

# The Boston Globe

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2024

## For Metco families, Newton strike hits harder

Child care tough to arrange for 415 Boston students

By **Jeremy C. Fox**  
and **Christopher Huffaker**  
GLOBE STAFF

Most teenagers would welcome an unexpected break from the rigid school routine, especially one that requires an early wake-up to make a one-hour bus ride, and then another home at the end of a long day.

But for Jaylon Phifer, a Metco student from Dorchester who attends Newton South High School, the nearly two-week-long teachers strike has come at an inopportune time: the walkout has delayed the submission of second-term grades, which he and his classmates need to send to colleges.

“I’m still waiting on two major schools that can be life-changing — Rutgers and UMass Amherst,” Phifer said. “So it’s like really stressful waiting for my grades.”

While he supports the teachers’ quest for a better contract — enough to journey out to Newton during the break to attend a rally on their behalf — he is nonetheless shocked to see adults unable to come to an agreement and not disrupt crucial class time.

“This is Massachusetts, you’re supposed to emphasize education,” Phifer said. “Especially in Newton, this is something that we’re proud of.”

Phifer is one of 415 Boston students who at  
**NEWTON, Page A12**

## All around the world, super hype for Swiftie Bowl

By **Beth Teitell**  
GLOBE STAFF

This isn’t good for the . . . let’s be generous and call them “football purists.” Already aggrieved by the attention lavished on Taylor Swift at her boyfriend’s football games, they surely were driven off the cliff on Sunday when Kansas City scored a Super Bowl berth and Swift confirmed she would be there. Forget any hysteria about the Chiefs’ clutch victory. It was Swift madness that suddenly went into overdrive.

American Airlines and United bestowed Swift-themed numbers on flights from Kansas City to Las Vegas: 1989 (Swift’s birth year and very popular album); and 87 (Travis Kelce’s jersey number, not that anyone cared before).

Media outlets that don’t typically cover the international dateline suddenly became

**SWIFT, Page A8**



PATRICK SMITH/GETTY IMAGES

Travis Kelce’s got a big game to play in about 10 days, but his famous girlfriend will be the center of attention.

‘We had things just running on a shoestring. We’re talking about a medical center with people’s lives on the line.’

PATRICK MURRAY, former lead mechanic at St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center in Brighton

## At Steward hospitals, things are off

Dwindling supplies. Broken equipment. Blank TVs. Still, staffers and patients try to make do.

By **Katie Johnston, Felice J. Freyer, and Dana Gerber**

GLOBE STAFF

Surgeons buying their own medical instruments. Nurses devising their own mouthwash solution for patients on ventilators. Patients eating crackers after all the sandwiches prepared for the day had run out.

As a financial crisis roils Steward Health Care, prompting requests for

state assistance and raising fears about the possible closure of the system’s nine Massachusetts hospitals, its approximately 200,000 patients and 16,000 employees here are grappling with a range of once-unthinkable challenges.

For patients, the long-brewing crisis has meant a sudden lack of access to certain services and supplies, procedures rescheduled at the last

minute, even blank TVs in their rooms because service had been cut off.

Some employees, concerned that they won’t have what they need to do their jobs and that their livelihoods might be in jeopardy, have decided to leave. But most are staying, doing everything they can to provide high-quality care while holding out hope that another health care sys-

tem will step in and save them.

Steward Health Care declined to comment on many issues raised by employees and patients but said in a statement that it “serves a patient population that are among the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable, and we are committed to continuing to care for them.”

The Globe spoke to seven people  
**STEWART, Page A12**

## DESPERATE MEASURES



JOHN TLUMACKI/GLOBE STAFF

As migrants continue to pour into the state, the Melnea A. Cass Recreational Complex in Roxbury has been converted temporarily into a shelter. A worker used a pole to adjust the ventilation above 300 Army cots on the gym floor. Dozens of migrants who had been sleeping at Logan Airport began moving in Wednesday night. **B1.**

## S.C. Democrats fear optics of a low primary turnout

By **Lissandra Villa de Petrzelka**

GLOBE STAFF

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Ely Young traveled more than two hours to see President Biden speak at the state Democrats’ dinner on Saturday night, where they celebrated their new status as the first state on their party’s nominating calendar. But he’s concerned not everyone shares his excitement.

“I’m really worried about the enthusiasm. That really scares me,” said Young. “I’ve been hearing a lot, ‘Well . . . he hasn’t done anything,’ . . . When [people around town and family members] really are so adamant that he’s done nothing for them, that’s very concerning.”

While the president faces no meaningful opposition in Saturday’s contest, party leaders have been working to turn out their voters in what is meant to be the grand opening act of Biden’s reelection campaign.

The state party has launched a large-scale  
**SOUTH CAROLINA, Page A9**

## Despite talk about age, Biden has hit the road

Travel is comparable to predecessors’ in third year



Joe Biden  
**83 trips in 2023**



Donald Trump  
**113 trips in 2019**



Barack Obama  
**89 trips in 2011**

By **Jim Puzzanghera**

GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — President Biden stepped out of the White House with his overcoat draped over his arm at 10 a.m. on Dec. 5 and boarded a Marine helicopter to take him to a Maryland military base, where he got on Air Force One for a trip to Boston. After a trio of campaign fund-raisers there, he landed back at the White House nearly 12 hours later, answering a few questions from reporters before walking inside.

It was a whirlwind day on the road for Biden, who at 81 is the oldest president ever and has faced questions about his activity level and stamina. And the schedule wasn’t that unusual. A Globe analysis found that Biden’s travel in 2023 stacked up comparably with his two immediate predecessors in the third years of their presidencies — and in some measures exceeded them — with the pace

**TRAVEL, Page A9**

**Senators battered the CEOs of five major tech companies with accusations that they failed to stem a rising tide of child sexual abuse on their platforms. A2.**

**The Federal Reserve said interest rate cuts are coming, but probably not for a few months. D1.**

### Not so Febulous

**Thursday:** Cloudy, as usual. High 42-47. Low 33-38.

**Friday:** And some more. High 39-44. Low 24-29.

**Weather and Comics, D5-6. Obituaries, C10-11.**

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