPB as she saw it as an ideal opportunity for her background and skill set. She is thankful to be surrounded by supportive and passionate educators, students, and administration. She advises that "[g]reat outcomes take resilience and hard work, one step and one day at a time." At the end of the day, she hopes her students will think that her class was not only amazing and fun, but also applicable to their futures.

Mrs. Paola, the New HS Spanish 2 and 3 Teacher



Palaksi Pagare

Mrs. Paola is the new high school Spanish 2 and Spanish 3 teacher at Stratford Preparatory. From a lawyer in Peru to now a Spanish teacher at SPB, she has a drive for learning and never giving up.

1. How do you feel being part of the SPB community? - I'm grateful to be at Stratford Preparatory. I have great colleagues and students who have made me feel welcome. I appreciate the kindness, respectfulness and eagerness to learn that I've found in the students and leaders here.

2. What did you do before coming to SPB? - My journey is a bit different because my first career was not being an educator. I started out as a lawyer in Peru. Later, I found myself living in Sweden and I decided to pursue a career in education. After moving to the US, I did a masters degree in US Law targeted specifically at foreign lawyers, and then I started working as a teacher again. Before SPB, I was at the French American School of Silicon Valley.

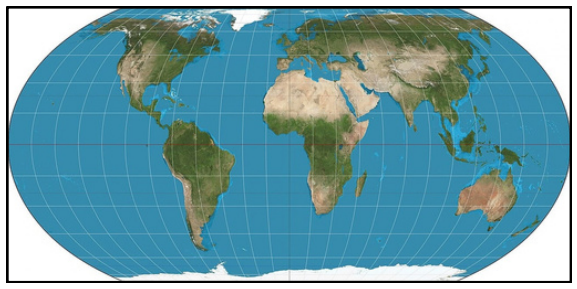
3. Why did you decide to be a Spanish teacher? - Since I was little I have had a love for teaching: teaching my neighbors, family members, and friends. When I lived in Sweden, I studied in the university there and learned about language teaching. My goal was both to teach Swedish as a second language and Spanish.

4. What are you the most excited for this year? There are several things I am excited for this year including watching my students learn and grow throughout the school year, and watching them be able to speak Spanish with confidence.

5. At the end of the year, what do you want your students to take away from your class? - I want my students to be able to leave my classroom knowing how to express themselves in Spanish in real life situations, with a solid understanding of the language. Studying Spanish is not just about learning Spanish, it's also about discovering that you can learn anything!

WORLD NEWS

Equal Earth Map



Samik Bansal

The maps hanging in classrooms around the world are going to get a historic update. On September 4, 2026, the United Nations passed a resolution to endorse a new map called the Equal Earth Map. The resolution, nicknamed “Correct the Map,” passed overwhelmingly with a vote of 164-1. The UN is now urging classrooms, governments, and companies around the world to adopt this new map.

For hundreds of years, schools have mainly used the Mercator Projection, which was created all the way back in 1569. While it was great for ships navigating the ocean, it had one major flaw: it distorted the true size of countries. The Mercator projection stretches the map sideways to flatten a round globe onto a straight grid. To keep shapes from looking squished, the math forces the map to stretch just as much vertically as it does horizontally. Because this stretching gets stronger and stronger the closer you get to the poles, northern and southern landmasses balloon out to giant, unrealistic sizes. This makes Greenland look bigger than Africa, when in reality, Africa is 14 times bigger than Greenland.

The Equal Earth Map was created in 2018 by modern cartographers. It uses clever math to show every landmass in its true and accurate proportion. If a landmass is 14 times bigger than another in real life, it looks 14 times bigger on the map. To make this change, it curves the edges.
This new map will be introduced around the world in major companies and corporations. At this very moment, cartographers around the world are translating the map into different languages and making minor tweaks to areas with border disputes.

Trump Tariffs Brass Instruments

Ivy Liang and Abigail Tao



On August 6th, 2026, Trump’s administration proposed a 25% tariff on all brass-wind instruments, such as trumpets, saying that the aluminum, steel, and copper pose a national security threat. Under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act, the president can place tariffs on imported goods if it harms national security. Trump’s administration considered the foreign copper and zinc harmful to U.S. security.

