

Parent Survival Kit

Boston Latin School

2010-2011

Collection of Useful Information
For Boston Latin School Parents
Compiled by
Boston Latin School Parents

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WELCOME!

As a parent of an incoming Boston Latin School student, you may find yourself a bit anxious, a little intimidated and somewhat in-the-dark as to what the next few years will hold for your child. Then again, you might be like the rest of us who were in the not-so-distant past...absolutely terrified, completely cowed and entirely ignorant. You may wonder whether BLS is the right place for your child.

Relax. For all its history, tradition and fame, Latin School is, above all, an institution whose mission is to help children achieve their potential. How effectively that goal is realized depends on a number of factors...the talent of the faculty...the competence of the staff...and the motivation your child develops and maintains during a Latin School career.

But your role as a parent is much more than that of a spectator. The extent to which you become involved in your student's life while at BLS can have a profound influence on how satisfying that experience becomes for both of you. And your willingness to engage with parent associations, individual parents and school functions will enhance that involvement.

The purpose of this unofficial packet is to enable you to take some early steps in this process. It's a very rough, unpolished collection of materials by some veteran parents that we hope you will find useful and informative. We plan to add other items as we discover them.

Your family's journey at Boston Latin School is about to begin. At times, the road may seem long, rough and even impassable. Hang in there...There are

resources, organizations and individuals that can assist you along the way. Take advantage of any that you need. Enjoy the experience and good luck!

In order to maximize the benefits of your BLS experience, you and your child should follow the following motto: "**Educate-Communicate-Participate**".

Educate yourselves about the background, organization, procedures and standards of Boston Latin School. The more you learn about how the school works, the less likely you are to be surprised, especially over the first few months. The first set of items in this collection will help you to learn the basics about BLS.

Communicate with other parents, other students, faculty and school staff members. Be pro-active. Ask lots of questions. This next set of items will help you to better communicate on behalf of your child.

Participate in activities *outside* the classroom. If the sum total of your child's Latin School education is a high school transcript, you've both missed out on some interesting and enriching experiences. Get involved.

For students, there are dozens of clubs, activities and sports. For parents, there are some great organizations and volunteer activities that will inform and challenge you and enable you to make BLS a better place for your child and those that follow your child.

Finally, this kit concludes with some parting observations from the parent of a graduate.

What Parents Need To Know for the Seventh Grade/Class VI/ Sixie Year

Prepared by the Boston Latin School Communication Committee

In Seventh grade (Class VI, while twelfth grade is Class I), students are entering BLS and getting used to the lifestyle that they must go through for the next six years. Incoming students are grouped (assigned randomly) into 3 clusters, A, B and C. Each Cluster has the same set of teachers who move through the material at more or less the same pace. Homework, tests and projects are all the same in the cluster regardless of the section. Seventh graders are known as “sixies.

Keep Informed (See www.bls.org)

- The BLS website is for the BLS community – students, parents, faculty and alumni. **You must login and insert your email address to access parent specific information and receive important school notices.** Login Instructions are listed below in Communication and posted at www.bls.org.
- School policies are in the Student Handbook printed in your student’s purple Agenda and are posted at www.bls.org.
- Attend Parent and Site Council meetings; join a parent organization listed in website.

Curriculum (See www.bls.org → Academics)

- Seventh graders take five major subjects: Earth Science, Reading, Writing, Latin and Math which meet every day. In addition, there are electives such as Physical Education, Art and Music that meet less often. Sixies will have at least one study.
- Students can choose an instrument (the information regarding this would have arrived in your home a month or so after notification that your student has been admitted to BLS) and will perform in the school band or orchestra during the winter and spring concerts. Students can also choose to be in Chorus. Boys are highly sought for the Chorus since there are far fewer boys than girls in Chorus
- In Reading and Writing students will be reading approximately two novels every term and writing compositions. The key to succeeding is READ!
- Declamation is a mandatory public speaking activity occurring three times a year. Success in Declamation requires preparation way in advance and lots of practice. So be prepared to listen!
- Mathematics covers pre-algebra and a few early topics in Algebra I. There are also math competitions during the year. See math department website for the schedule.
- In addition to tests, experiments and projects weigh a great deal into your child’s final grade. All students must complete a science project. Some may be chosen to present their science project at science fair at the school, city or state level. Students should begin their science project early, put effort into research, and make sure the actual visual aids are attractive.
- Since most students are studying Latin for the first time, you can expect that they may need some additional help and encouragement with this subject. Memorization is a large factor. Many students use index cards for vocabulary. If students devote their time to memorizing the forms of Latin words, and actually understanding the uses of each rule, the rest of the year will be a breeze. The key is: don’t fall behind!

Report Card/Progress Reports:

- There are five marking periods in the year, approximately two months apart. This means that there five report cards issued in the year, with the fifth one being mailed to your home. Around mid-term, parents and students may receive progress reports from teachers. Some teachers give progress reports to all students, while others only give them to students at academic risk. At the end of the year, the grades from all five terms are averaged in each subject to determine the final grade.

Student Support (See www.bls.org → Support Services)

- Students/parents can contact their guidance counselor for any problem. Guidance counselor assignments and contacts are listed below in Who’s Who.
- Drop-In After School Tutoring is available from M-Th/2:15 to 3:15 p.m; see your guidance counselor.
- Guidance counselors are also helpful in arranging for tutoring during Study periods.

- Saturday Success School (9:00-11:30 a.m.) provides additional tutoring. See next page for contact information. This program is very helpful to students especially to learn how to organize their work and improve their study skills.

Getting Answers and Solving Problems

- Students/parents can contact a teacher or guidance counselor directly. (Contacts below).
- If you or your student is unable to resolve a problem with a teacher, contact the program director for the subject matter in which your student is having difficulty. If the matter is not resolved, contact an Assistant Head Master, then the Headmaster.
- For specific problems, contact the Assistant Headmasters whose responsibilities are listed on www.bls.org →About BLS→Administration. Contacts are also listed below at Who's Who.
- For questions regarding your child's health, contact the Health Room at 617-635-7881. More information is listed at www.bls.org → Student Support → Health.
- Ask a parent by sending an email to blscommunication@gmail.com.

