

Celina Zhou

Ladue Horton Watkins High School | @laduepublications | laduepublications.com
Panorama Newsmagazine | Melodrama Literary Magazine | ID Specialty Magazine

Over the course of this school year, everyone on our various publications' staff, whether website, magazine, lit mag, or newsmagazine, has probably heard me complaining about design. Whether struggling to migrate from the 2024 program to the updated 2025 program, suffering through endless crashes and being forced to edit on top of PDFs, or being faced with the endlessly daunting task of formatting an exorbitantly long story across a page and two spreads, my vendetta against Adobe InDesign is Ladue Publications legend. And yet, my name continues to appear in the design credits of folios, and the dark red "Id" icon is pinned to my MacBook TaskBar; for all that I complain about design, I find myself circling back over and over again for the same reason — the power that visual storytelling holds.

This year, my second year on staff, I was given the opportunity to work as co-editor of Panorama's In-Depth section, which is consistently our centerspread and cover story, tackling sociopolitical issues with unique nuance and detail. Design has consistently been a priority of In-Depth in conjunction with the powerful stories we aim to write, and oftentimes I have worked on both story and design in a single issue, and conducted interviews even when I didn't work on the story proper, allowing me to develop a nuanced understanding of the content I'm working with, both story and design. As a result, much of my work in design focuses on the synthesis of visual and verbal storytelling, making our often thematically complex and uniquely long stories more accessible through hierarchy, infographic, color and shape.

In addition, I worked as Junior Editor-in-Chief of our literary magazine, the Melodrama, and produced content for our specialty magazine, ID, which each provide in their own right unique opportunity. Designers on Melodrama never produce content of our own — every element on the page is a collage of the student artwork and writing that we receive through an open submissions form, and ID centers photography as its primary design element, producing more visually lush and diversified design.

Throughout my tenure on staff, design has been something that has consistently forced me to challenge myself, evaluate and reevaluate my own mindset and skills, problem-solve through difficult situations, act under pressure, and pick myself up from failure, and for all that I complain about it, I am endlessly grateful. Next year, I will have the privilege of continuing to work with design among other responsibilities as Co-Executive Editor-in-Chief of Ladue Media, and I look forward to continuing on this journey.



LADUE HORTON WATKINS HIGH SCHOOL
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On the Table

PG. 19 - 23

As a result of incoming political
leadership, bills impacting education
emerge on state and federal levels

On the Table

Due to new political leadership, bills impacting education emerge on state and federal levels

By Alzhraa Mahmoud

In-Depth Editor

By Amelie Lock

Staff

We are in danger of producing an educated proletariat ... That's dynamite!" These were the words of Roger A. Freeman, a key educational adviser to Ronald Reagan, defending the decision to shut down several public universities in California following student protests in 1970. His statement reflects a historical fear — and at times, hope — among the powerful: that education, when accessible to the masses, becomes a tool for reshaping society. Throughout history, efforts to control education have emerged in various forms — from defunding public schools to censoring curricula — all in an attempt to dictate who gets to learn and who gets to lead.

As new leadership enters office, bills that can determine the fate of the modern education system are on constant watch for public districts nationwide. Many states have implemented voucher programs, diverting funding to private and religious schools, and some have shown support for the dissolution of the Department of Education as a whole.

Today, new legislation and the expanding school choice movement present a double-edged sword. Certain components could potentially expand educational opportunities, while others could divert resources and limit access. Ultimately, the battle over education remains as much about money as it is about learning.

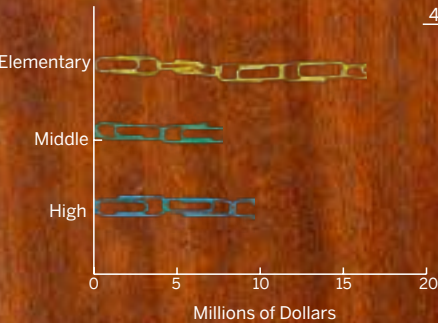
Photo by Vincent Hsiao

Report Card

Panorama surveyed 123 students Feb. 27

Breaking down the district's budget

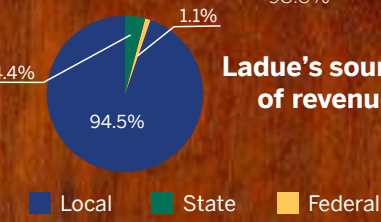
The allocation of Ladue School District's funds



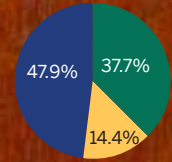
Does Ladue have enough funding for essentials?