Schools, students, families, music stores, and repair shops will all be affected deeply by the tariff. Schools that have music programs will need to pay more for the instruments or for repairs when they are damaged. Because rental stores and music stores will all increase their brass prices, it can make the students not want to buy or rent the instruments and price them out of school band programs. There will also be budget constraints, meaning old instruments will have to be used for longer periods of time instead of replacing them with newer instruments. Families who have students who want to try a brass instrument might be discouraged because of the higher prices. Music stores may lose customers because people won’t want to pay for the instruments due to the prices being too high. Not only that, but repair shops are also charging more to fix brass instruments.

Beyond Just a Weekend: The Real Legacy of Labor Day

Saanjali Vinay

For many, Labor Day symbolizes the end of summer through an informal three-day weekend packed with barbeques, lake vacations, and discounts on fall merchandise. However, the true nature of Labor Day is hidden behind its barbecue smell and discounted prices, as the holiday was created as a result of industrial unrest of the nineteenth century.

The first Labor Day was held on September 5, 1882, when about 10,000 people went on unpaid vacation to parade from City Hall to Union Square under the organization of the Central Labor Union of New York. The working day of an ordinary worker of that time was 12 hours, with six or seven working days a week. Moreover, these hardworking people had to perform their duties under dangerous conditions in factories, mines, or mills.

It was during the terrible Pullman Strike of 1894 that the moment arrived. During this event, the workers went on strike at Pullman Palace Car Company in Chicago due to reduced wages and high rent in their company-run town. As a result, there was a national railroad boycott, which halted the entire transport system of the nation. To discontinue the strike, President Grover Cleveland sent federal troops to break the strike, causing several riots that resulted in the death of dozens of workers. Under pressure from the outraged citizens and the coming mid-term election, Cleveland and Congress passed legislation in June 1894 declaring the first Monday in September as a national holiday.

Labor Day is a celebration of all those rights that workers have won after years of struggle. Rights such as eight-hour workdays, weekends, minimum wage, payment for overtime, and restrictions against child labor are not gifts from the companies.

As the modern workforce encounters issues surrounding algorithmic management in the gig economy, the increasing automation of the workforce, and changing job security, the idea of what constitutes labor changes. Labor Day is an ongoing symbol of the need to constantly protect the dignity, safety, and rights of the working class.

Moving a Castle

Alicia Wu

Have you ever seen someone try to move a castle by hand? Well, that’s exactly what’s happening right now in Hirosaki City. The Hirosaki Castle was built in 1611 by a samurai family, but in 1627, most of the castle was destroyed in a fire. In 1810, the castle’s tower was rebuilt, but sadly, in 1983, a strong earthquake hit Hirosaki, severely damaging one of the castle’s stone walls. However, the castle wall wasn’t easy to rebuild because the tower was in the way. The people in charge of the castle decided to use an old Japanese method called “hikaya” to move the tower so the wall could be fixed. The method involves raising an entire building and moving it on rails or rollers by pulling it with ropes. In 2015, Hirosaki Castle’s tower was moved 256 feet away from the castle wall. The tower moved some of that distance through the efforts of thousands of volunteers tugging on the tower with ropes methodically. In 2024, the castle wall was repaired, meaning that the tower could return to its original position.



This year, Hirosaki city asked for volunteers to enlist to help move the tower back to its original position. Over 10,000 people from all over the world applied to take part - far more than the city expected. At first, they had only planned to use 1,800 volunteers, but because of the additional volunteers, they adjusted their plans so more people could join the effort. Over several days in late August, about 4,000 volunteers took part in moving the heavy building, working in groups of 80. Even though it felt like the tower hadn’t moved after each pull, the volunteers moved the keep about 1 meter every day. After several days with adult volunteers, students were given a chance. They also moved the tower, though not as far as the adults. In total, the tower was moved a little over 16 feet. Lots of volunteers enjoyed the experience, all of them saying it was a fantastic experience. Now that the hikiya is over, the tower will be pulled the rest of the way by large and powerful machines.

