

# The Boston Globe

Serving our community since 1872

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024

## Huge special ed bills hamstringing districts

Towns, cities cite costs among reasons they can't meet pay demands of educators

By Deanna Pan and Mandy McLaren  
GLOBE STAFF

For Massachusetts public school districts struggling to respond to the intensifying pressure from teachers for higher salaries, one number among their many growing expenses stands out: the \$1 billion plus they spend to send students with disabilities to specialized campuses, including private special edu-

cation schools.

With teachers on strike in Beverly, Gloucester, and Marblehead, some officials have pointed to the rapidly rising cost of special education as among the reasons why they cannot afford the pay raises educators are seeking.

Marblehead, for example, spent \$4.4 million on out-of-district special education placements in fiscal 2023, nearly three times more, ad-

9,500

Roughly the number of special education students in Massachusetts who were enrolled in separate public or private day schools at public expense in 2022

35%

increase in the cost of sending students to out-of-district placements over the last decade

justing for inflation, than what the district spent in 2008, the earliest year for which data were available; in Gloucester those costs have risen more than 20 percent, after inflation, to \$6.5 million, from \$5.4 million in 2008 in today's dollars. The state reimburses the districts for a slice of those expenditures.

Over that same period, total enrollment in both school districts has cratered by nearly 20 percent.

Schools in all three striking districts remained closed Friday as negotiations between districts and

**SPECIAL EDUCATION, Page A10**

## US allows missiles to strike Russia

Policy escalation follows Putin's use of N. Korean soldiers against Ukraine

By Adam Entous, Eric Schmitt, and Julian E. Barnes  
NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — President Biden has authorized the first use of US-supplied long-range missiles by Ukraine for strikes inside Russia, US officials said.

The weapons are likely to be initially employed against Russian and North Korean troops in defense of Ukrainian forces in the Kursk region of western Russia, the officials said.

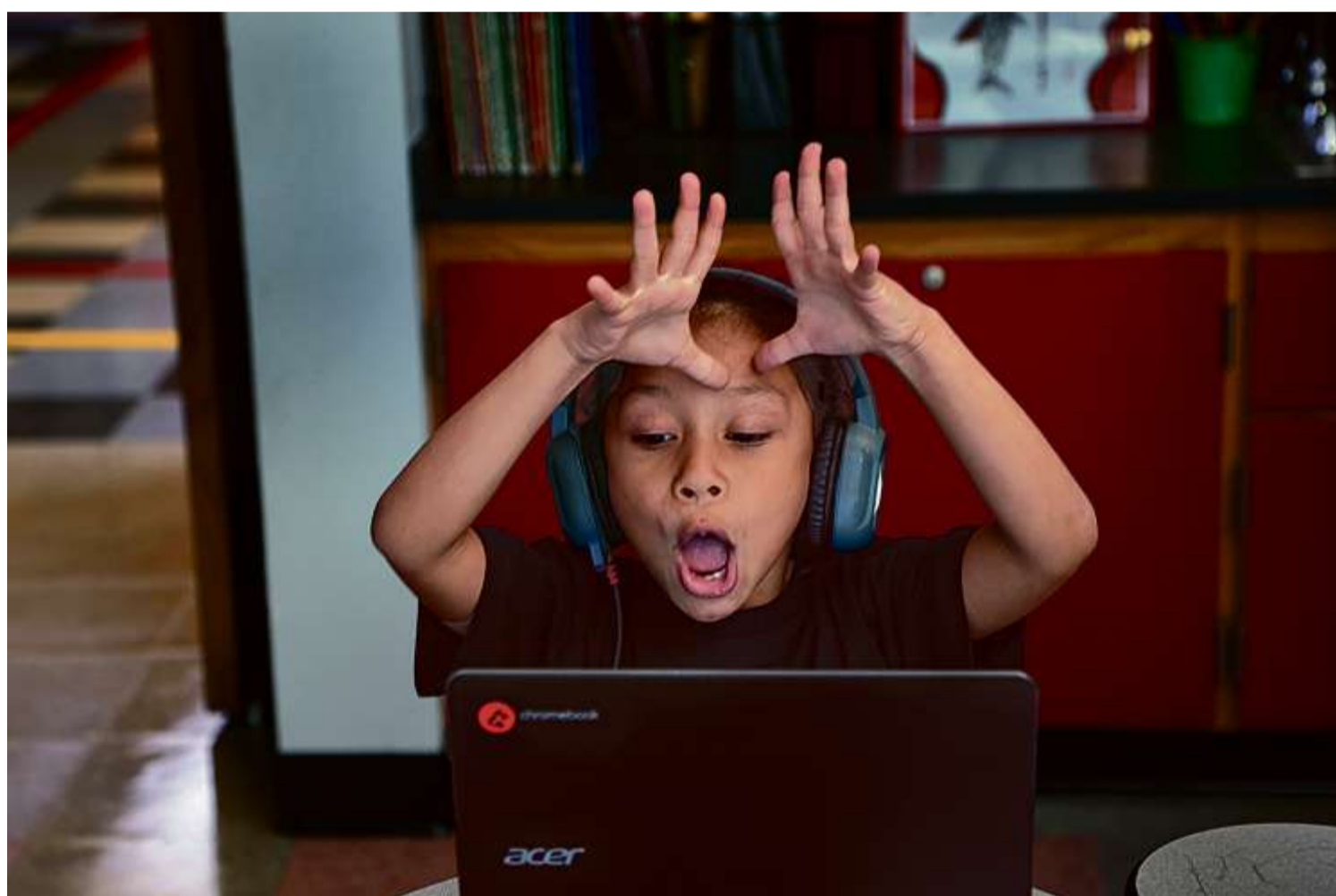
Biden's decision is a major change in US policy. The choice has divided his advisers, and his shift comes two months before President-elect Donald Trump takes office, having vowed to limit further support for Ukraine.