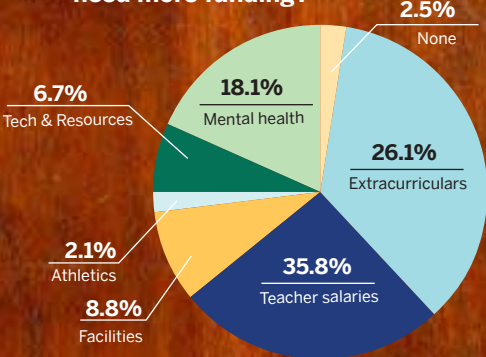
Ladue's sources of revenue



State average sources of revenue



What areas of Ladue need more funding?



On the Dime

During the infancy of the United States, children were educated through a mix of haphazard, disjointed methods. It wasn't until the 1830s that Massachusetts legislator Horace Mann advocated for state-funded schools, believing education would create moral and productive citizens, that public schooling became the norm.

"An educated public serves two functions," instructional coach Rebecca Rubin-Schlanksy said. "First, [it] is vital for a healthy democracy — if we are to disagree, we cannot do that from a place of ignorance. Second, [it] is an embodiment of our government's responsibility to its citizenry to protect inalienable rights."

Before the Civil War, public school funding came from taxes on liquor, theatre and lotteries. As the need for an educated workforce grew, lawmakers sought more stable funding. Today, public schools are funded by federal, state and local sources, with local property taxes providing the most stable revenue. In Missouri, which ranks 49th in state funding, this instability worsens dispari-

MORE TO KNOW

55.9%

of students believe the main goal of their education is career preparation and

18.6%

believe it's exploring interests and passions, while

25.4%

of students' main goal is developing critical thinking skills.

CURIOUS? Scan to read and listen to the full story



Panorama surveyed 123 students Feb. 27

ties between wealthy and low-income communities.

"[Some] districts that don't have a robust tax base rely on the state, and the expenditure per pupil is then much lower," social studies teacher Meg Kaupp said.

Per pupil expenditure is calculated by dividing a district's total spending by its student population. However, funding allocation is more complex. Missouri's school funding formula centers on the state adequacy target, set at \$6,375 in 2006 as the minimum cost for quality education. Two decades later, education costs have nearly doubled, but the SAT remains unchanged.

"The governor said '[The formula is] broken,' [and] I agree," assistant superintendent for business & finance Geoff Macy said. "But unless they put more money into [it], it's always going to be the same amount, just redistributed."

On the Floor

Recently, various levels of government are reassessing how funding is spent and distributed. Public school funding is often on the chopping block in order to free

up cash for the individual's benefit. Missouri Gov. Mike Kehoe introduced an updated budget that falls \$300 million short of funding the formula after claiming that he is not seeing "acceptable" results. At Ladue, students would be impacted by such policies.

"Income [tax reductions] would impact our transportation," Geoff Macy said. "Right now we receive approximately a million dollars to support transportation. The first line item the governor cuts is transportation. So if income tax is reduced, the most immediate impact to us would be a reduction in [those] revenues."

Residential property taxes make up a large percent of the district's revenue, and the assessment value rate lies at 19%. Proposed Senate Bill 87 would decrease this assessment value to 17%, resulting in a 10.5% decrease in property tax, ultimately prompting a 9.86% drop in revenue for the district.

"There is a desire to cut property taxes or cap them," Phillys Pasley, director of the Missouri Arts Alliance for Education, said. "The people who are bringing this

about are operating under the belief that by putting more dollars into each individual's pocket, the benefits are going to outweigh the programs that will be cut."

In just the first few months of 2025, Missouri lawmakers have filed over 100 bills impacting education. While current bills like Senate Bill 87 raise a broad concern due to their direct impact, all bills that could affect education are on watch for the school board and administration.

"It's that old fable of 'The boy who cried wolf' [with a new bill]. Our families get panicked, then it never even gets out of [committee]. We don't want to overwhelm our community, but want to let them know."

Jim Wipke

Superintendent

A recent headliner has been House Bill 711, which addresses open enrollment. It would allow students to travel outside of their designated district, expanding educational opportunities. The counterargument is that this could create an entirely new point of financial contention for low income public schools.

"So, the kids that can leave, leave, and then what does it leave behind in terms of finances? Their money is leaving that district as well," Wipke said. "You're essentially causing a situation where districts that are already struggling will probably collapse."

On the Move

As legislation increasingly focuses on the possibility of ex-

panding school choice, many see charter schools as alternatives amid concerns over an allegedly ineffective public education system. Charter schools are free, publicly funded institutions that operate independently, allowing for greater experimentation. They can receive funding from private entities, leading to the belief that they will be able to level the playing field for kids in less affluent areas.

"School choice being a matter of fairness is an oxymoron," Calvinno Hammerman (10) said. "Also, everyone already has a choice. In current proposals, school choice legislation would be applicable for people who could have already afforded private school. The possible mixing of state funds in private religious schools is not fair."