Arts/Sports (See www.blsarts.org and www.bls.org→Student Life→Athletics)

- Students can take part in many after-school band, orchestra and drama programs. Encourage your student to explore the many opportunities offered. However, since most seventh graders are still adjusting to life in BLS, your child may choose just one activity or choose to join these activities later in the year or even wait until the 8th grade. The time commitment varies on the activity with some in school and some after school commitments.
- If your children are interested in sports, encourage them to join a school team. Fall, winter and spring sports are listed on the website above and in student agendas. Although time commitments vary, most teams meet everyday after school during the season. Daily updates are available on the BLS Sports Hotline by calling 617-635-8895 ext 257.
- Tryout schedules for fall, winter and spring sports are posted on the website, sent out via the parent listserv, and posted outside Mr. McDonough's office and both locker rooms. Note that most fall teams have tryouts that begin in August before the start of the school year.

Other Extra-Curricular (See www.bls.org→ Student Handbook)

- Involvement in extra-curricular activities, including community service, is an important part of a student's "college resume."
- Student clubs are listed in the Student agenda and on the website. Students can learn about and sign up at the Extra-Curricular Fair held each fall.
- There are no required community service hours until senior year.

Curriculum Choices for Class V:

- In March, students make two curriculum choices for the eighth grade.
- Students choose a modern foreign language (Chinese, French, German, Italian and Spanish).
- Placement in the Math Honors program for the eighth grade is made by the faculty. Usually 2 out of approximately 15 fifteen sections are deemed Honors level for Math. Placement is based on math grades during the first three marking periods, performance in the mid year test and performance in the CML tests.

Planning for college

Seventh grade is also a time when it is a good idea for parents to think about helping their child begin to plan for college. Guidance and Support Services offers advice to parents on how they might effectively assist their child on the BLS website at <http://www.bls.org>→Student Support.

In addition, BLS periodically offers a workshop for parents, *Early College Planning*. This workshop is designed to offer parents an overview of the college admission process with special attention to the following areas: academic requirements, transcript of grades, admission testing, admission decisions, finding the right college, financial aid and financial planning.

What Parents Need To Know for The Ninth Grade/Class IV/Freshman Year

Prepared by the Boston Latin School Communication Committee

Ninth Grade at BLS marks a change—the "beginning of high school" and the inception of the official transcript that will be part of college applications. No matter what has happened in the prior two years at BLS, ninth grade is the time that habits and accomplishments register now in a new way. Continue to provide support and structure to your child, with a shared objective of helping them become increasingly independent.

Keep Informed (See www.bls.org → Parents)

- School policies are in the Student Handbook printed in your student's purple Agenda. It is also posted on www.bls.org.
- The BLS website is "communication central" for the BLS community – students, parents, faculty and alumni. **You must login and insert your email address to access parent specific information and receive important school notices.** Login Instructions are listed below and posted at www.bls.org.
- Attend Parent Council, Site Council, and/or Home and School Association meetings; join a parent organization listed on the website.

Curriculum (See www.bls.org → Academics)

- Typical schedule for IVA students (those who entered BLS in 7th grade): English, Latin III, Algebra II, Biology I, World History I, Physical Education, Chinese/French/Italian/Spanish/German II.
- Typical schedule for IVB students (those who entered BLS in 9th grade): English, Latin I, Algebra I, Biology I, World History I, Physical Education, Chinese/French/Italian/Spanish/German I.
- Detailed course descriptions are listed on the website above. Teachers distribute syllabi to students and parents in the fall
- Honors: Algebra 2 only. The number of sections depends on the readiness of students entering grade nine, including students enrolled in Algebra I Honors and those who have achieved at a high level in Algebra 1. Consideration for enrollment in the honors program is contingent upon teacher recommendation, grades, performance on the CML (Continental Math League) and NEML (New England Math League) math contests, and mathematical maturity. Honors students are required to participate in the 5 CMLs (during class time) throughout the school year, as well as the AMC (American Mathematics Competition) and are encouraged to join the Math Team.
- Ninth grade B-sies are placed in Algebra 1, Algebra 2, or Algebra 2 Honors, according to the results of a placement exam given during the summer.
- Electives: None this year. In the spring, students will choose between Chemistry I and Physics I for sophomore year. Attend Curriculum Night in March for more information.

Arts (See www.blsarts.org)

- Almost one-half of BLS students participate in the arts program. Even if your student was not involved in the seventh or eighth grades, it is not too late to join the orchestra, band, choir, to act or be part of the stage crew in a variety of school productions. Encourage your student to explore the many opportunities offered.
- The time commitment varies on the activity with some in school and some after school commitments.
- If your children are interested in sports, encourage them to join a school team. Fall, winter and spring sports are listed on the website above and in student agendas. Although time commitments vary, most teams meet everyday after school during the season. (See www.bls.org → Student Life → Athletics)
- Daily updates are available on the BLS Sports Hotline by calling 617-635-8895 ext 257. Tryout schedules for fall, winter and spring sports are posted on the website, sent out via the parent listserv, and posted outside Mr. McDonough's office and both locker

Other Extra-Curricular (See www.bls.org → Student Handbook)

- Involvement in extra-curricular activities, including community service, is an important part of a student's "college résumé."
- Student clubs are listed in the Student agenda and on the website. Students can learn about and sign up at the Extra-Curricular Fair in September each year.
- Students at the beginning of the year should also think about their extracurricular activities and be aware that colleges are often more interested in depth than breadth. Encourage your student to focus on a few activities that they feel genuine passion for, rather than dabbling in a hectic mix that they will pick up and discard.