WORLD NEWS

White Rhinos Gone

Jenna Zhang

It started with rhino horns.
People love rhino horns.
In Yemen, where the white rhino lives, people like rhino horn daggers, rhino medicine, and rhino hides. How do they get those things they like? They get rid of the living rhino.
The white rhino is a huge, majestic, grayish rhino. It lives on the shrublands and grasslands of Africa. It's the second largest land animal, 5 to 6 feet tall, 3000 to 7000 pounds. They're lawnmower-like grazers, eating grass close to the roots. Majestic ungulates of Yemen. There are two subspecies, the northern white rhino and the southern white rhino. The southern rhinos are near threatened, but it's the northern rhinos that are really gone.
Functionally extinct. There are two northern white rhinos, both female, so no more pure northern white rhinos can be born.
Be aware of what you buy. It could come at an enormous price for a species.



Pokémon Takeover: World Championships and PokémonXP Hit SF!

Kiaan Daxini

From August 28 to 30, 2026, San Francisco became the global epicenter for Pokémon fans, hosting both the prestigious 2026 Pokémon World Championships and the first-ever PokémonXP fan convention.
The excitement was split between two major city venues. At the Chase Center, elite global players battled for titles in Pokémon GO, Pokémon UNITE, the Trading Card Game, and video games. Meanwhile, just down the street, the Moscone Center hosted the inaugural PokémonXP convention, offering casual fans immersive exhibits, exclusive merchandise pop-ups, and community panels.
The debut of PokémonXP made this historic weekend unique. This was the first-ever dual weekend where both the most competitive Pokemon lovers and casual, all-around fans alike could celebrate on the same weekend. Typically, Pokémon World Championships are reserved solely for top of the line competitive play, but having a convention for casual lovers this weekend proved to allow for a more unified celebration experience for all fans. Local students of our district who journeyed down to attend this epic two-part event could not have had a more enjoyable time surrounded by intense strategy and Pokémon nostalgia.
Tens of thousands of fans took over the city this weekend, and the energy across downtown San Francisco was palpable.

Should The US Restrict Social Media for Minors Under 18?

Mahi Bhattacharya



Recent news reveals that the world-renowned tech company Meta has been sued for intentionally designing their social media platforms (like Instagram) to be addictive to children and teenagers. Officially issued on Wednesday, August 26, 2026, Meta has reached a landmark settlement agreeing to pay 18 billion dollars and add child-safety features to their social media platforms. According to Attorney Jay Jones, Meta had knowingly deceived the public about the addictive features of social media for teenagers and children. The majority of attorneys and the public in general believe that this settlement will put an end to these dangerous practices and protect teenagers from harm socially and emotionally. However, many are debating the effectiveness of the child-safety measures being added to Instagram, as other major platforms like TikTok and YouTube lack the safety measures needed to protect children from their harmful influence. A Meta spokesperson emphasized that the protection features "will only be effective if our peers-Tiktok and Youtube-put the same measures in place." However, it is also important to note how teenagers and children themselves feel about this change. 6th-grader Navya Karthik states that "They should have done this a while ago." Navya also believes that children have emotional fluctuations and negative impacts due to excessive social media exposure.
Features such as hidden likes, which hide the number of likes on posts, reduce these fluctuations and unhealthy comparisons. Mandatory breaks after 15 minutes of constant scrolling help enforce this as well. Although these changes undoubtedly have a wave of support, they have also been a source of major criticism, particularly from angry parents. Many pointed out that although Meta added "safety features", they were largely ineffective in the sense that they were supposed to block harmful content and messages. In fact, testing from child safety organizations like Fairplay found that about 64% of the safety features added to Instagram still left accounts exposed to unsafe content. But with a large part of the internet arguing that Instagram wasn't even dangerous and addictive in the first place, the debate is still ongoing: Should or should not the US restrict Social Media for minors under the age of 18?