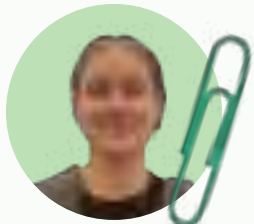
Despite critiques, Jesse Dixon, a partner at the Opportunity Trust, a St. Louis nonprofit supporting charter schools, believes this model isn't as harmful as some claim it to be.

"Charter [schools] are generally no better or worse than district schools," Dixon said. "We end up spending quite a bit of money on charter schools in my organization, because the district isn't getting better in St. Louis City. If we want better educational outcomes for our kids, we can't influence the elected board of the district. With charters, we can decide tomorrow if we want to do something new."

The growth of charters, with enrollment increasing by nearly 400,000 students in the last five years, often comes at a cost to local public schools. With limited budgets and declining enrollment partly as a result of charters, public schools risk losing resources, funding and teachers.

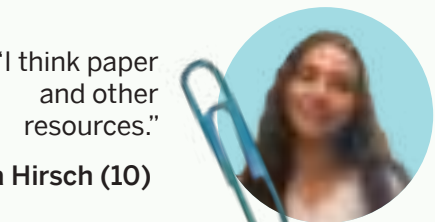
"The single loudest anti-charter voice is the teacher unions," Dixon said. "For them, every char-

What Do You Think the School District Spends the Most Money On?



"I think it's electricity."

Delaney Brinker (12)



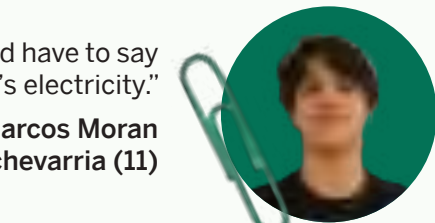
"I think paper and other resources."

Betina Hirsch (10)



"[It's] probably infrastructure."

Roger Tang (9)



"I'd have to say it's electricity."

Marcos Moran Echevarria (11)



"Probably the chunky signs that are everywhere above the doors."

Mimi Tabscott (10)

Funding Formula

Public school funds allocation formula, broken down

Weighted Average Daily Attendance:

The higher the average attendance, the more funding a school district is capable of receiving.

X

State Adequacy Target:

The averaged target amount of funding that the state will try to provide the schools with.

X

Dollar Value Modifier:

This adjusts the funding based on the cost of living in an area. The higher, the more funding, and the lower, the less funding.

-

Local Effort:

The contribution to the district from local taxes. This can be dependent on property value changes and district fines.

=

State Funding

-ter school that opens and fills 300 seats means fewer seats in district schools. They argue that charter schools hurt districts, but they also create competition that compels districts to improve.”

The argument that competition from charter schools translates to improved public districts is a common one. The most recent study to reinforce these claims comes from Brown University in 2024 which sampled charters in 12 districts in Florida as well as their public schools, ultimately finding that charter school presence improved reading scores and absenteeism in their respective public districts. However, limited research and the lack of safety guards for students remaining in districts still leave uncertainty.

“In my opinion, most, not all, but most charter schools don’t have a solid plan for longevity. And in my opinion, I would consider it a little bit of a money grab.”

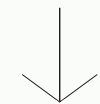
Jim Wipke
Superintendent

The latest national study on charters from Stanford University has found that the typical charter student had reading gains that outpaced their peers in the public schools they would have attended. However, the fact remains that a quarter of charter schools close within their first five years.

“If the argument is we can turn charter schools faster, why do you need to turn a school that you just started?” Wipke said. “I don’t understand why we need to change something when we just

Students weigh in on budgets and funding

ON THE BOOKS



More to Know

33.9% of students believe public school teacher salaries in Missouri are **far too low** and

38.8% believe public school teacher salaries are **slightly too low**.

1 in 4 students believe Ladue **does not** prioritize spending in ways that **most benefit students** while

1 in 5 report that budget constraints have directly affected their experience at school.

Panorama surveyed 123 students Feb. 27

got started. If we are constantly innovating, then what are we getting done?”

On the Ground

While many adults devote their career to advocating for equitable access to education, student voices provide a personalized perspective when having conversations with state and federal legislators.

“I walk into a state representative’s office and I say my part and give my information, and the response is ‘Uh huh,’” Pasley said. “If a student walks into that same office, with the same message, they hear it completely differently. Student voices are incredibly powerful, especially when that student is sharing information from their lived experience.”

While it may be easy to become despondent and remain ignorant to issues relating to the subsistence of the education system, nothing will change if student’s stories go untold.

“I got involved in advocacy because I care about the world around me and I have a lot of opinions on what’s happening in the world,” Hammerman said. “I learned at a young age that change happens when you talk to people in power, and that’s exactly what advocacy is.”

The accessibility of education is ultimately a determinant of humanity’s future and of each student’s future. Advocating for education allows young people to take control of their lives.