Student Support (See www.bls.org → Support Services)

- Students/parents can contact their guidance counselor for any problem. Guidance counselor assignments and contacts are listed below in Who's Who.
- Drop-In After School Tutoring is available from M-Th/2:15 to 3:15 p.m.; see your guidance counselor.
- Guidance counselors are also helpful in arranging for tutoring during study periods.
- Saturday Success School (9:00-11:30 a.m.) provides additional tutoring. Contact information is below.

Getting Answers and Solving Problems

- Students/parents can contact a teacher or guidance counselor directly. (Class IV guidance contacts on next page)
- If you or your student is unable to resolve a problem with a teacher, contact the program director for the subject matter in which your student is having difficulty. If the matter is not resolved, contact an Assistant Head Master, then the Headmaster.
- For specific problems, contact the Assistant Headmasters whose responsibilities are listed on the next page.
- For questions regarding your child's health, contact the Health Room at 617-635-7881. More information is listed at www.bls.org → Student Support → Health.
- Ask a parent by sending an email to blscommunication@gmail.com.

Additional Survival Tips for New Parents

- ASK QUESTIONS.
- **Don't do a big school supply shopping trip before school starts.** Sometime during the first week, your student will come home with a big list of necessary items. Wait 'til then, except for a few basics like pens and book covers.
- **Invest in index cards.** They're especially useful for memorizing Latin grammar and vocabulary, math and science formulae, declamation passages and history facts and dates, but can be creatively applied to almost any subject. Index cards can be easily reviewed while riding to and from school, during study periods and while waiting for classes to start. Pre-holed or self-punched cards can be carried or stored in binders.
- **Review your student's corrected tests, quizzes and graded homework assignments.** Ask questions like "Do you now know the answers you got wrong? Should you get extra help? Are there grades I haven't seen?"
- **Find out whether your student's teachers post their homework and grades on-line.** If they do, make sure you keep up to date with what's going on, especially at first when they might be struggling to stay organized.
- **If you see that there's a problem in a particular class, contact the teacher.** Ask what you and your student can do to perform better. If the teacher doesn't respond, contact the department head. Don't wait until the teacher contacts you or until a bad grade comes in, if you can avoid it. Open House might not give you enough opportunity to talk to the teacher one-on-one.
- **Encourage your kid to go to the extracurricular fair.** Usually held at the end of September, the fair is where students find out about the many clubs on offer. Encourage your kid to participate in an extra-curricular activity. It's a good way to make friends, particularly for the quiet ones.
- **Help your kid establish a study routine right from the start of school.** A quiet, distraction-free place should be available each afternoon/evening. If your kid regularly tells you that he/she has no homework or that it was all completed during a study period...be suspicious.
- **Make sure kids stay ahead of homework.** An easy Tuesday or Wednesday could mean trouble by Thursday night. Projects, term papers and reading can be worked on during a light homework night.
- **Save EVERY paper.** DO NOT toss any work until report cards have been delivered and you both agree with the grades.
- **You can obtain/purchase extra copies of textbooks, especially the larger ones, and keep them at home.** You'll spare your kid a lot of back-breaking weight during the commute. Remember, too, that copies of the textbooks are kept at the Boston Public Library. Some vendor websites for those purchasing extra books:
 - www.bookbundle.com
 - www.used-textbooks.net
 - www.varsitybooks.com
 - www.ecampus.com
 - www.textbooks.com
 - www.half.com
 - www.efollett.com
 - www.amazon.com
 - www.k12books.com
 - www.hmco.com
 - www.mcdougallittell.com
- **Encourage your child to collect phone numbers/e-mail addresses of other students**—at least one in every subject.
- **Prepare your kid (and yourself) for the humbling reality that, at BLS, every kid is smart.** Classes are often demanding and sometimes a "C" is a good grade. Sure, grades are important, but not as important as a happy, well-adjusted teenager.
- **Make an extra effort to communicate with your kid.** BLS can be a scary place for new students. Take your child's emotional temperature on a continual basis.
- **When it comes to punctuality, Latin School is no place for free spirits.** If your kid is late for school, he or she will have detention...in the early morning of the next day. Do whatever you can to insure that your student arrives on time.
- **Lunch lines are very long.** Either send your child with a lunch or if your child buys lunch, bring singles or change.
- **Encourage your child to leave an old/spare pair of shorts and sneakers** in their locker. Don't get stuck without your shorts/sneaks.
- **Meet your child's guidance counselor during open house night.** Make sure your son/daughter makes an appt to meet him/her also. This is done during a study period.

