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# REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

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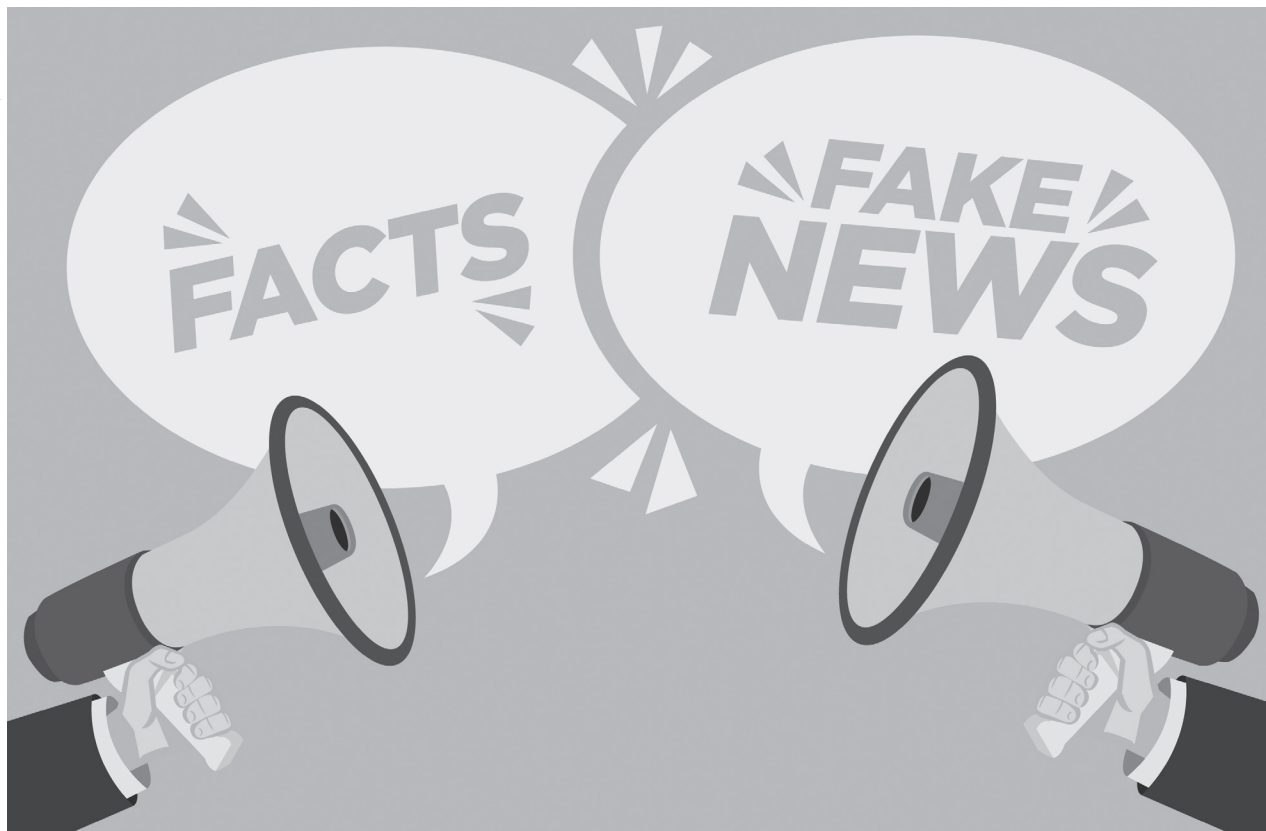
October 8, 2025

## SETTING THE RECORD



North Andover's Ethan Ackerman-Vallala sets a school record in the 100-yard breaststroke at Haverhill High School in September.

REBA SALDANHA



## Looking to combat fake news?

Here are some resources to help you determine if what you've read is true:

» **PolitiFact** is the Pulitzer Prize-winning fact checking operation run by the nonprofit Poynter Institute. The site fact-checks statements by politicians and debunks myriad Facebook hoaxes.

<https://www.politifact.com/>

» **FactCheck.org**, run by Annenberg Public Policy Center, performs much of the same tasks, and also let's you ask questions of the fact checkers. An example question: Did the Supreme Court rule that it is illegal to take the oath of office with anything but the Bible? (The answer is no.)

<https://www.factcheck.org/>

» **Snopes** is the original fact-checking website. Use the site's search bar to get to the bottom of political statements, viral videos and urban myths.