“Not every [student] feels comfortable going up to an adult and saying ‘Here’s what you need to do, here’s why,’” Pasley said. “When students become more aware of the structures in place and the role they can play, everybody wins. They develop the skills to ask for what they want, and be able to defend it.”

Regional Budgeting

The Missouri Board of Education requested **\$500 million** to meet adequacy targets in 2026.

Only **\$200 million** is provided in Gov. Mike Kehoe’s proposed budget.

Inflation rates rose **65%** since 2020

while state target spending per student only rose **17%.**

\$23,299 per student

Ladue spends well above the median of \$14,000 for spending per student in the St. Louis area.

\$19,275 per student

Saint Louis Public Schools

\$12,068 per student

Riverview Gardens

Paper Trail

Examining regional education funding

Missouri education budget allocation

2015-24, percent of general revenue

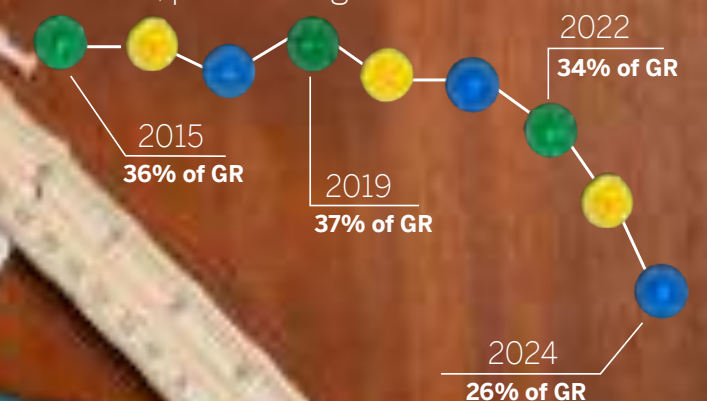
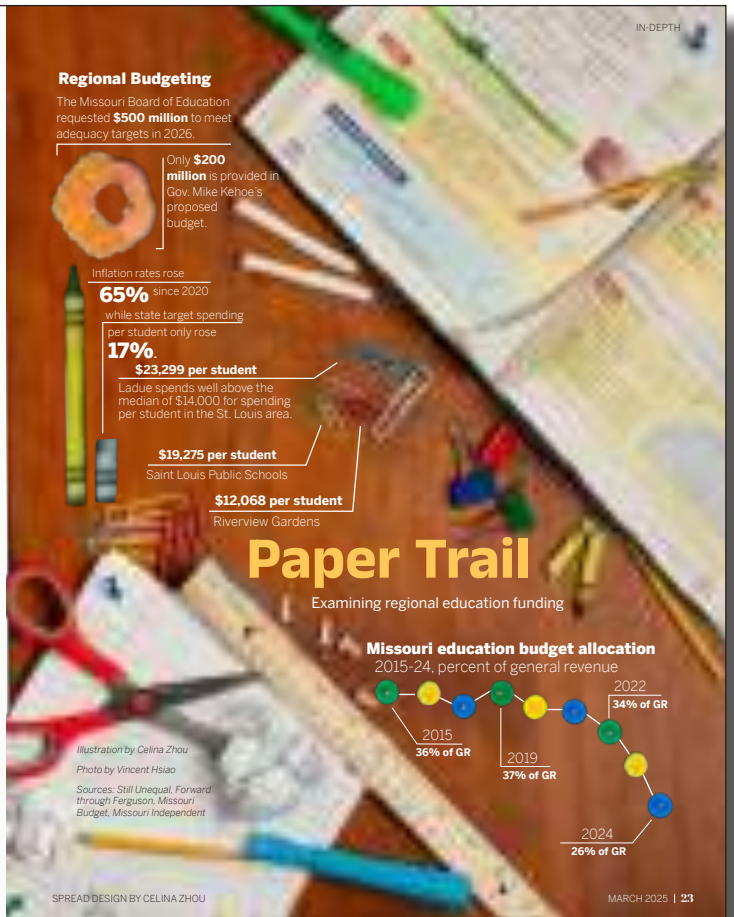
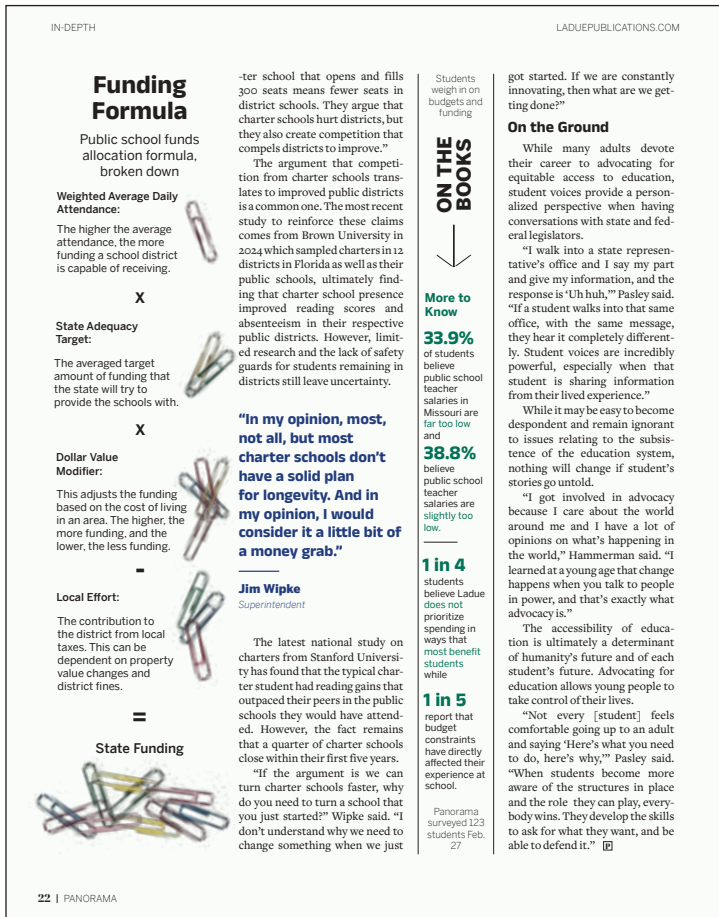