Boston Latin School Who's Who

Department & Responsibilities		Ext.	Email Address
Assistant Head Master Malcolm Flynn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historian of BLS & Trivia Master • Supervisor of 1st floor • Substitute coverage • Coordinator of discipline supports (Floormasters, other AHMS) 		110	mflynn@boston.k12.ma.us
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations of building (facilities, emergencies, neighbors) • Program Director, Health & Physical. Education 			
Assistant Head Master Sherry Lewis-daPonte <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator of Class V • Supervisor of ground floor • Works with Floormasters. on 1st level disc 		101	slewis2@boston.k12.ma.us
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator of cluster meetings, parent conferences, events 			
Assistant Head Master Elizabeth McCoy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Officer of BLS • Supervisor of 3rd floor • Works with Floormasters on 1st level disc. 		137	emccoy@boston.k12.ma.us
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance monitor for Class VI-I • Responsible for (with Registrar) all grade reporting, scheduling & academic records; annual course selection process • AHM for special education issues 			
Assistant Head Master Karen Mound <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator of Class VI • Supervisor of 2nd floor • Works with Floormasters & cluster leaders parent conferences, cluster meetings, consistency of experience—curriculum 		151	kmound@boston.k12.ma.us
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation • Enforcement of tardy policy • Class I Praefecture 			
Program Directors			
Classics	Sherry Lewis daPonte	101	slewis@boston.k12.ma.us
English	Susan Moran	146	smoran@boston.k12.ma.us
Fine & Performing Arts	Paul Pitts	121	ppitts@boston.k12.ma.us
History		153	
Mathematics	Kathleen Bateman	150	kbateman@boston.k12.ma.us
Mod. Foreign Languages	Susan Moran	119	smoran@boston.k12.ma.us
Science	Kathleen Bateman	153	kbateman@boston.k12.ma.us
Guidance Counselors			
Class I, IV (A-C); II, III (B-C)	Megan Moylan	125	mmoylan@boston.k12.ma.us
Class I - IV (D,E, V-Z)	Zita Cousens	124	zcosens@boston.k12.ma.us
Class I - IV (F-G); II, III (A)	Jim Montague, Program Director	212	jmontague@boston.k12.ma.us
Class III, IV (H-Le); I, II (H-L)	Jennifer Segal	126	jsegal@boston.k12.ma.us
Class III, IV (Li-O); I, II (M-O)	Elaine Sylvester	127	esylvester@boston.k12.ma.us
Class I - IV (P-S)	Andrea Encarnacao	128	aencarnacao@boston.k12.ma.us
Class I – IV (T,U); V (W-Z) ;VI (X-Z)	Bill Murray Student Support Coordinator	128	wmurray4@boston.k12.ma.us
Class V (A-L); VI (A-J)	Ada Wong	142	awong@boston.k12.ma.us
Class V (M-V); VI (K-W)	Amy Webster	316	awebster@boston.k12.ma.us
Student Support			
Saturday Success School	Michael Giordano	213	mgiordano@boston.k12.ma.us

Boston Latin School Glossary of Terms – What’s What

A list of acronyms, abbreviations, and trade words frequently used at Boston Latin School...

ACT	a standardized test used by some colleges to determine admission (comparable to SAT)
After-school tutoring	available Monday-Thursday for students in grades 7-9; coordinated by Mike Giordano (“Gio”)
Agenda Book	individual student log book for recording assignments, contains Student Handbook
Alma Mater	school from which you graduated; also the statue in the first floor foyer
APA	Asian Parents Association
A/P Classes	Advanced Placement classes; high level courses eligible for college credit
Approbation	student honor roll with no grade lower than a B-
Approbation with Distinction	student honor roll with no grade lower than an A-
ARGO	student-published newspaper
Assembly Hall	Auditorium
Ass’t Head Masters	4 members of the BLS administrative team.
BAA	Boston Arts Academy
Benchmarks	Standards
BLA	Boston Latin Academy
Black Box Theatre	performing arts room on the first floor of the new wing
BLS	Boston Latin School
bls.org	official website of Boston Latin School, “communication central” for the BLS community
BLSA	Boston Latin School Association, the alumni organization for BLS graduates
blsarts.org	website for the arts department at BLS
[BLS PARENT NOTICE]	an email with this phrase at the beginning has been sent to you by the BLS administration. This is the OFFICIAL listserv, one-way communication from school to home with important announcements and information. Parents/guardians of all students are strongly encouraged to submit their email address if they have not already done so. If you receive messages with this phrase, you are registered; please do not resubmit your address unless it has changed. To sign up, go to: bls.org.
[BLS VILLAGE]	An email with this phrase at the beginning has been sent to you by the "Village list serv", an UNOFFICIAL source of opinions, info, and advice provided by parents. Often helpful but, Caveat emptor! This listserv is not supported by the school.
BPA	Black Parent Association
BPS	Boston Public Schools
BTU	Boston Teachers Union
Bzie/Beezie/B’sie	Student who enters BLS in ninth grade. His/her curriculum differs somewhat from that of a Sixie, and follows the "B" path which may include differences in both Latin, Math and modern language requirements.
Censure	Disciplinary consequence given by a member of the administration; students receive an F in conduct for the term and three days of detention.
Class I,II,III,IV,V,VI	members of Class I are seniors; members of Class VI are sixies (q.v.)
CLD	Center for Leadership Development; provides professional development for BPS teachers

Clusters	groups of teachers who share the same students; common in grades 7 and 8
College Resource Center (CRC)	Room where students go to research college options. In Junior Year, students take a nine-session program to begin their search and learn about the college application process. Mr. Giordano is the administrator.
Course Outline	syllabus; a list of what is to be learned in a subject, course, or year
Court Street	(26) Court St. is the address of the BPS headquarters. The Superintendent, her deputies, and other administrative departments have their offices located here.
CP	constructively present; approved student absence usually for school business (ex. field trip)
CWPC	Citywide Parents Council
Daily Bulletin	list of announcements published by the Main Office daily and emailed to parents on the listserv
Declamation	public speaking which is a required part of the BLS curriculum
Dining Hall	Cafeteria
DESE	Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (formerly DOE, Dep't of Education)
ELL	English Language Learner
ESL	English as a Second Language
ETF	Educational Team Facilitator. Representative from Unified Student Services (a BPS department) who coordinates a Team Meeting (q.v.) that may result in an IEP (q.v.) being written and services being started to address a student's special needs.
Floor Master	teacher who handles middle level discipline on a designated floor
Formative Assessment	assessments given by teachers several times during the year to chart a student's progress (contrast Summative Assessment)
FOA	Friends of the Arts: a parent organization supporting the Arts at BLS
FCC	Friends of Chinese Culture: a parent organization sharing Chinese culture with BLS families
FOS	Friends of Science: a parent organization supporting Science at BLS
Friends of BLS Crew	parent organization supporting BLS girls' crew team
Friends of BLS Soccer	parent organization supporting boys' and girls' soccer at BLS
Grade Level Team	teachers from the same grade who meet regularly to plan and look at student work (see Clusters)
Ground Floor	bottom/basement floor
Head Master	principal or CEO of a school
Home and School Association	parent group responsible for organizing events, fundraising for scholarships and student needs, recruiting volunteers, and researching grants
IEP	Individualized Education Program, plans developed by teachers, SPED representatives, school administrators, parents/guardians, students and others for students with special needs
ILT	Instructional Leadership Team, planning team composed of teachers, coaches, staff, principal/headmaster and parent liaison
ISEE	entrance exam for BLS, BLA and O'Bryant School, which are the BPS' three "exam schools"
LEP/ELL	Students with Limited English Proficiency, also called English language learners (ELL) are students who do not speak English or whose native language is not English, and who are not yet able to do ordinary schoolwork in English.