<https://www.snopes.com/>

» **A Google reverse image search** is the best way to find out if that photo you saw making the rounds on Twitter or Facebook is real. This story from PC Magazine walks you through how to do it on your desktop or your phone.

<https://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2492468,00.asp>

» **Still need help?** Contact us at the Eagle-Tribune, and we'll get the answer for you, no matter the topic. Email editor Tracey Rauh at [trauh@eagletribune.com](mailto:trauh@eagletribune.com).



## REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

### How the program works

Your school can have access to local, trusted journalism from The Eagle-Tribune on a daily basis. We report on news throughout the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire, covering all things local - from schools, to sports, to government, people profiles, business, entertainment and more. You get the facts - the real news - from experienced reporters, photographers and editors you can count on at no cost to your school.

#### Here are the basics of the program:

**What is it?** The Eagle-Tribune partners with local businesses to provide free digital access to our newspaper to anyone within the school at no cost to the school. This access encourages students to value the vital news coverage being produced by The Eagle-Tribune. They will build awareness and gain critical thinking skills in the process.

#### Who can participate?

This program will benefit teachers, students, and the broader school community.

#### Where does it take place?

You can access our newspaper online. Teachers can incorporate the program into their curriculums, even having reporters, photographers and editors visit your class.

**When can we start benefiting?** As soon as we have your commitment to participate in Real News in Schools we will go to work to find a local business who wants to sponsor you. Once we have one, we will work with your IT Department to get the program up and running.

#### Why is this valuable?

There's a lot of fake news out there on social media and elsewhere. The Eagle-Tribune, founded in 1868 as the Lawrence Daily Eagle and a twice Pulitzer Prize winning publication, has a long track record of fair and accurate reporting that cuts through the misinformation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
[EAGLETRIBUNE.COM/REALNEWS](http://EAGLETRIBUNE.COM/REALNEWS)

# Preserving the right to disagree

**Bill Ketter**  
Commentary



Forty-five years ago the value of free speech rights resonated soon after our group of American journalists landed at Havana's Jose Marti Airport and began discussion with Cuban

officials over repressed dissent.

In Communist Cuba, we explained, people cannot publicly shout, "Down with Castro" for fear of incarceration. But in America, we can freely shout, "Down with President Carter" without fear of retribution.

Today, I'm not sure the comparison holds. That includes an aggressive campaign against media outlets that are considered liberal or unfriendly.

The First Amendment

guarantees free speech and press freedom – two principles benefiting Americans since the nation's founding.

A notable example of presidential attacks on these bedrock beliefs date to the Sedition Act of 1798, designed to silence critics of President John Adams in the interest of national security over anticipation of war with France.

That act made it unlawful to publish public statements resulting in "contempt or disrepute" of the president

or the government. It proved so unpopular that Adams lost his bid for reelection to Thomas Jefferson two years later.

Public support for First Amendment protections terminated the Sedition Act in 1801.

Contemporary attacks on free speech include presidents Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon and Joe Biden: Reagan for efforts to restrict access to the Freedom of Information Act; Nixon for blocking public

disclosure of the Pentagon papers revealing embarrassing facts about the Vietnam War; Biden for strong-arming social media companies to censor postings the government considered harmful in combating the Covid-19 virus.

Today our president is demanding similar – yet differently motivated – constraints on the press. Donald Trump has a long history of suing media outlets when their journalism displeases him. It is

a common bullying tactic to counteract unfavorable publicity. Summarily dismissed by judges in the past few years were his lawsuit against CNN and two others targeting the Times.

The reason: The First Amendment's free speech and press shield. If politically motivated attacks ever remove that shield, Americans of all beliefs will suffer the silencing consequences.

*Bill Ketter is CNHI's senior vice president of news. Reach him at [wketter@cnhi.com](mailto:wketter@cnhi.com).*

## Cancer can't stop the coach

Bradley fights through treatment to keep Whittier Tech on winning track

By Hector Longo

» Staff Writer

It was a typical Wednesday morning during the Whittier Tech football season for Kevin Bradley. He was dissecting film of his next opponent, Lawrence High.

What wasn't typical was the location, Mass. General Hospital, awaiting a chemotherapy session followed by radiation treatment.

This opponent is much bigger than any football team. Bradley has tongue cancer.

"They tell me they're trying to move me quicker," said Bradley. "Hopefully, I might be able to make the last hour of practice."

If you know Bradley, you know he's not joking. The cancer wasn't going to get in the way of Wildcat football, or for that matter, Wildcat anything.

The heart-and-soul of Whittier Tech sports for nearly three full decades now churns on.