Illustration by Celina Zhou

Photo by Vincent Hsiao

Sources: Still Unequal, Forward through Ferguson, Missouri Budget, Missouri Independent



“On the Table”

This is an example of a quintessential “In-Depth package,” consisting of our newsmagazine’s front cover, a section-specific cover, and two spreads that contain both story and infographic elements. I designed both covers and the second spread, and co-designed the first spread with one of my staffers. Because the story focused on attacks on public education and state- and federal-level cuts to school funding, design motifs focused on school supplies, while the section cover and second spread infographic acted as mirror images of order and disorder, a progression mirrored in the chalk photography on the front cover.

At the Crossroads

The government’s ability to make change is called into question during periods of transition

By Alzhraa Mahmoud & Celina Zhou
In-Depth Editors

In arenas across the country, crowds rally; the air is heavy with heat and breath, the warmth of bodies close together with anticipation, and the skyline is crowded with signs. This, here and now, with these people and their voices pressing into a feverish pitch. To them, this is where the difference is made. They say, “This is history in the making.”

Two miles down the street, a local candidate knocks on doors. Most remain closed, but in their mind, every opened door is a spark of hope. Next door, a teenager rants in a group chat with friends about the broken system.

The heart of politics is this — change. Government is often seen as the only way to make change, but in the midst of an election, many have begun to stray from this path, believing that progress can only come from working outside the system or rebuilding it. Today, the power of politics is front and center, raising a crucial question: Does the system work — and, if not, how do we fix it?

Problems in Politics

The current government, though longstanding, is far from immune to problems. “It’s hard for voters that want to stay informed to find coverage of things that are happening locally,” Missouri State Senator Tracy McCreery said. “A lot of the trusted newspapers and radio stations

By Isaac Zelinske
Staff

District 1

Oakville, Mehlville, Webster Groves	US House Incumbent Cori Bush
State Senator Incumbent Doug Beck (D)	US House Candidates Wesley Bell (D) Andrew Jones Jr. (R) Blake Ashby (B) Don Fitz (G) Rochelle Riggins (L)
State Senator Candidate Robert Crump (R)	

Representative Ann Wagner of the **second congressional district** has been noted for her changing position on **former President Donald Trump**. Having previously both endorsed and denounced him, she currently **endorses** him.

District 2

Western St. Charles	US House Incumbent Ann Wagner
State Senator Incumbent Nick Schroer (R)	US House Candidates Ray Hartmann (D) Shelby Davis (G) Brandon Daugherty (L)
State Senator Candidate N/A	

District 4

Clayton, Brentwood, Richmond Heights	US House Incumbent Cori Bush
State Senator Incumbent Karla May (D)	US House Candidates Wesley Bell (D) Andrew Jones Jr. (R) Blake Ashby (B) Don Fitz (G) Rochelle Riggins (L)
State Senator Candidate N/A	

District 5

St. Louis City	US House Incumbent Cori Bush
State Senator Incumbent Steve Roberts (D)	US House Candidates Wesley Bell (D) Andrew Jones Jr. (R) Blake Ashby (B) Don Fitz (G) Rochelle Riggins (L)
State Senator Candidate Robert Vroman (R)	