Latin American Parent Association	Parent organization that provides support for Latino parents
Master	Faculty member, teacher
MBTA	Mass Bay Transportation Authority, aka the “T”
MCAS	Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, a (summative) state test created by DESE. Certain MCAS tests must be passed in order to graduate from high school.
McCarthy Institute	umbrella term for “Saturday Success School” and “After-school Tutoring”
MCPC	Multi-lingual Communications and Placement Center. Provides information, support, and advocacy for parents with bilingual and non-English speaking students
Misdemeanor	disciplinary notation assigned by a teacher or administrator that lowers a student’s conduct grade
Music Night	annual spring (usually May) celebration with performances by student musical groups/ensembles
Networking	communicating with peers
NHS	National Honor Society. The Faculty Council selects juniors and seniors based on exemplary scholarship, leadership, service, and character.
OSO	Optimizing Student Outcomes – a subcommittee of the SSC focusing on the recruitment and retention of students from underrepresented schools/communities
Parking Log	binder in the Main Office for guests to write down their temporary parking spot
Parent Email Notices	parents sign up on BLS website to receive the important emails
PIC	Private Industry Council. The PIC office is inside the College Resource Center (q.v.), and assists students-in finding summer or other jobs.
Praefect	senior assigned a school-based community service project (e.g., work in Main Office)
Prize Night	annual scholarship awards event for seniors
Program Directors	administrators who oversee content-based departments, aka department heads
Progress Report	Student grade reports published midway through each term esp. for students in danger of failing
PSAT	Preliminary SAT used as basis for National Merit Scholarships when taken in Junior Year
THE REGISTER	student-published magazine at BLS
TAG	Talented and Gifted program
Tardy Detention	morning detention held for students who were late to school the previous day
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test, aka the “College Boards”
SAT II	SAT in specific subject matters (i.e., World History, French etc.)
Saturday Success School	aka the “McCarthy Institute”
Seevak Room	conference room located on the third floor
Senior Week	full week in early June dedicated to senior events and celebrations
Sixie	BLS student in seventh grade, so named because (s)he has six years of school to go through at BLS.
SMART Goals	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely goals
SPC	School Parent Council - Every parent/guardian of a member. Monthly meetings held the 2nd Tuesday of the month.
SPED	Special Education
SSC	School Site Council, a governing body composed of teachers, parents, and

	school administrators, which helps to manage the school. Monthly meetings usually last Monday of the month.
SSC	Student Support Coordinator, member of the guidance team
SST	Student Support Team, composed of teachers, administrators and staff to assess students identified as at-risk and propose interventions
Standards	concepts and skills children should be able to master; set for each grade and subject area
Student Handbook	given annually to each student; includes the Code of Discipline, etc. and can be found in the front of the students' agenda books
Summative Assessment	assessments done at the end of a particular learning cycle by the state or federal education departments (contrast formative assessment)
Swimming Pool	don't believe it, there isn't one
SY	school year
Syllabus	a list of what is to be learned or produced in a subject, course, or year
Team Meeting	A gathering of people relevant to the determination of what, if any, services are appropriate to address a student's special needs. Generally the participants include parents/guardians, ETF, the school's SPED coordinator, teachers, school administrators, clinicians or other consultants, and others
Visitors' Parking	Two reserved spaces at front of school. Also, <u>after 8:00 am</u> , empty spaces in the parking lots; sign the Parking Log in the Main Office, noting the space number and your license plate.
WSIP	Whole School Improvement Plan

Email suggestions for additional terms to blscommunication@gmail.com

A Message from the BLS Health Office

Welcome to the 2010-2011 school year. We hope you are returning from a restful and healthy summer. Important information is listed below. ***PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!***

HEALTH ISSUES: Please notify the nurses of all health issues *at the beginning of the school year and as they occur*. It is very important for us to have medical documentation of diagnoses such as diabetes, asthma, life-threatening allergies, cancer, hearing or vision loss, seizure disorders, attention deficit disorders, Asperger's, etc... We will notify your child's 10/11 teachers of these issues at your request. Please also notify us in advance of scheduled surgery and upon your child's return to school due to absence from extended illnesses.

HEALTH OFFICE EMERGENCY CARDS: (The emergency sheet distributed on the first day of school) Every student must have one of these on file **in the Health Room**. Please fill it out and return it as soon as possible. This information is important in case of illness, emergency, or dismissal from school. Please also call us to update/change any information as it occurs.

TAKING MEDICATIONS IN SCHOOL: If you want your child to receive approved over-the-counter medications in school, please notify us in writing. Prescription medicines required during the school day must have a doctor's order along with parent's signature. All medications are stored in a locked cabinet and administered under the nurses' supervision.

(Students with doctor's orders to carry inhalers or epi-pens must notify the nurses when medication is needed in school.)

Please note that students are responsible for picking up their unused medication *at the end of the school year*. All remaining medication is discarded.

MEDICAL WAIVERS/ELEVATOR KEY: A doctor's note is required when applying for a medical waiver or requesting temporary use of an elevator key. (*\$20 Deposit required for key*).