Celebrating Cheeseburgers

Faria Mohideen



No, your eyes are not mistaken. What started as a mistaken order is now one of the most purchased foods in America, which is why we celebrate National Cheeseburger Day!
The cheesy burger that we all love was created in 1924 by a teenager named Lionel Steinberger who was working at his dad's sandwich shop in Pasadena, California. He accidentally dropped a piece of cheese on a sizzling meat patty straight off the grill, melting the cheese.
He slapped it between two buns and gave it to his father, who loved it and added it to the menu. Soon, the new food creation struck, and others started adding it to their restaurant menus. It became claimed under law, and helped kickstart fast food chains like Burger King, In N Out, and Wendy's.
During the early 2000s to 2010s, the tnternet was taking the globe. On websites and chat rooms, National Cheeseburger Day was born.
Around 2017-2018, fast food chains started taking this unofficial celebration as a marketing play. Deals began to emerge and National Cheeseburger Day became recognized by more Americans.
Today, National Cheeseburger Day is celebrated on September 18 with social media posts and fast food deals. Happy (belated) Cheeseburger Day!

School Sports

A New Cross Country Season Takes off

Jaylen Zhang and Yan Chen



Stratford Preparatory Blackford hosted its first cross country meet of the season on September 17, 2026, kicking off the cross country season this fall. Four schools competed at the meet: Stratford Preparatory Blackford, Action Day, Miramonte Christian, and Apostles Lutheran. Across the four schools, 66 students competed, and for some students, it was their first time participating in a cross country meet.

The race took place on the Stratford Preparatory Blackford campus. The course was 1.8 miles, which is almost 3 kilometers long. The track started near the school building, then weaved to the field, then onto the track, and finally back to the field. Because the course could have been a little confusing for athletes, there was a map at the information desk and guidelines on the track to mark the course.

In total, eighteen boys and eleven girls from fourth to sixth grade competed. Among seventh and eight graders, twenty-eight boys and nineteen girls competed.

Unfortunately, only two sixth-grade girls from Stratford competed, so they were not eligible to receive a team score. However, the sixth grade boys scored twenty points, while both seventh and eight-grade boys and girls scored fifteen points.

Congratulations to Tingshun Liu, Freya Johansson, Jaylen Zhang, and Yan Chen for their outstanding results at the meet. Tingshun Liu won the eighth-grade boys' race, while Freya Johansson won the eighth-grade girls' race. Jaylen Zhang was the fastest seventh grader in the boys' race, and Yan Chen was the fastest seventh grader representing the girls.

This year's school cross country team introduced several changes from last season. Along with Coach Anderson, Coach Roach joined the coaching staff this season. Although athlete participation decreased from last year, the team gained one more sixth-grade girl competitior. Because the season just started, the training isn't as intense as last year, allowing athletes to gradually build up their endurance and get used to the course.

As the season progresses, the training will get more intense, to prepare the athletes for the coming meets.

These developments mark the beginning of an exciting new season for the Cross Country Team this year. With guidance from Coach Anderson and Coach Roach, a dedicated group of returning athletes, and a new group of champions, this team is set to succeed!

HS Tennis

Zoey Yu

From powerful serves to carefully placed lobs, Stratford's tennis team showed determination throughout its latest match, competing hard across both singles and doubles. On September 8, Stratford's tennis team took on King's Academy on one of the hottest days of the year. Despite the intense heat, the players battled through their matches and stayed determined to their very last point.

At #1 singles, Aditi picked up an 8-3 victory, and she used many lobs to keep her opponent moving on the court. At #2 singles, Wenyue fought hard but fell short 8-4, while Elizabeth battled through her #3 singles, but unfortunately lost 8-4 as well. In exhibition doubles, Aditi and Wenyue earned a 6–0 win, while Elizabeth and Sydney finished with a 6–4 victory.

Even with the heat pushing the players to their limits, Stratford continued to fight for every point, giving their 100% effort on the court.

MS Cross country Club Overview

Freya Johansson



Cross Country is a sport that requires hard work and determination. Centered around running, Cross Country offers many competitions that encourage people to run to their maximum potential and test their limits. Just like most other sports, cross country practices include a warm-up, the main running set, and stretches and cool-downs. Usually, the warm-up is a mile, along with dynamic exercises like high knees. The Cross Country Team then works on strides, which are short, accelerated runs that are performed at 95% of your running effort. Then, the team runs their main running set and cools down if they have time, doing various stretches.