District 13

Jennings, Bellefontaine, Florissant	State Senator Candidate N/A
State Senator Incumbent Angela Mosley (D)	US House Candidates Bethany Mann (D) Bob Onder (R) William Hastings (G) Jordan Rowden (L)
US House Incumbent Blaine Luetkemeyer	

District 14

Olivette, University City, Ferguson, Edmunton, Hazelwood	US House Incumbent Ann Wagner (R)
State Senator Incumbent Brian Williams (D)	US House Candidates Ray Hartmann (D) Shelby Davis (G) Brandon Daugherty (L)
State Senator Candidate N/A	

District 15

Manchester, Ballwin, Chesterfield, Town & Country, Wildwood	US House Incumbent Ann Wagner (R)
State Senator Incumbent Andrew Koenig (R)	US House Candidates Ray Hartmann (D) Shelby Davis (G) Brandon Daugherty (L)
State Senator Candidates Joe Pereles (D) David Gregory (R) Jeff Coleman (L)	

Representative Cori Bush was defeated in the democratic primary of the **first congressional district** by **Wesley Bell**, supported by **\$8.5 million** in funds from **pro-Israel group AIPAC**.

District 23

Manchester, Ballwin, Chesterfield, Town & Country, Wildwood	US House Incumbent Ann Wagner (R)
State Senator Incumbent Andrew Koenig (R)	US House Candidates Ray Hartmann (D) Shelby Davis (G) Brandon Daugherty (L)
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District 24

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Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer, having been the U.S. House Representative for Missouri’s **third congressional district** since **2013**, chose **not to run for reelection in 2024**.

have suffered tough times financially, and have ended up cutting staff [and] reporters.”

According to a July 2024 Pew Research Center study, 17% of Americans between the ages of 30 and 49 often receive local political news from their local news station. Young people are especially vulnerable to this lack of coverage: only 12% of people aged 18 and 29 receive local political news. In addition, with local sources in decline, national platforms are often the only place where political news can be found, and those platforms have their own issues.

“They’re selling politics as a spectacle,” Jacob Barnes (12) said. “You’re buying opposition. You’re buying entertainment. Politics is based on consumption.”

Other sources of governmental flaws can lie in secrecy and internal corruption.

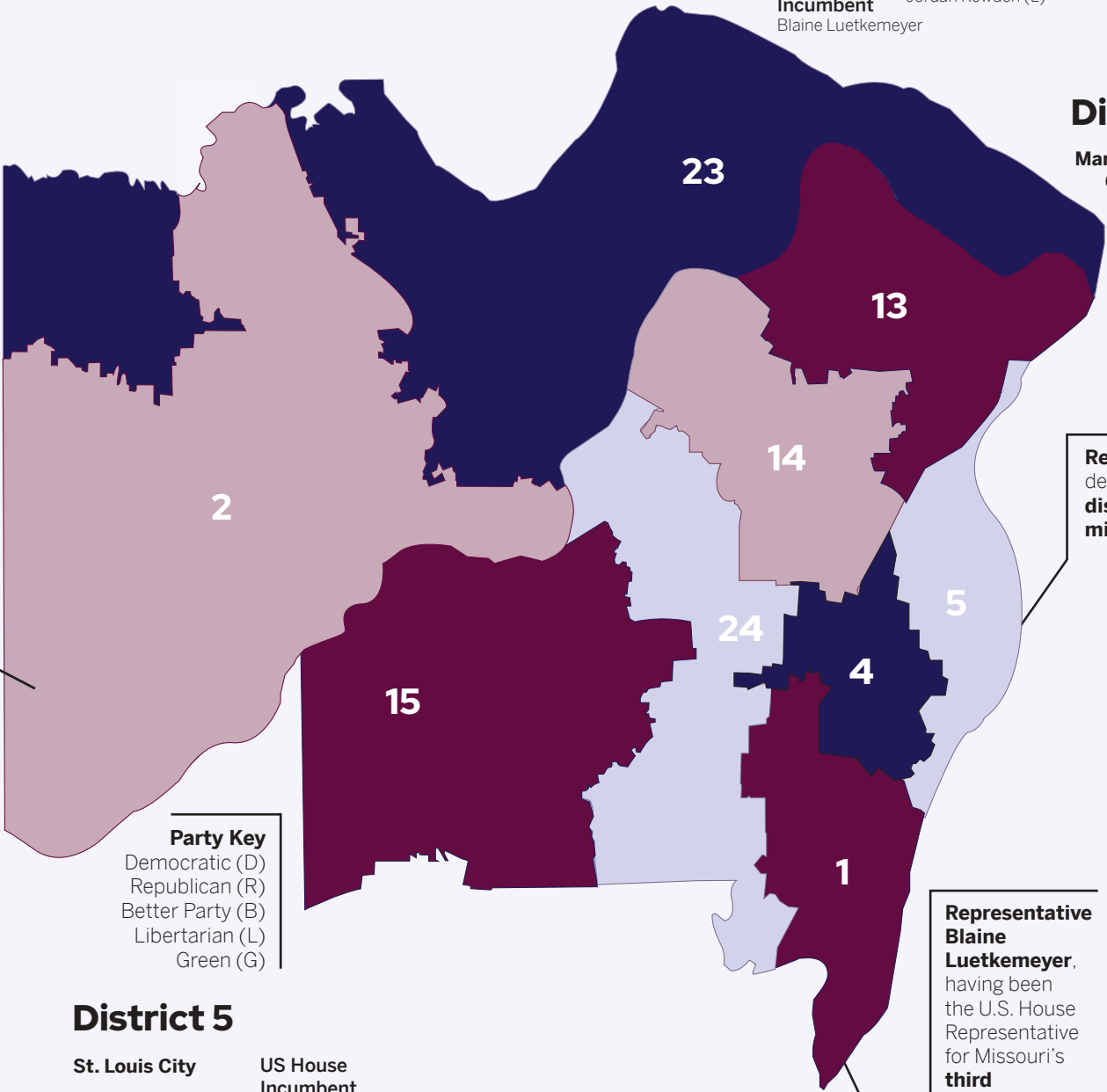
“Government isn’t necessarily corrupt, but the way [ours] runs has a lot of corruption,” Calvino Hamerman (10) said. “People go places to make deals. Are all these deals made by upstanding citizens? No, but that’s where real governing happens.”