(See attendance waiver procedures in the Student Handbook/Agenda)

SPORTS CLEARANCE PROCEDURE: Any student wishing to participate in a sport/team must have a yearly physical exam on file in the Health Room. Students obtain a sports clearance form from the nurses. Parents then complete and sign the clearance form and give it to the coach. **Students do NOT give physical exams to the coaches-only clearance forms.**

Thank you for your cooperation and continued support. Please feel free to call us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Patricia Kenney, RN

Ellen Moy-Maneikis, RN

Kimberly Brogan-Healy, RN

Phone: 617-635-7881

Fax: 617-635-1581

Special Education @ BLS

If your child is entering Boston Latin School with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Accommodation Plan in place, please ensure that the Student Service Coordinator at BLS is aware of your child prior to the beginning of the school year to expedite appropriate implementation of accommodations and/or services. The BLS Student Service Coordinator is William Murray. X128, wmurray4@boston.k12.ma.us).

How can parents know if their child needs and is eligible for Special Education services?

If you suspect that your child has difficulties that are preventing him/her from either accessing the curriculum or making effective progress in the regular education curriculum, you have the right to request an evaluation to determine eligibility for specialized instruction or an accommodation plan. You should, however, always begin by making your concerns known to the teacher in the class where your child is struggling. At the same time you may request a multidisciplinary evaluation by writing a letter of request and noting your specific concerns to the Student Support Services Coordinator located in the Guidance Office

The coordinator will see that all school-based requests are handled according to the established timelines/guidelines. Parental Rights Brochures are available through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/>. You may also call program Quality Assurance at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education DESE at 781-338-3700. A child's right to special education and/or accommodations is mandated by state and federal education law as well as civil rights laws

Communications at Boston Latin School

How to Keep In Touch and Informed

www.bls.org is the official website of Latin School for the BLS community (students, faculty, parents and alumni). It's your key to essential information about BLS; it will enhance your ability to receive time-sensitive information from the school; and it will facilitate your ability to participate in parental associations and volunteer activities. **You must login in order to access parent specific information and receive important school notices.**

New BLS parents must wait for their accounts to be created before they can login. For now, all important information will be posted at the www.bls.org.

As soon as you login successfully, click the My Profile button in the left navigation and enter your email address in Internet Information to receive Daily Announcements, parent newsletters and important updates!

- If you are an alumna/us of BLS, you should follow the directions on the BLSA Community page!
- If you need help, simply email BLSLoginHelp@gmail.com. Be sure to include your name and student's name and ID in order to get help!
- Make blsa@pushpage.com an Approved Sender ... Don't let any messages fall victim to Spam or Junk Mail filters. Make sure that all e-Updates reach your inbox.

The BLS "Village" is an unofficial list by which parents, students and staff can communicate. The Village limits its discussions to matters relating to BLS. Village members communicate with each other respectfully and refrain from using the site for generalized discussion, political or otherwise. To join, register with the Village caretaker Miles Fidelman at mfidelman@meetinghouse.net. Give your name, e-mail address and connection with the school.

The Communications Sub-Committee of the School Site Council/School Parent Council is actively engaged in finding ways to improve communications between BLS and parents. If you have questions about communications at BLS, email the committee at blscommunication@gmail.com.

BLS Staff and Faculty E-Mails are listed on www.bls.org. For Assistant Head Masters, see "About Us →Administration;" for Guidance Counselors see "Support Services→Guidance Overview;" and for faculty see "Academics→Programs and search the appropriate Department. If you have a problem, see What Parents Need to Know, Getting Answers and Problems Solved.

Participation in Parent Organizations is one of the best ways to receive information from BLS administration and other parents – person to person. Parent organizations are School Parent Council, School Site Council, Home & School, Black Parent Assn., Latin Parent Association, Friends of Chinese Culture, Asian Parent Association, Friends of Science, Friends of BLS Crew and Friends of Soccer.

The Sixie Guide to Excellence at BLS A Guide For Students And Parents As They Transition Into The Boston Latin School Community

by Rachel Skerritt BLS Alumna, ex-master and now
Chief of Staff for the Boston Public Schools

Congratulations! You are now among the newest members of the Boston Latin School community. While this is an exciting time, you might also be feeling nervous and anxious about what your sixie year will be like (sixie is another word for 7th grader, meaning that you have six years left at BLS). This is perfectly natural. Yes, seventh grade will be different from what you're used to. But that doesn't mean you can't handle it!

The fact that you were accepted to BLS means that you have the ability to succeed here academically. But it's not going to be easy. Maybe you did well at your previous schools without even trying. Here, that won't be the case. However, if you're willing to work hard and put in your best effort, sixie year will be fun and enriching.

This pamphlet is designed to help you learn a few basic skills that will make success more achievable in all of your academic subjects. Most seventh graders have the most trouble with managing their time and staying organized. Maybe you've never had so much homework before. Maybe you've never had to take notes before. Don't worry – many students have stood in your shoes and they've done just fine. Use this guide as a resource whenever you need it.

The Academic Year

Boston Latin's calendar is a bit different from many other schools. While most schools have four academic terms, BLS has five. This means that there are five report cards issued every year, with the fifth one being mailed to your home. Each term is only about two months long, so there is no time for slacking off. Around mid-term, you can expect progress reports from your teachers. Some teachers give progress reports to all students, while others only give them to students at academic risk (that's why progress reports are often called "warning notices"). At the end of the year, the grades from all five terms are averaged in each subject to determine your final grade. This is what stays on your transcript, and also determines whether you've passed the course.

Class VI Curriculum

BLS seventh graders take five major subjects: Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and Latin. In

addition to these, there are electives such as Music, Physical Education, and Art, that meet less often. How in the world are you going to balance all of these classes? Keep reading and find out! Here is a bit of information on each major academic course:

English: In Class VI, students take two English courses: Reading and Writing. In the Reading course, students work to develop skill as close, analytical readers; keen, active listeners; effective writers and speakers; skilled presenters; and critical thinkers. The Writing course is designed to help students become lifelong writers. With a strong grounding in the study of the parts of speech, the elements of a sentence, and the study of syntax, students will learn a variety of skills, from note taking to writing in a number of genres. The key to succeeding in English is very simple: READ! There is no way that you can perform to the best of your ability if you do not keep up with the books that the class is reading.