"What else can I do?" questioned Bradley rhetorically. "Every day, I get texts from

so many people, pushing me forward. It's impossible for me to let them down. That's what keeps me going."

A three-sport coach along with his top dog duties as Whittier's athletic director, Bradley still pushes as hard as he can. At 64 years young, he has no interest in retiring.

As much as the school and its student-athletes mean to him, Bradley has a list of reasons a mile long to keep fighting and keep driving. It starts at home with his wife Ellen and children, Leah, Connor and Kevin.

"My family is great. They are my backbone right now," said Bradley. "We have always been a strong, loving family. Through good and bad, we will continue together no matter how many speed bumps come our way. They are the reason I fight so hard."

Well, them and Bradley's guiding light, his lone grandson, Logan. "I am blessed," grandpa Kevin says.

Daily radiation treatments, daily rides into the city and chemo – he's got five more of those (yuck!) left – have altered Bradley's days.

There is a bit of a different vibe at Wildcat football practices lately. The Methuen High and Plymouth State

Hall of Famer won't jump into the huddles like he has in the past years. But the intensity of those days remains. Bradley has his assistant coaches to thank for that.

"I have the world's best coaching staff," said Bradley, who prays the rosary on his daily 6:30 a.m. commutes into the city. "Every single coach has a job, and they do it to the fullest. They know their responsibilities, and they are great."

"The biggest challenge I have made to them is if they see me slowing down to kick me in the (butt) to pick me up. And they do."

Bradley has found sources of inspiration near and far. When times get tough, the one face that pops into his head is Mikey Lane of North Andover.

A legendary team manager during his days at Central Catholic and more recently, at the University of Alabama, Bradley hasn't encountered anyone tougher than Lane in his life.

"He doesn't know it but I have so much admiration for that boy and how he enjoys life, what he has accomplished," said Bradley. "I honestly think of him and what he's done. If he can do that, I can do anything."

Fortunately, Bradley's



JAIME CAMPOS

**Whittier Tech football head coach Kevin Bradley, middle, high-fives Anderson Pineda Martinez (2) in a 2024 game. Methuen's Bradley won't let his current battle with cancer keep him away from his duties on the sidelines with the Wildcats this fall.**

prognosis is good. He's sticking to the plan his physicians have laid out for him. And his daughter, Leah, a nurse practitioner, keeps everyone on the same page.

Perhaps the best advice Bradley got came from a

teacher and cancer survivor at Whittier Tech when he received the diagnosis.

"The biggest thing she put in my mind sticks with me every day," Bradley said.

"She said, 'You will never feel lower than the day they

told you that you have cancer. Now get over it and do what you need to do.'"

Words to live by ... for a long, long time.

*You can email Hector Longo at [hlongo@eagletribune.com](mailto:hlongo@eagletribune.com).*

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# Clean, cost-saving electric buses carry Lawrence students

By Jill Harmacinski

» jharmacinski — Staff Writer

LAWRENCE — Nearly three dozen comfortable, quiet and cost-saving electric school buses were rolled out this school year for city students.

Through a public-private partnership, 35 new buses, including 10 minibuses, are being used by Lawrence Public Schools to get students to and from classes.

A ribbon cutting was held this month to celebrate the deployment of the new “clean community transportation,” according to a press release.

The program was undertaken through a partnership between state environmental agencies and Beacon Mobility, Zenob, Sargent & Lundy, National Grid, Liberty Utilities and Lawrence Public Schools.

The buses are supported by an initiative led by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and funded by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection as part of their regular home-to-school operations, according to the release.

While used by LPS, the buses are based in Methuen.

The school district serves 13,000 kindergarten through grade 12 students.

The 25 electric school buses alone are projected to reduce carbon emissions by an estimated 1.35 million pounds per year, equivalent to removing 136 gas-powered passenger cars off the road for one year.

In addition, the district was awarded \$1.67 million under MassCEC’s ACT School Bus Deployment Program in 2023 which was used to fund the 10 minibuses, officials said.

“To give students a comfortable, quieter daily bus ride while benefitting public health, the environment and Lawrence taxpayers is a big win for our entire community,” said Lawrence Public Schools Superintendent Ralph Carrero. “This initiative is the power of

public-private partnership at its best.”

Scott Sheridan, NRT bus senior vice president, lauded the hard work and dedication “of all our partners from the public and private sector who made this project possible and are helping us power this new fleet for the 2025 school year.”