Some are observing larger issues in government, bringing up the question: Are there flaws with the system’s setup, or is this government fundamentally flawed?

“The way that politics is [discussed] is dangerous with this huge emphasis on [how] the only way to get stuff done is through representatives,” Franklyn Yang (12) said. “A lot of representatives don’t represent our issues, and [they’re] pandering to people.”

In contrast, some students find the system to be something that must be worked within.

“Getting the people who share your views elected can help,” Hamerman said. “Find a congressperson who shares your views and get them elected.”



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Brandon Daugherty (L)

State Senator Candidate N/A

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Ladue in Focus

Students and staff reflect on politics, the election and the future

Describe the Election in One Word.



Mina F.

"Tense."



Jennifer H.

"Important."



Danielle C.

"Funny."



Shana B.

"Nail-biter."



Chloe L.

"Concerning."



Charles R.

"Polarized."



Emma L.

"Exciting."

By **Celina Zhou**
In-Depth Editor

One of the greatest strengths of democracy is giving people a voice, whether through voting, polling, rallies or protests. However, in the masses, the voice of a single person can be drowned out by the force of the people.

To discuss politics, Panorama created a focus group of students and staff. One of the questions we asked was, “Do you think your voice is heard in politics?”

Students reported a sense of voicelessness as minors, despite being drastically affected by politics. Staff described feeling neglected in Missouri, a deeply partisan state, as media hones in on swing states.

In a polarized world, the focus group spoke about their fears

stemming from national division, keeping an open mind and engaging with people across the political spectrum. From disagreements at the dinner table to anxieties during debates and fears about the future, all described a want to bridge these divisive gaps.

Some were frustrated with systems like the electoral college, the opacity of the political process and what they perceived as the self-serving tendencies of politicians, culminating in a general hesitance towards wholly trusting the government. Most of the focus group described their attitudes towards the future as cautiously optimistic, detailing the need to, at the very least, make an effort to make change.

CURIOUS?

Scan here to read the full participant interviews



What’s One Issue That’s Important to You on the Ballot in November?



Chloe L.

"Abortion and gun laws."



Emma L.

"The environment."



Alex Z.

"Inflation."

Participants

Name	age	
 Emma L.	 Chloe L.	 Charles R.
30	16	18
 Alex Z.	 Jennifer H.	 Gabriella B.
15	47	15
 Henry M.	 Jacari H.	 Danielle C.
14	18	18
 Shana B.	 Ayden H.	 Mina F.
37	15	17

Do You Have Any Hopes or Fears Surrounding the Election?



Gabriella B.

"I really hope it just gets better and more fair. I think the backlash, party-to-party, should just try to be as considerate as possible."



Ayden H.

"I hope that whoever wins, they'll at least be more competent than previous presidents."



Jacari H.

"My biggest fear is that whoever wins will just let resources go to waste and not try to help the world."

Do You Trust Politicians?



Ayden H.

"No. They always have a motive. There's been a lot of corruption scandals recently, too. Like with George Santos and Eric Adams."



Mina F.

"Not really. Sometimes politicians get caught up in winning over the people instead of thinking about what's going to better our country."



Shana B.

"I don't know if I really think about it that way. Just because someone's a politician doesn't make them any more or less trustworthy than anyone else."

Is Your Voice Is Heard In Politics?



Henry M.