In addition, you will have a public speaking activity three times a year called Declamation. This requires you to memorize a selection (poem or speech) and recite it in front of the class. Success in Enrichment relies on your commitment to reading the novels assigned, as well as working to improve your writing skills. Success in Declamation requires preparation way in advance and lots of practice.

Math: Seventh grade mathematics covers pre-algebra and a few early topics in Algebra I. It is important to have a foundation in fractions, decimals, and percents before the year even begins. Some of you may not have covered these topics very well at your previous schools. You should get help AS SOON as you realize that you may be behind. Calculators are also needed later in the year (they should have a fraction key). Aside from getting help early on, you should do homework problems every night and turn in math projects on time.

Science: Topics in science include the solar system, weather, the earth's surface, and rocks. Different science teachers will focus on different aspects of earth science. However, the one thing that all science teachers require is a great deal of effort. Here is a class where you have a lot of power over your grade. In addition to tests, there are experiments and projects that weigh a great deal into your final average. The most important of these assignments is the final science project. You should begin your science project as early as you can, put a lot of effort into research, and make sure that the actual visual aids are attractive.

If you do not do a science project, it is very likely that you won't pass science for the year.

Latin: For some of you, this will be your first experience with a foreign language. Latin is different from other languages that you will take in the future because it is not spoken anymore. First year Latin involves learning the endings of nouns and verbs, and also learning hundreds of vocabulary words. Here's the good news: Latin is largely memorization. If you devote your time to memorizing the correct forms of Latin words, the rest of your years in Latin class will be a breeze. Latin also covers a lot of the same topics you will address in English grammar. So if you know this is not a strong area for you, it's important to get help right away.

This is Hard Now What?

Chances are that you will enjoy certain subjects more than others. It is also likely that you will find some subjects easier than others. So what do you do when you realize that you're confused or lost? Here are a few options:

Ask Questions In Class

If you usually perform well in a certain subject, but find yourself puzzled one day in class, don't stay silent! If you don't understand a math problem, don't assume that you'll figure it out on your own. Ask the teacher about the specific area where you became confused. You could also request that the teacher do another problem similar to the one that you didn't understand. Guess what else? There are probably at least five other students who had the same question but were too scared to ask.

Talk To Your Teacher After Class

You should always let your teacher know when you're having trouble. Find a few moments to talk to a teacher one-on-one about the problems you're having. Different teachers will suggest different solutions. Some might work with you after school or during a study period. Others might recommend a tutor or after-school program. No matter what they suggest, it's always good to communicate with them. It shows that you care about your academic success, and teachers appreciate that.

Get a Tutor!

BLS has after-school help for any and all academic subjects. After school, there are teachers and upperclassmen who can help you with that difficult Latin translation or that tough science question. There is also a program called Saturday Success School, where you can get intensive help in up to three academic subjects on Saturday mornings. After school tutoring is on a walk-in basis (meaning that

you can come whenever you need help), while there is a commitment to stay in Saturday School for the whole academic year. Neither of these programs should be thought of as punishments. These are offered to make life at BLS easier for you. If you are interested in getting extra help, see your guidance counselor.

All Right. I'm Doing Pretty Well, But How Do I Get an "A"?

This is a really tough question because every teacher has different requirements for earning an "A" in his/her course. But there are certain rules that you can count on across the board. First, there is no way you'll get an "A" without doing homework every night. Second, you can not get "A's" by doing the same level of work that you do in September. For example, if an English teacher offers suggestions on an essay that you wrote, you should make those changes on your next essay. Third, don't pass up the "freebies" that teachers give, such as extra credit, fun/creative projects, and easy quizzes. Those are grade-boosting opportunities!

Here are specific areas that you'll need to master to do your best at BLS:

Time Management

Latin School gives an average of three hours of homework a night. Keep the word "average" in mind. This means that some nights you'll have more, and some nights you'll have less. You'll be a lot less stressed if you leave three hours in your schedule every day for homework, even if you only have about 40 minutes of written work.

On nights that you don't have that much to do, study anyway: Review your Latin vocabulary; do some work on the science project due next month; read a chapter in the novel you're discussing in English class.

On the other hand, there will be some nights where you'll think that all of your teachers got together and plotted to make your life miserable. It may seem like everyone decided to give a ton of homework on the same day. Use your study periods to get a head start on work DUE THE NEXT DAY. Never rely on a study period to get work finished that is due that same day. You may have an unexpected workshop that may cancel your study period, or the assignment may take longer than you expected.

Taking Notes

Some teachers may require you to take notes, while in other classes it will be optional. But unless you have supernatural powers of

memorization, **TAKING NOTES IS ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA**. But what do you write down? It depends on the subject and on the style of test given by the specific teacher. For example, in an English class where you may have essay tests, it would be a good idea to take notes on the discussion topics that are brought up in class. In a science class where you're learning about various types of rocks, you would want to write down what makes one rock different from the other. In Latin class, you may copy down vocabulary or certain rules. In math, the best thing you can do is to copy down the examples that are done by the teacher in class. That way you can refer back to them when you're doing your homework.

Remember that notes aren't the same as reports or essays. You don't have to write in full sentences. And you shouldn't write in paragraphs. Space out different topics so everything is easy to find. Indent the next line if you're writing about a subtopic. For example:

Sixie Year

Five Major Subjects

English Reading and Writing – read the books on time!

Math – need to know fractions, decimals and percents

Science – work hard on projects

Latin – memorize!!!

See? You can record lots of important information without your hand falling off. It is a skill that gets better with time, so **PRACTICE!**

Test Taking

It's not easy to tell you how to take a test, because no two tests will ever be the same. But there are some rules of thumb. One is that you should look at the entire test before you begin. True story – one time a student took his math test in record time. He sat smiling for about a half hour while he waited for the other students to finish. When he got it back, he'd received a 40%! He didn't realize that the test continued onto the other side of the paper.