Everyone in Cross Country is different, some people are there for improvement and others are there for competition. Coach Anderson and Coach Roach are determined to provide an environment where everyone is running their best. No matter how hard it gets, they encourage athletes to push through.

On competition days, everyone is required to run the 3K, but runners are divided into different sections based on their grade levels. Students in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade compete together, while students in seventh and eighth grade compete together. Boys and girls compete separately.

Cross country is more than just running, every step of the mile is an opportunity to improve.

MS Girl's A Team VOLLEYBALL

Miranda Duong



This year, the Stratford Girl's Volleyball A Team consists of nine eighth grade members and one seventh grade member. Led by Coach Stephanie, the team has three setters and a strong offense and defense, with most players having several years of experience. Coach Stephanie aims for the team to improve in their skills while also making new friends and building strong connections with each other.

The team played their first game on September 14, 2026 at 4:45 pm against BASIS, after just a few practices! There were a lot of close rallies, some wins and some losses, and a couple excellent serves from both teams. The team communicated and worked together well, helping win the first set. Although the team lost the second set to BASIS, they came back strong to win the third set, securing a great start to the season!

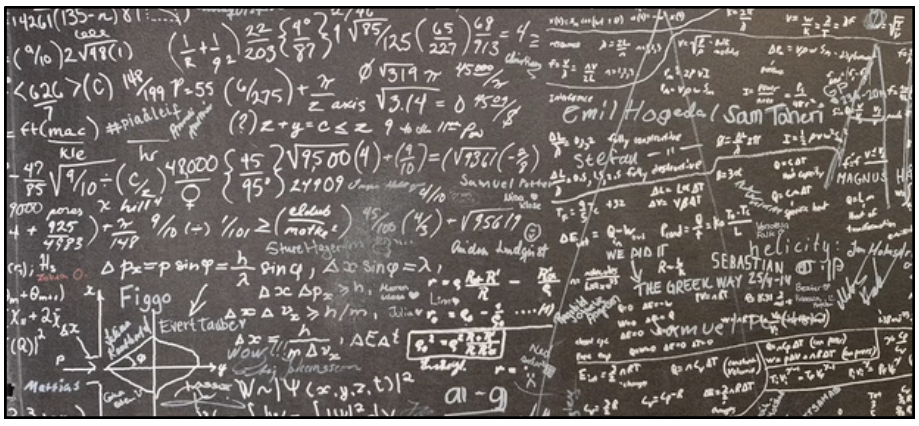
Serving is an impressive strength of the A Team. In total, they served an impressive twenty aces throughout the entire match! In volleyball, an ace happens when a serve lands directly in the opponent's court or is touched by the receiving team but cannot be kept in play, which scores the serving team a point.

The next two games for the A Team will be against Canyon Heights, on 9/21/26, and Apostles Lutheran, on 9/24/26 at 4:30 pm. So come and cheer for the Girl's A Team, and show some school spirit! Go Lions!

Student Voices

The Problem with the Pacing of Precalculus

Ruyi Wang



Of the 13 chapters in the Precalculus With Limits textbook, only Chapters 10 (Topics in Analytic Geometry), 11 (Analytic Geometry In 3 Dimensions), and 12 (Limits and an Introduction to Calculus) did not substantially overlap with content in any chapter of Algebra 2 & Trigonometry. Putting Stratford's school year trimesters into consideration, the course does not introduce significant new material until the final trimester. Although Precalculus has an important role, the way its material is distributed shifts much of its focus toward review even though there is ample space to introduce new material that will better aid Calculus study.

Of course, including review in the course right before Calculus, which is often referred to as a big transition point in math, is reasonable. Calculus expects algebraic manipulation, trigonometry, and other skills to be mastered beforehand. Someone who cannot proficiently apply these topics will likely struggle even more once moving forward. The success of a student in the standard math trajectory does rely heavily on their proficiency in the fundamentals of Algebra. A review that is valuable to one student can be repetitive to another. Is it really worth spending two-thirds of the year on?