“As part of our ongoing commitment to reduce emissions and promote cleaner air for our students and schools, we are thrilled to announce the launch of this charging site to support our new electric fleet for Lawrence Public Schools,” Sheridan said.

The charging site was completed last summer and is being used to charge and store the 35 new electric buses.

“This investment means healthier air for students, quieter neighborhoods, and cost savings for school districts over the long term,” said Rachel Ackerman, Senior Program Director for Clean Transportation at MassCEC.

“Projects like this show how innovative partnerships can deliver immediate community benefits while accelerating the state’s transition to clean transportation. MassCEC is proud to support Lawrence Public Schools in putting these new electric minibuses on the road,” she said.

Electrified by National Grid and Liberty Utilities, the charging station site provides a sustainable hub for recharging the electric batteries that power the new fleet to shuttle Merrimack Valley students and community members to and from school and other local activities, according to the release.

“At National Grid, we believe fleet electrification is a key component of building a sustainable and diversified energy future. We’re proud to collaborate with a range of stakeholders to invest in and modernize our energy infrastructure to support the customers and communities we serve,” said Jake Navarro, director of Clean Transportation at National Grid.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Through a public-private partnership, 35 new electric school buses, including 10 minibuses, are being used by Lawrence Public Schools to get students to and from classes. LPS Superintendent speaks during a ribbon cutting earlier this month.



New electric school buses “fuel up” at the charging station located in Methuen.

# Disappointments are part of life

By Michael Veves

Commentary



I have finally learned at age 71 how to teach and it doesn't have too much to do with the number of publications (scores) or degrees I hold

(three). It's now nearly 45 years since my first teaching job at Billerica's Marshall Middle School. It ended in Lowell after 'only' 20 years. What happened?

The 1980s and 90s saw vast changes in teaching: tenure was eliminated in favor of professional status after three years, teachers were required to get a master's degree, and standardized testing was introduced, to name a few factors.

Computerized learning hit all at once, overwhelming many teachers. In 1990, most of us didn't know how to use email. In a few short years, it became the only mode of communication.

It didn't take long for me to lose patience and throw idealism out the window. After about four years at age 33, I started feeling I made the wrong decision.

I lost my job teaching in Billerica only to land next door in Wilmington and lose that job, too. My first teaching jobs were eliminated due to what was then known as Proposition 2-1/2, a tax-cutting measure that, as usual, hit public education: art and music were hit first; young teachers next.

I then landed a high-school teaching job in Lowell and hoped working with older students would be right for me. It wasn't. That was 1986. Was it me that was the wrong fit? Did I

simply not know how to teach?

Freshmen came in with elementary-level reading skills. Sophomore classes began with, perhaps, 24 students and ended with 18 or 16 still coming, as many dropped out or simply disappeared. Yet I kept trying.

I did what many teachers do: I transferred. I had taught both middle and high school. Now I was headed for the fourth grade. The road, however, grew muddier.

But it was there I met a man I very slowly came to revere: Roger Landry of Lowell, an old-school school principal. I started to settle down. Roger's door was always open. He always seemed relaxed, unshakable. He gave me a piece of advice I carry with me to this day.

"Michael, you are trying too hard," he told me.

This advice was in response to a substitute teacher who was confused on what to do a day I was absent. Confused! This was fourth grade! I had left a plethora of work which confused her. Upon looking into it, Roger realized I was trying to cover too much.

Moving at the speed of light for type A personalities like me is not without rewards or risks.

The risk was usually disappointment, disillusionment. This ended in what is commonly known as burn-out, which affects many professionals. Teachers are no different.

Teachers need the energy of a long-distance runner, the patience of Michelangelo painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and the competence of a scholar. This is unrealistic. It can lead to a teacher trying to be perfect.

A series of circumstances brought me back to teaching at age 60. But this time as a substitute. What I have

noticed after nearly 1,500 subbing jobs in the last eight years is this: the best classrooms seem relaxed, stress free.

Roger Landry's messages echo: The best teachers moderate themselves. They find balance which, though it can be learned, is, for some, a gift.

Teachers in these classrooms move with ease. The students in these classrooms also seem to move with ease. Worry seems limited and voices are not raised. Patience is monumental and these teachers are very slow to arrive at anger. Respect is paramount: no name calling, no belittling.

When I began teaching, my expectations were far too high resulting, as I look back, in tension I lived with day in and day out. I took to heart every problem. It was an impossible thing to do. Teachers – and dare I say parents – have to be careful not to try too hard.

