



A first-grader read a book at Lincoln Elementary School in Winchester.

JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

The word of the day is ‘complacent’

The wealthiest school districts in Massachusetts are also, strangely, the most likely to stick with reading curriculums the state frowns on, ones that leave many students struggling with an essential life skill.

BY NAOMI MARTIN AND MANDY MCLAREN|GLOBE STAFF

THE GREAT DIVIDE
Race, class, and opportunity in our schools

Lost in a world of words: Part of a series of stories examining the literacy crisis in Massachusetts

WINCHESTER — At school, she panics if she has to read aloud. She’s a conscientious student and keeps her grades up, but it isn’t easy; at times she has such trouble synthesizing the novels she reads in English class, she Googles plot summaries to remind herself of what happened. Even in math, word problems are thickets.

Madison von Mering, a driven 16-year-old who loves field hockey and sailing, is not a strong reader. As a young child, she was never correctly taught how to sound out unfamiliar words.

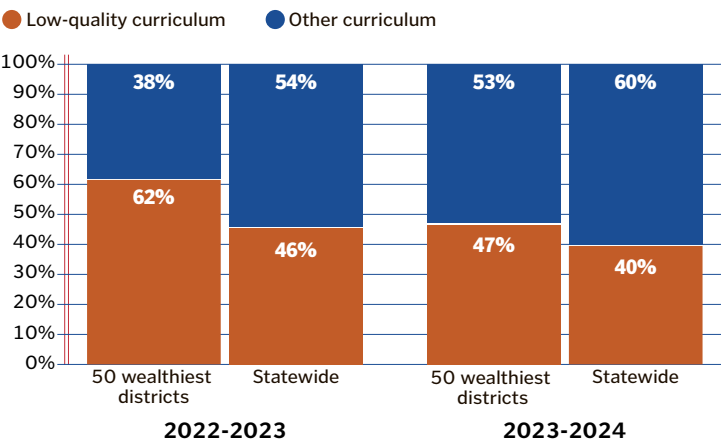
“Even still, a lot of words, I just guess on how they’re pronounced,” she said.

Madison lives in Winchester, a wealthy Boston suburb known for having some of the best public schools in Massachusetts. Yet almost one in three of its students in grades 3 to 8 last spring

LITERACY, Page A12

Low-quality reading curriculums are popular in rich communities

The majority of the state’s 50 wealthiest communities used reading curriculums last school year that the state defines as low quality. Seven changed curriculums this year, as did eleven other districts statewide.



SOURCE: Boston Globe survey

CHRISTOPHER HUFFAKER/GLOBE STAFF

In the OR, all-seeing technology documents surgery



PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF

Dr. Douglas Smink, chief of surgery at Faulkner Hospital, supports use of the OR Black Box (top right corner).

Faulkner first here to use AI ‘Black Box’ to improve outcomes

By Felice J. Freyer
GLOBE STAFF

The operating room has long functioned in secrecy, a sanctum where a team works in quiet synchrony to cut open and, hopefully, repair an unconscious patient’s body. Those who do the work rarely talk about it with others and often can’t remember exactly what happened, making it hard to assess what went wrong, or what went right, or whether anything could have been done better.

But now an AI-powered technology may put an end to the mystery, by re-

cording what goes on in the OR in the finest detail — every move each person makes, every word uttered, every instrument used, every shift in the patient’s vital signs, more than a half-million data points from each OR over the course of each day.

The technology is called the OR Black Box, although it involves no box, black or otherwise. The name is intended to evoke the “black box” airlines use to track everything that happens in the cockpit.

More than two dozen hospitals in the United States and Canada have installed the system — a set of wide-angle video cameras that stream to sophisticated software — in some of their operating rooms. In mid-November, Brigham & Women’s Faulkner Hospital in Jamaica

BLACK BOX, Page A14

In Milton, key test of state’s new housing law

Town risks sanctions if voters reject zoning that enables bigger buildings

By Andrew Brinker
GLOBE STAFF

From the moment almost three years ago when Massachusetts passed a landmark housing law requiring many communities to allow more multi-family housing, it was clear a political war was brewing.

And over the last month, a front line has emerged in Milton, where a contingent of residents is resisting a new land-use plan adopted by Town Meeting in December that they say will have catastrophic consequences for their upper-middle-class suburb on Boston’s southern border. Opponents have succeeded in forcing a townwide vote on the proposal in February, which will determine whether Milton will be the last of the 12 close-in communities that have the earliest deadline to comply with the new housing law — or the only one that hasn’t.

It will be the greatest test yet for what’s known as the MBTA Communities Act, which compels cit-

MILTON, Page A11

Haley may face chilly climate as race heads south

Trump has deep support in states after Iowa, N.H.

By Jess Bidgood
GLOBE STAFF

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Former governor Nikki Haley of South Carolina knows the weather conditions for Monday night’s Iowa caucuses will be downright inhospitable.

“I know it’s going to be negative 15,” she told a crowd of about 150 inside a theater here on Thursday afternoon. “I don’t even know what that is.”

The Iowa caucuses have turned from a traditional political pageant into an exercise in survival of the elements. Blizzard conditions bore down on huge swaths of the state Friday and Saturday, forcing the cancellation of some last-minute campaigning, while treacherously low temperatures in the offing could significantly depress turnout on

IOWA, Page A8

The All-Scholastics special section: The Globe honors the finest high school athletes from the autumn season.

Rains, winds, and high tides led to flooding along parts of the New England coast. **B1.**

Taiwan elected a pro-independence leader. **A2.**

A flake check

Sunday: A few flurries. High 38-43, low 22-27.

Monday: Clearing, cool. High 31-36, low 23-28.

Complete report, **A22.**

Obituaries, **A20.**

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