I think the problem becomes more noticeable when the actual AP Calculus BC course comes in to play. While Precalculus seems to slow down and recollect, Stratford's combined Calculus AB and BC course covers a huge amount of new material in a relatively short time. Precalculus slows down the progression and then that forces the following course to speed it back up. If Precalculus is supposed to make Calculus easier, it seems strange that the two are so drastically different in terms of pacing.

Rather than cutting down the review in Precalculus, the full year can be reconsidered to better balance review with new material. That might support both students who need review and students who are ready to move forward to more preparation. Even introducing just one or two topics of Calculus in Precalculus could give students more time to understand them before using them in practice. That way, Calculus BC would not need to move much faster, and Precalculus would no longer feel slow at times. Based on comparing the two textbooks and personal experience from taking the course, I think Precalculus has room to introduce more new material without eliminating the review that some students need.

For some students, Precalculus can act as a barrier from getting directly to Calculus, or shut out the possibility of exploring other fields of advanced math study. A more effectively structured course could use the same amount of time to expose students to what can come after the Algebra checkpoint. As only one of many possible directions, Calculus should not necessarily be regarded as the endpoint of all mathematics in high school. While Calculus remains important for engineering applications such as structural design and aerospace technology, other areas of advanced mathematics can also prove valuable in coding, finance, data analysis, and artificial intelligence. Data Science, Discrete Mathematics, or even Game Theory are all compelling alternatives that are often overlooked because Calculus is widely considered the peak of mathematical accomplishment. Perhaps three trimesters could also be used to broaden students' understanding of what advanced mathematics can offer, whether or not Calculus is their end goal.

Who is to Blame—AI and Education

Amruta Srinivasan



As I write this sentence, Grammarly is pointing out ways I could use its AI features to further refine my words. Microsoft Copilot is a mis-click away, and the very first prompt asks me if I would like a sample first draft. Google's Gemini blinks invitingly at the corner of my screen, daring me to enter a question. Generative AI is quite literally everywhere, and seemingly inescapable. It's embedded into so many of our digital resources, which makes not using it all the more difficult. Gemini's AI Overview shows up in nearly every Google search, which could lead to students utilizing harmful misinformation in their assignments and daily lives. Corporations flaunt their AI tools, and attempt to reel in students with alluring advertisements. They do not care if a student is put on academic probation for cheating. They do not care about integrity. They simply care about profiting off of their users. Why in the world, then, would they care about cheating?

Cheating, unfortunately, has always existed. Sure, it was much harder in the past, but the urge to lie and dupe one's way through a course or exam has been around since the very first exam. The rise of generative AI did not somehow turn every honest and upstanding student into a despicable cheater. Instead, it made cheating easier. Today, a cheater would copy and paste the essay prompt into Chat-GPT, while his ancestor would write down test answers on little chits of paper and sneak them into the exam room. These are just different manifestations of the same issue.

Of course, students who use AI to cheat are not guiltless. Cheating in any form is abhorrent and vile, and it is a completely inexcusable offense. I am merely pointing out the fault in the corporate rhetoric surrounding Artificial Intelligence and the issues built into our educational system. AI-based cheating is merely a symptom of the overarching problem plaguing students.

When education is centred around the result and not the process, generating an essay using Chat-GPT seems like a viable option for some students. The students are given no incentive but an abstract concept of integrity to write and create their work by themselves. The education system is deeply flawed, and the AI epidemic is unfortunately just a byproduct.

To fix my generation's constant reliance on generative AI, we must first fix our education system. We shouldn't just deliver hollow sermons on ethics and righteousness; rather, we need to restructure how students and young people are viewed. The AI crisis has just exacerbated a problem that has always lived in our world, and has made it painfully visible and nearly impossible to ignore.