When working with people (and especially kids), we are going to make mistakes. The only thing we can really expect from teachers, from students, from schools, from parents is that things will not always go as planned: imperfections rule.

The teacher who tries to be perfect, along with the school principal and his team, will end up disappointed. Strive for the best, prepare for plan B.

Disappointments are not the end of the world or your career – be that as a student or an adult. They are simply a part of life, even if sometimes hard to accept in an achievement-oriented society like ours.

Life, teaching, parenting, growing up is about adaptation.

*Michael Veves spent 20 years as a public school teacher before opening an equestrian stable, closing it after 20 years and following his next passion: ballroom dancing. He continues to substitute teach.*

## Teachers need commendation, not condemnation

To the editor:

As a proud public school educator, I am dismayed to read "Extremist social media create student dilemma." Warning about teachers' extremist social media posts, it states, "If a teacher feels this emboldened online, imagine what they are saying in class."

While there are certainly some who choose to express their protected First Amendment rights in a controversial manner, I ask the reader to please consider the

professionalism demonstrated by the majority of educators. Please consider that we share our knowledge and love of our content, which is far more than "how to read, write, do math and socialize with other children."

We are teaching them how to think creatively and critically.

We are teaching them the skills they need to understand their very complex lives and the very complex world in which we live.

We are doing incredibly valuable

work, which is often undervalued and misunderstood.

We need commendation, not condemnation.

Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the founder of Negro History Week, which is now Black History Month, wrote, "Real education means to inspire people to live more abundantly, to learn to begin with life as they find it and make it better."

This educator agrees.

Heidi Wakeman  
Gloucester

# Extremist social media creates student dilemma

Chicago Tribune

We think a sensible rule of thumb when considering whether to post something online is to ask yourself: Would I say this to someone's face? If not, the delete button.

In the wake of Charlie Kirk's assassination, many people aren't taking even a beat before posting vile comments online.

It's starting to cost some people their jobs. Private employers with no tolerance for hateful rhetoric, are parting company with employees over their social media posts. And in schools, when educators cross the line, some people are calling for these teachers to lose their jobs.

This trend has been growing for years. In other parts of the country, conservative teachers also have faced blowback for their online choices. A Texas teacher was fired in 2019 after posting on social media calling for President Donald Trump to round up "illegal students."

When educators use their platforms to broadcast political views, the message to students is unmistakable: conform, or be left out. And that's where the problem lies.

If a teacher feels this emboldened online, imagine what they're saying in class.

We've consistently defended the First Amendment in the strongest terms. Calls to stamp out "hate speech," like Attorney General Pam Bondi's recent proposal, run completely counter to this fundamental American principle.

Teachers argue they're exercising their right to free speech. True, but they should also worry about whether they are depriving students of theirs.

The reality is that nobody wants their kid walking into a hostile classroom, or an environment that is more about propaganda than critical thinking.

School environments should be open and welcoming. How can you foster a willingness to work through difficult ideas if your students aren't free to be vulnerable and say what they really think?

That's the chilling effect that takes place when a child from a

conservative family walks into a classroom led by a vocal left-wing teacher. The same is true when a student from a progressive family walks into a classroom led by an outspoken conservative teacher.

Most parents send their kids to school to learn how to read, write, do math and socialize with other children.

They don't like it when schools tack on extras nobody asked for, and they certainly don't need teachers telling their kids what to think. Indeed, education is all about learning how to think – not regurgitating what someone tells you is right.

We say with confidence that if a child is told by his or her teacher – the authority figure in the classroom – that someone in politics is bad or evil, a few things will happen. First, that child now knows that they cannot say anything in this classroom that would run counter to their authority figure's beliefs. Not in reports, not in classroom discussion. If parents agree with the teacher, it'll confirm that belief. If, however, the child's parents hold the opposite view, the child comes into conflict: Either their parents are bad, evil and wrong, or their teacher is bad, evil and wrong. So they're left wondering: Who can I trust?

That's corrosive to trust, and corrosive to learning.

Our kids don't need to know their teachers' politics. Indeed, knowing them is a disservice to learning and personal growth.

Schools, however, are obliged to reckon with the way they and their employees present to their community and their students. They need to think long and hard about the classroom environments they are cultivating and whether kids feel free to think for themselves.

The classroom environment provides the perfect captive audience for folks who view politics as the highest social calling. They should not be allowed to take advantage of that.

Classrooms should be the freest places in our society for young minds. Schools owe their students an environment where curiosity thrives free of political litmus tests.



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