



Lanyards Won't Keep Us Safe

Kate Gardner, Sophomore
Reporter

For those of you who are or have students attending Marblehead High, you may have heard of an upcoming safety measure. Beginning this April, students will be expected to wear their student IDs on their person at all times, on threat of detention. There will likely be a grace period, but afterwards, students without IDs may be subject to detention. Upon further infractions, it has even been suggested that students without their IDs be sent home and forced to miss school. Much of what we know now is conjecture, as few resources have been provided to students explaining the policy and its reasoning. However, the major justification for this new policy is that it responds to growing concerns about gun violence. Although I respect this intention, I believe this new policy is not an effective response to gun violence.

In the event that someone who doesn't belong tries to attack, administrators argue, they will be noticed before they can do any harm due to their lack of identification. I have two issues with this argument, the first being that someone who is armed, even upon being called out, will not simply be subdued. A madman with a submachine gun will not be stopped by an administrator asking them for an ID. True, when an attacker is recognized, police can be called. However one can not reasonably assume that someone without an ID is truly evil without somehow interacting with him or her, at which point it would be too late. On the other hand, if someone was visibly a danger, for example holding a gun, then a lack of ID as a cause for concern would be irrelevant.

The second and greater issue I take with this argument is that much of the time, shooters perpetuate violence against organizations that they are a part of. The Virginia Tech, Columbine, and Parkland massacres were all perpetrated by students or former students at said organizations. If, God forbid, someone attacked MHS, it is entirely likely that they would be a student, and thus would have a student ID. Only more involved measures would be truly effective to identify when people pose a risk to their community.

In these cases, the measures that would prevent a shooting are things such as recognizing warning signs, intervening with violent students, and, of course, preventing perpetrators from getting guns. Blanket measures such as the new ID policy seem designed to give the feeling of safety in spite of the fact that their actual effect would be minimal. Furthermore, for many students, this policy does not ease concerns but rather exacerbates anxieties.

Another argument for carrying IDs is that the school may soon scan them to take attendance. Late students, instead of waiting in line, would just swipe their ID and be signed in. Although this is a good idea in theory, the reality is that the tools for scanning IDs are not available. Furthermore, it has been said that administrators lack even a functional database of ID barcodes. The fact is, MHS is a public school. Although we manage to implement and finish projects, doing so often takes time. Implementing a schoolwide program on the justification of a potential future project is wishful thinking. A promise does not constitute an actual system.

The final issue I take with the new ID policy is the exorbitant punishments that may be implemented alongside it. Barring students without their ID from school disrespects the very institution it is supposed to protect. Education should always be a priority. Furthermore, in today's academic climate, it is hard to catch up on missed work. I have even known my peers to attend school sick because they can't afford to miss a day of work. Setting students at a disadvantage because they forgot a lanyard will benefit no one and create a new level of student stress. This new system fails to take into account the reality of human error. People forget things. People lose things. That does not mean that they should miss out on their education.

I respect Mr. Bauer and the administration, and I appreciate their efforts to create dialogue with students. However, I think that this new policy will only stress out students without having positive safety benefits. To put it bluntly, in an America where teens are mowed down with AR-15s, the minutiae of lanyards is a waste of time. In the future, I hope that administrators will reconsider this policy, or at least implement a scanning system in order to justify it further.



Half of English MCAS is in the Trash

Sophia Piper, Sophomore
Reporter

MCAS. The word triggers flashbacks to yellow #2 pencils, rows of Jolly Ranchers, extremely specific instructions about bubbling in your answers (remember: no stray marks!), and entire days filled with the grueling task of making your school look good. There is not a single student in Massachusetts who doesn't internally groan whenever someone mentions the upcoming standardized test session. However, the sophomores who just took the English section may be a little angrier than they were most years – and for good reason.

As a sophomore who likes to write, even I must say that the prompts given were at best, slightly boring, and at worst, torturous. Four 5000-character essays in two days! Not to mention that they were based on a total of eight excerpts, some of which were written in the 19th century. However, this is honestly old news to any student who has ever taken the test. We take the

test, as mind-numbingly boring as it is, and move on. But not this year! Guess what? Two (yes, two!) of the essays we had to write were invalidated! Half of the work and torture we were put through now means nothing, nada, goose-egg! The reasons behind this make the situation even worse.