Student Spotlights



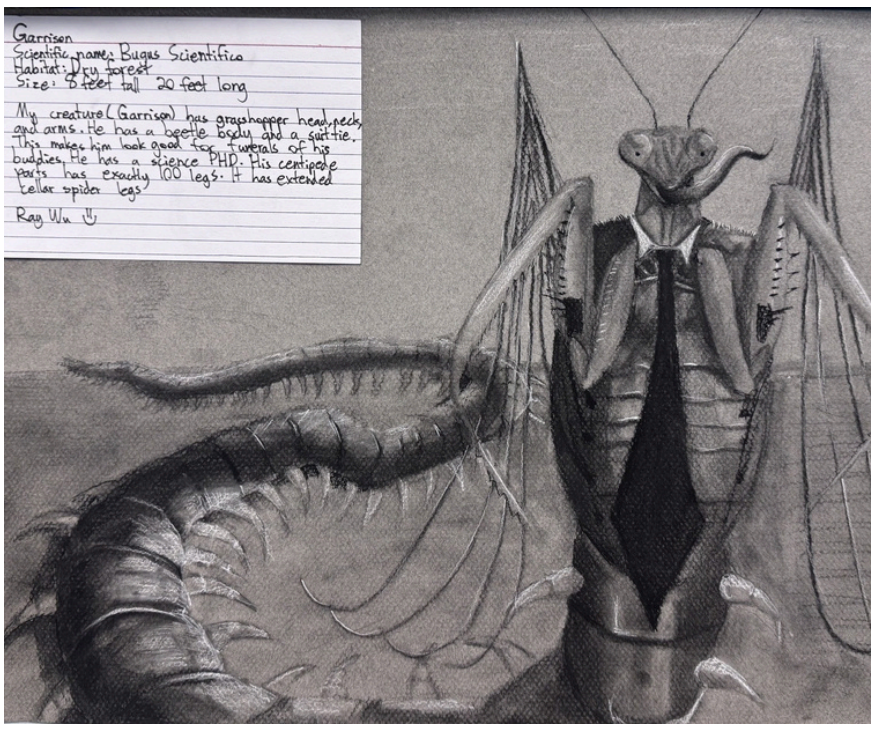
Amber Yang - 6th Grade



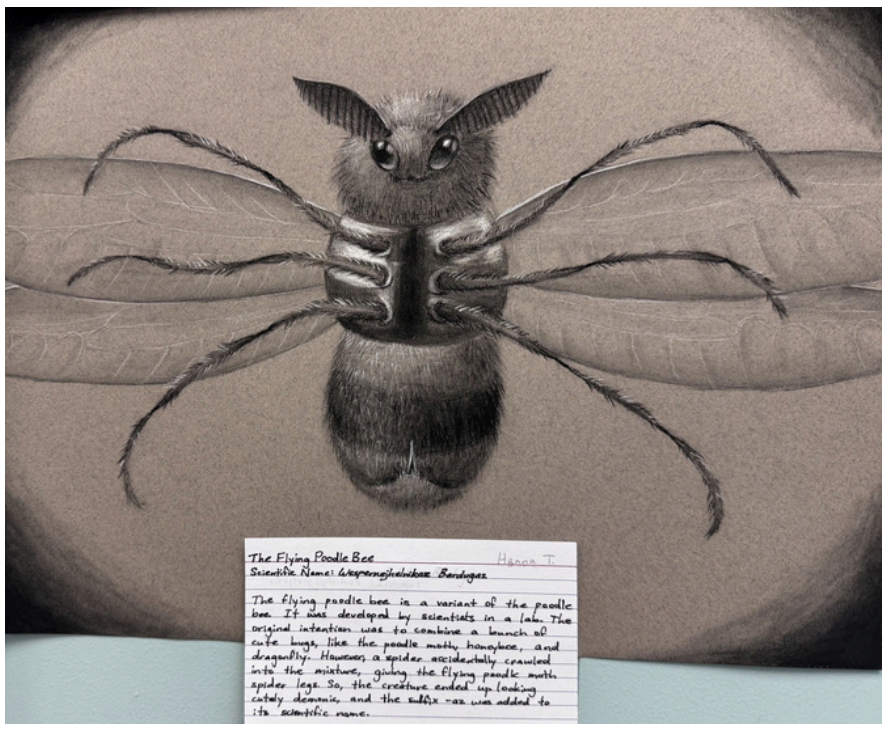
Margarita Chupina - 6th Grade



Saanvi Joshi - 7th Grade



Ray Wu - 8th Grade



Hannah Tang - 8th Grade



Ivory Gu - 7th Grade



Claire He - 7th Grade



Kassidy Lemmi - 8th Grade