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Schools slow to draw the line on AI use

Policies not keeping up with technology

By **Steph Machado**
and **Camilo Fonseca**
GLOBE STAFF

When Patrick Wygant assigned his ninth-grade world history students a paper on the Renaissance and Reformation last winter, one submission caught his eye. A student who typically has low reading and writing levels turned in a “bril-

liantly written” report.

Wygant, a teacher at Rogers High School in Newport, R.I., confronted the student, who quickly owned up to using artificial intelligence to write the paper.

Wygant and a fellow history teacher asked the rest of their ninth-graders if they, too, had used AI on the assignment. Roughly 70 out of 158 admitted to using the technology to generate their papers.

“Most of them were honest and said, ‘Oh yeah, I typed it into an AI

and copy-and-pasted it,’” Wygant said. “They owned it right away.”

The teachers could have flunked them for plagiarism. But the student handbook did not have any guidance on the use of AI, and some students seemed unaware what they did was wrong.

“We tried to use it more as a learning opportunity,” said Wygant, who now teaches a unit on AI and has adopted a clear policy in his classroom about how it can and cannot be used.

Uncertainty over AI in schools is widespread. In Massachusetts, parents of a high school student sued the Hingham public school district after the student was punished for using AI to help research and outline a history paper, arguing that the student handbook did not prohibit using the technology for those purposes at the time. The district contends the student’s actions amounted to plagiarism, and the teacher, Susan Petrie, testified in

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, Page A7

T workers on leave in probe of corruption

10 allegedly worked on private cars while on job

By **Shannon Larson, Sean Cotter,**
and **Danny McDonald**
GLOBE STAFF

The MBTA has placed 10 employees at its Cabot Yard maintenance facility on administrative leave while it conducts a criminal investigation into allegations they were working on private vehicles during work hours, general manager Phil Eng said Thursday.

Eng declined to give specifics of the allegations, citing the ongoing investigation by the Transit Police into the “potential of criminal activity.”

“It appears they were doing something that they should not have been doing on MBTA property or MBTA time,” Eng said.

He also did not provide a timeline for when the investigation began, or what led the T to look into the allegations. Located off Dorchester Avenue in South Boston, the facility is used to store and maintain Red Line vehicles, and is also the home base for Red Line track workers and inspectors.

“As public servants, we have an obligation to do the duties that we’ve accepted in the roles,” Eng said. “These employees, it appears, were not doing that.”

The probe marks the latest controversy for the T, an agency maligned for slow trains, derailments, equipment malfunctions, and allegations

MBTA, Page A6



PHOTOS BY JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

Xander, a 4-year-old who is on the autism spectrum, snuggled with his mother, Natalie, as they settled into their seats.

A chance to fly at their own speed

Families with neurodiverse children savor a practice run on the ground

By **Christopher Gavin**
GLOBE STAFF

WARWICK, R.I. — Standing beside Gate 12, Marcella Almeida knew exactly where she wanted to go: Disney World.

But at Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport one afternoon this week, Almeida and her family were not hopping a flight to Florida.

In fact, the aircraft she was about to board with her husband and three children was not scheduled to fly anywhere. Even the ticket in their hands said their destination was, well, exactly where they were already.

But Tuesday still felt like the start of a journey. At the airport’s first “Autism Flies” event, hosted by Breeze Airways and Connecticut-based Autism Double-checked, families with neurodiverse children and young adults were able to gain insights



Lucas Avila, 7, checked out the plane with Lynne Cotter, a volunteer with “Autism Flies.”

into air travel — but without the stress and trauma of embarking on an actual flight.

Almeida, of West Warwick, is the mother of Carter, 5, and 3-

year-old twins Nathan and Natalia, all of whom have Fragile X syndrome, a genetic condition that Almeida said is similar to autism.

The disorder can affect behavior, and Almeida said it can be a struggle to keep her kids contained, as they’re prone to wandering off on their own, as is also common for children with autism.

So while they dream of going to Disney someday, traveling — especially on an airplane — presents a host of factors to consider. The prospect, Almeida admits, has left her feeling “petrified.”

“I want to see what we’re going to be up against and how they’re going to behave once the cabins close . . . and they’ve got to sit still,” Almeida said, as the trio rocked and jumped around in a wagon in the airport terminal alongside their father, John. “As you can tell, just here, they won’t stop. So I can’t imagine what it’s going to be like in there.”

NEURODIVERSITY, Page A7

Menendez brothers may get a chance for parole

DA seeks resentencing in changed climate on abuse

By **Tim Arango and Matt Stevens**
NEW YORK TIMES

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles County district attorney said Thursday that he would request the resentencing of Lyle and Erik Menendez, who killed their parents in 1989, a step that could lead to their release from prison.

The district attorney, George Gascón, announced his decision at a news conference at the Hall of Justice in Los Angeles.

“I believe that they have paid their debt to society,” he said.

Gascón, who was surrounded by members of his office and members of the Menendez family, said he would ask the court Friday to resentence the brothers to a murder charge that comes with the possibility of parole.

It is not clear when a Los Angeles Superior Court judge will decide on the resentencing re-

MENENDEZ BROTHERS, Page A6



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High 61-66. Low 41-46.

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Sunrise: 7:09 Sunset: 5:46

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As it considers relocating, Hasbro said it will lay off dozens of employees while streamlining operations. **B5.**

Countries have made no progress on global warming a year after world leaders made a landmark promise, a UN report said. **A4.**

The Boston Athletic Association will invest more than \$1 million into the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center in a multiyear partnership. **B1.**

The EPA said it is strengthening requirements for removing lead-based paint dust from homes and child-care facilities. **A2.**

The Boston area has seen only three days of rainfall over the past two months, and much of the state is now abnormally dry or worse. **B1.**

Abuse victims angered by Vt. diocese’s bankruptcy

By **Kevin Cullen**
GLOBE STAFF

BURLINGTON, Vt. — When Brenda Hannon heard the Roman Catholic diocese here had filed for bankruptcy on Oct. 1, her mind drifted back to St. Joseph’s Orphanage, the nuns, and the peanut butter pudding.

In 1961, Hannon was 8, living at the orphanage, and did not like peanut butter pudding.

“It looked like dirty dishwasher,” she said, “and it tasted like dirty dishwasher.”

But when Hannon refused to eat it, she alleges, some of the nuns became incensed.

“They tied me to a chair,” Hannon said. “They tried to force my mouth open. One of them held

ABUSE, Page A6



EYAD BABA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

DESTRUCTION — A boy walked through the rubble of a school hit Thursday by an Israeli airstrike targeting the central Gaza Strip. Israeli and US negotiators are scheduled to return to Qatar over the weekend to try to revive cease-fire talks with Hamas. **A4.**