Allowing the Ukrainians to use the long-range missiles, known as the Army Tactical Missile Systems, or ATACMS, came in response to Russia's surprise decision to bring North Korean troops into the fight, officials said.

President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine did not confirm the permission to strike but suggested Sunday that more important than lifting the restrictions would be the number of missiles used to strike the Russians.

"Today, many in the media are talking about the

**UKRAINE, Page A4**



PHOTOS BY SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

Raelynn Ruiz reacted to her reading tutor on her computer during class at Frank M. Sokolowski Elementary School in Chelsea.

## Once reviled, online lessons are drawing rave reviews

By Mandy McLaren  
GLOBE STAFF

CHELSEA — Try as she might, first-grade teacher Kyle McGee can't be everywhere at once. She can't practice high-frequency words with Jonathan and at the same time attend to Santino's reading fluency. She can't rehearse short vowels with Raelynn while also quizzing Sophia on letter sounds or Joel on the Magic E rule.

But this is what her students need: individualized attention. All 25 of them.

Therein lies the challenge of modern teaching, especially in a post-pandemic world, where foundational deficits, if not addressed early and aggressively, can hamstring students for life. So what's McGee to do?

As a teacher in the Chelsea Public Schools, she has been

Chelsea teachers toss aside their skepticism as tutor program boosts performance of young students



Almudena Abeyta, superintendent of Chelsea schools, visited first-grade students practicing their skills.

able to deploy a superpower of sorts, relying on an army of trained reading tutors to provide tailored, one-on-one instruction to more than half of her students for 15 minutes every school day. The tutors, employed by Ignite Reading, a San Francisco-based company, beam in through interactive video calls on students' laptops.

Chelsea's experiment, which the district began during the 2023-24 school year, is an example of "high-dosage" tutoring, a research-backed practice requiring small groupings and highly trained tutors, and which experts nationally say is key to pandemic recovery.

The model could be a salve for a longstanding literacy problem in the state: Even before the pandemic, more than one in

**LITERACY, Page A10**

## Deal by deal, medical device firm reemerges

Boston Scientific again among Mass. leaders in burgeoning industry

By Jon Chesto  
GLOBE STAFF

The day after completing a billion-dollar deal, Boston Scientific dispatched food trucks to hand out fried chicken sandwiches and burritos to Silk Road Medical employees in California and Minnesota, before holding a town hall-style meeting to welcome them into the fold.

That September day was a big one for the teams at Silk Road, which makes stroke-prevention devices. But deals like this are a regular occurrence for Boston Scientific, and the Marlborough company has the process down to, well, a science. During chief executive Mike Mahoney's 12-year tenure, Boston Scientific has completed more than 40 acquisitions, helping turn the medical device maker into one of the state's most valuable companies.

This might be surprising considering the damage caused by its bet-the-farm, \$27 billion deal in 2006 for pacemaker company Guidant, which sealed a victory in its bidding war against the large

**BOSTON SCIENTIFIC, Page A7**

## From prison cells to green jobs

Ex-inmates among new workforce needed to power state's climate goals

By Ivy Scott  
GLOBE STAFF

Gripping a soldering iron firmly in his right hand, Osvaldo Medina angled the tip toward the circuit board and prepared to attach a small red lightbulb. He watched puffs of smoke curl up as hot silver drops melted onto the board, fixing the bulb in place. Then he stepped back to admire his handiwork, passing the iron to one of his classmates.

"The state of Massachusetts is going green, and that's the future," said Medina, roughly two months into his Digital Principles class at the Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology in Boston's South End. "So I want to be ahead of the game, before it's too late."

Medina, 37, never imagined three years ago that he'd be working toward a degree in renewable energy technologies. After he left high school in the 11th grade and became entangled in dealing drugs, two decades passed before he picked his studies back up at the Boston Pre-Release Center, a minimum security prison under the Department of Correction that pre-

**GREEN JOBS, Page A5**



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

Osvaldo Medina (left) showed Alexander Harris a project in his class at Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology.



Whirl, wind affair

**Monday:** Cloudy, windy. High 60-65, low 41-46.

**Tuesday:** Sunny, windy. High 54-59, low 38-43.

Sunrise: 6:39. Sunset: 4:19.

Weather and comics, **D4-5**.

Obituaries, **B6**.

VOL. 306, NO. 141

\$4.00

Suggested retail price



**A Patriots' comeback falls short** as they lose to the Los Angeles Rams 28-22. **C1.**

**Democrats are pushing to fill vacant federal judgeships** before the Trump administration takes reins of government. **B1.**

**A long line of bicyclists rode from Cambridge to the State House to remember those who have been killed** on nearby streets and to urge lawmakers to support safety measures. **B1.**

**Back-pain sufferers and investors alike are keen to learn** of results of Vertex's latest work on pain management. **D1.**

**Hundreds of salmon are returning to their traditional breeding grounds** in the Northwest after completion of the largest dam removal project in American history. **A2.**