"No, of course not. Electoral college-wise, no Democrat in Missouri or any red state really has influence on politics."



Danielle C.

"No. If I went on the internet and talked about my views on politics, I don't think anyone would care. If you're not famous, then you probably won't get heard."



Jennifer H.

"Yeah, because I make sure to vote, all up and down, every single election."

What Is the Biggest Challenge Facing Us as a Country?



Gabriella B.

"Having older people in the government."



Emma L.

"The pettiness of politics. The 'us versus them' mentality."



Jennifer H.

"Getting a shared sense of what's true and what isn't."



Charles R.

"Making sure we have a strong middle class."



Danielle C.

"We're in debt. Like, crazy, trillions of dollars debt."

Are You Optimistic for the Future?



Gabriella B.

"Yes."



Chloe L.

"No."



Henry M.

"Yes."



Jacari H.

"Yes."



Charles R.

"Yes."



Alex Z.

"No."



Mina F.

"Yes."

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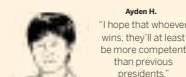
Participants



What's One Issue That's Important to You on the Ballot in November?



Do You Have Any Hopes or Fears Surrounding the Election?



Do You Trust Politicians?



Is Your Voice Heard In Politics?



What Is the Biggest Challenge Facing Us as a Country?



Are You Optimistic for the Future?



"Ladue in Focus"

This was another spread for our newsmagazine's election specialty issue. I constructed a focus group and interviewed them on hopes and fears for the upcoming election, thoughts on trust, justice, and voice in politics, and more. I utilized illustrations from our Art Editor-in-Chief, and focused on including as much student and staff voice in the spread as possible, prioritizing quotes and outlook.





“SURGE”

This design is a spread from our literary magazine, Melodrama. Over the last few years, we have instituted sections through our literary magazine as well as a progression between them — this year, for our theme of Tides, our sections were DROUGHT, FLOW, SURGE, and RECEDE. SURGE, the section I was responsible for managing, focused on maximalist and visually lush artwork, aiming to induce a sense of being overwhelmed in the reader, a motif I tried to embody in the section header, a collage of student artwork using cutouts and Adobe Photoshop’s liquify tool.



written by
Celina Zhou

photographed by
Lilly Jacks

photos courtesy of
Eric Rhiney

BRAIDING A BOMB

Tachelle Rhiney finds community and self expression as a hairstylist

When a client sits down in a salon chair, there's a few things a good hairstylist should take into account. What type and texture is the hair? What products should be used? Should it be cut wet or dry? Blended or layered? Special School District teacher Tachelle Rhiney considers all of that and more. To Rhiney, working with hair is a point of community, an intimate form of connection that can change clients not just externally, but internally as well.

A licensed cosmetologist of almost 25 years and a non-professional stylist for even longer, Rhiney comes from a rich background of hairstylists whose passion she's inherited, and now runs her own salon, Embrace You Salon.

"I think [hairstyling is] definitely cultural," Rhiney said. "Just about every woman in my family knows how to do hair, and just about all the men know how to cut hair, so it's kind of a skill that I picked up because everybody was doing it. It was routine and ritual. My mom was kind of an unofficial hairstylist of the neighborhood; she never went to hair school, but she was the neighborhood hairstylist. She did a lot of our neighbor's hair, their kids' hair. So for me, it started from just [being] surrounded by it."

In addition to her familial background, Rhiney also carries a deep consideration for the history of Black hairstyling, which has rich and storied origins within the United States and beyond, hailing back to the pre-slavery era.

"It starts back in Africa as it being just part of our community," Rhiney said. "When I did my research in many of the African cultures, the hairstylist was just as important as the medicine man, as important as the high priest. This person held a certain power in the community. Once we came to America and there were no ways for us to care for our hair, I think that it became something that we did take care of ourselves."

Developing a relationship with and learning how to take care of hair can be a rite of passage for Black youth.

"In some African American families, hair can be really tied to spirituality, Hoodoo and stuff like that," family friend and client Madison Davidson (12) said. "Hair has always been a tie for that stuff and every Black person's hair journey is different."

Black hairstyling has historically had challenges stemming from historic and systemic forces that sought to restrict that form of self expression, especially in the United States. But for Rhiney, Black hairstyling in the modern day also provides a unique opportunity for experimenting with beauty, self expression and new styles.

"African hair, Black hair, is some of the most diverse hair you will find," Rhiney said. "It is hair that can go straight, it can go curly and anything in between. There are very few styles that we cannot achieve. Our hair is diverse, it's also very connected to us. You can know a lot about a person, especially in black culture, with our hair."





“Braiding a Bond”

This design is a spread from our specialty magazine, ID. I focused on making the spreads as clean as possible, with most of the design elements resulting from photos. Because the story focused on a teacher who also worked as a hairstylist, I introduced a unique typography.