The first essay that was on the chopping block used an excerpt that had already been distributed to our grade a few years back while PARCC was being used. To be honest, I had a feeling of déjà-vu while writing about it, so I saw it coming. But the ques-

tion that must be asked is: How in the world did the test makers not realize they had already given that essay out? They could have chosen from literally thousands of articles and excerpts, and they picked one that had already been used. I have no words.

The second essay ended up getting thrown out because it was racist. I'm not even kidding. We had to write a journal entry from the perspective of a woman who was hiding a slave. The excerpt depicted the woman as disgusted and hateful towards the runaway slave, which could easily be interpreted as racism. This is not uncommon in books about the Underground Railroad, but then having a student write an entry from the view of said racist woman raises a few problems. The question was tested out last year among different students and there were no problems detected, but when the test was distributed to the masses, some students voiced their concerns.

The MCAS officials have already put out apologies and reassured students and teachers alike that they really did not mean to do any of this. I'm sure that they are telling the truth (What would they gain from doing this anyways?), but I'm even more sure that all of the sophomores are bitter about writing two essays for no reason. All I can say is that we had better all pass with flying colors.



Poem of the Week

April is National Poetry Month, so during April, *Headlight* will be publishing one poem each issue. The following poem was written by an MHS student.

Shut your eyes
and the wolves find you.
Keep them open
and you're safe from those who
poke and prod at the skin that was once yours.
Immobility is what awaits you in this vulnerable state.
Quick thinking is key.
Although it wasn't for me.
Heavy lids are a perilous affair.
Resting is unnecessary when he is on the prowl;
Searching, for his next lamb to slaughter.
Fight him.
Run.
You can't count sheep when you are one.
If the wolf sneaks through the gate of your sealed
eyelids, he will lick his lips, and strike.
His next meal: you.
Your body: his.
Your heart: shattered.
Your eyes: shut.

By Anonymous

End Procrastination and Gain Motivation

Eva Nickolas, Freshman
Reporter

For those of you like me, it is a struggle to begin something the day that it is assigned, or even that weekend, whether it be for school, a job, or anything else you do not want to do, but must complete. You tell yourself that you will do it eventually, or you make yourself feel better by saying that you are simply too busy to deal with it right this second. In actuality, there is nothing truly stopping you from completing it. Procrastinating on an assignment is easy to do, however, it still usually gets done by its due date. It may not be as well put together as it could be, but it is completed. What about tasks without a due date?

When procrastinating on something that another will assess, one is much more likely to complete it, regardless of how rushed the process is. Yet, there are several things in life that people must complete without another making sure they follow through. For example, maintaining a healthy well being includes exercising, eating healthy foods, being mindful, and several other aspects. These are some of the easiest things to procrastinate on. Why? Because nobody else threatens an immediate consequence if you do not accomplish them.

It can be challenging to motivate oneself to get out of bed in the morning and go to the gym when one can just as easily stay under the warm, cozy blankets for just a little while longer.

Suddenly, that turns into scrolling through some pictures on Instagram or Facebook and maybe watching a few YouTube videos. Then, one might call a friend or have someone over, and then maybe run a few errands, and the list goes on. The opportunity to exercise that day no longer exists. And let's face it, if you don't like to work out, you are most likely celebrating; after all, no one is forcing you to exercise. This is just the issue: humans tend to use deadlines as a motivator. When there is no deadline, often times fewer things happen. The only solution to this is to create your own deadline.

The dangerous cycle of procrastination needs to end, for it ultimately leads to guilt, frustration, and sometimes self-hatred, as people may be disappointed in themselves for not following through on their goals. The solution to procrastination-provoked feelings may be timelines. Regardless of the topic, it is important for people to be self-empowered and strong self-motivators. You deserve to feel accomplished, worthy, and successful. So to all of the procrastinators reading this, I urge you to set up mini due dates for yourself, even if they be for something as simple as a new hobby. Please do not let the mini procrastinator inside of you rule your decisions or make you feel ashamed. Empower yourself through smaller, self-made goals and deadlines.

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