Another rule is that you should make sure that you follow directions given. If the teacher asks you to answer in full sentences, do so. If the test says to show all your work, show it. If it specifically says to write in pencil, don't use pen. **DON'T LOSE MAJOR POINTS BECAUSE OF CARELESS ERRORS.**

What if you're running out of time and you know you won't finish the test? Look to see if the teacher wrote down how many points each question was worth. If he/she did that, answer the questions that are worth

the most points. If you can't tell which question is the most important, try to get to as many as you can, especially if the teacher gives partial credit.

What if you're finished way before the end of the class? Lucky you! You have time to check all of your answers. If it's a math test, do the problems again. If it's a test where you have to write essays, proofread (that means to check your spelling, grammar, punctuation, and clarity of ideas).

Conduct

Yes, your behavior is closely linked to your academic success. Simply put, teachers are human beings. They try their hardest to be fair to their students, but a kid who is constantly being a pest in class is not going to get the benefit of the doubt when it comes to just about anything. Think about it - if two students have an 89.4% in a class, who is more likely to get an A- instead of a B+: the boy who participates and listens attentively, or the boy who passes notes in class every day?

At BLS, conduct grades are largely determined by the number of misdemeanor marks that you receive. Marks can be given for various reasons, such as talking in class, passing notes, or arriving to class late. They can also be given for things that don't really relate to your behavior, such as forgetting to cover a book. One or two misdemeanor marks equal a B in conduct. Three mean a C, four – D, five – F.

It's important to make a good impression from the beginning. It's not hard. Make smart choices and do what's expected. That doesn't mean that you should be as quiet as a church mouse. Make your presence known in class, but at times when it's appropriate. Remember, your teachers have the ability to write recommendations, nominate you for awards and special programs, and they talk to your parents and guardians! Show them your best.

Organization

Believe it or not, staying organized can be the difference between passing and failing a course. If you do your homework every night, but lose the worksheet before you can turn it in, you've wasted your time. Even if you're not a very neat person by nature, it's time to force yourself into gear, because it's going to make a huge difference.

Agenda Books

First and foremost, **YOUR AGENDA BOOK IS YOUR BEST FRIEND**. This book is given to every sixie for free at the beginning of the year.

Don't lose it! It has the school calendar, all the BLS school rules, a list of clubs and sports, and most importantly – space to write down your homework each night.

There are a few common mistakes that students make with their agenda books. One is that they write down the assignment, but they don't write down the subject. For example: pg. 365 Ex 1-2

What if you have two books that have page 365? You should definitely be more specific: English – grammar book pg. 365 Ex 1-2 IN NOTEBOOK This time, not only did the student add that the homework was for English class, but she noted some additional instructions that the teacher gave.

After the assignment is completed, put a small checkmark next to it to show that it's done. DO NOT CROSS OUT THE ENTIRE ASSIGNMENT. If you do that, then you're stuck with an Agenda book that has pages and pages of cross outs. Leave the pages readable in case you ever need to refer back to something you wrote.

Folders and Notebooks

Some teachers will give you specific requirements for the materials needed for their classes, such as binders and rulers. A lot of times, though, it is up to you to decide what supplies you need. It's a great idea to have a NOTEBOOK AND FOLDER FOR EACH ACADEMIC SUBJECT. Five subject notebooks are not a good idea at all. If one teacher wants to collect notebooks, you're in a bind because you can't separate them. With folders, it is a good idea to put assignments that have been corrected in one side of the folder, and assignments to turn in should go in the other side. It is important to go through these once each term to decide which papers you can leave at home.

Lockers

Believe it or not, locker routines can play a huge part in staying organized. Many students develop the bad habit of leaving important materials for class in their lockers by accident. There are ways to prevent this.

Set three times a day that you visit your locker, and keep this routine daily. The best times to visit are before homeroom, before lunch, and after school. When you're at your locker, ask yourself these questions: What classes do I have? What books, notebooks, and folders do I need? It is very helpful to keep a copy of your class schedule taped to the inside of your locker for easy reference.

If you do forget something in your locker, try to alert the teacher before class, and show them the forgotten assignment as soon as you possibly can (definitely that same school day).

Any Final Words of Wisdom?

Friends

One of the best things about Latin School is that it's full of all different kinds of kids with various interests from every neighborhood in Boston. Get to know them. Don't isolate yourself and talk to only the boys and girls who live near you, or with whom you went to elementary school. Talk to people in your classes. Learn about them. Learn from them. It's an education in itself.

Extracurricular Activities

It is difficult to manage your time as a sixie, but as you get more comfortable, investigate the many activities that are available to you after school. Sports, cultural clubs, and special interest groups exist by the truckload at BLS. It's a great way to unwind from a stressful day, and also a fabulous way to meet new people.

Be Yourself

The only person whom you need to impress is YOU! The only person with whom you're competing is YOU! Don't be angry when others perform better than you. Congratulate them, and they will do the same for you when it's your time to shine. Set goals for yourself and pat yourself on the back when you achieve them. In the meantime, support your peers and enjoy yourself.

Final Thoughts

The following comments were sent to The List by Donna O'Brien, a Boston school teacher and mother of a BLS student who graduated several years ago:

Hey everyone who reads this stuff: volunteer, volunteer, volunteer: It's about what you can do for the kids who can't get someone to help out. Bake the brownies, donate the donuts and throw the dough in to The BLS Home and School. It's a huge event in the future of our kids: So going into the home stretch, I'm going to tell you the lessons learned at Latin:

1. There are rules: you are at Latin.
2. There are standards: pay attention.
3. There is kindness: just look for it.
4. There is toughness: the dog ate my homework is not a good plan.
5. There is love: make sure all baggage is checked outside the front door.
6. There is compassion: sometimes the dog does eat the homework.
7. There is tenacity: staying up all night with your kid may have to happen.
8. There is joy: kids using all towels and eating you out of house and home is good.
9. There is depth: information about your kids is only as good as you give it.
10. There is passion: giving back is the only option.

Donna O'Brien, Latina Regnat.