



## The Vanishing Students

### Why Some of Our Fellow Classmates Drop Out

By Cole Smith & Benjamin Hutchinson  
Staff Writers

As a longtime academic support teacher, Mrs. Carla Wagner has seen plenty of Triton students who do not fit the traditional high school mold.

"Traditional high school doesn't always offer opportunities for students who are interested in the trades and vocational work," said Wagner. "So some students don't see the value in attending and/or finishing."

Sometimes, that disconnect with high school leads to students dropping out entirely. Other times, students drop out to help support their families or because they have physical or mental health issues.

Ex-Triton student, Anthony Russo, dropped out of school in order to work.

"School has always been super hard for me, and I struggle with sleep, so getting up is another issue for me that I've been wanting to fix," said Russo in a recent interview with the *Triton Voice*. "I figured if I got it approved to leave school and try and go into the work force I would do that. So far it's been great for me, and honestly it's helped my sleep schedule."

#### Triton's Dropout Rate Below Average

According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Triton generally maintains a lower dropout rate than the state average, but certain "high needs" groups, such



Michael Jolivet, Anthony Russo, and Jon O'Neil sat with the Triton Voice to discuss their various decisions to leave high school (courtesy photos).

as low-income and special education students, face more significant challenges. For the most recent full reporting year (2023-2024), Triton's numbers were:

- Total Dropouts: 7 students (out of 566 enrolled).
- Annual Dropout Rate: 1.2%.
- Grade Breakdown: The highest risk year at Triton was 12th grade (2.2%), followed by 10th grade (1.4%).
- Students identified as "high needs" (including those with disabilities or from low-income families) had a higher dropout rate of 3.1%.

Former Triton student Jon O'Neil, who decided to leave school only recently, said there were a combination of factors that led to his decision.

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## The Grammys' Best New Artists Olivia Dean & Others Perform Live

By Maecy Gay-Killeen  
Staff Writer

On Sunday, February 1st, Los Angeles's Crypto.com Arena hosted the 2026 Grammys. Olivia Dean was a first-time nominee this year, earning the Best New Artist award driven by the success of her acclaimed album "The Art Of Loving" and multiple charting singles, including "Man I Need."

All of the other nominees performed in the 'Best New Artist' segment alongside Dean including, Alex Warren, Addison Rae, KATSEYE, Leon Thomas, Lola Young, Sombr, and lastly the Marias.

The group of talented artists sang their own individual songs to showcase their accomplishments in direct succession of one another. Warren performed, "Ordinary" while moving throughout the venue. Rae performed "Fame Is A Gun" on a truck in the arena's loading dock. KATSEYE brought energy to the crowd while performing "Gnarly" with their "robotic" like choreography. Thomas brought his guitar out and performed "MUTT." Young showcased her vocals during the miscellaneous segment. Sombr took himself to the floating stage and performed "12 to 12." Lastly, The Marias performed "No One Noticed". This segment is a great way to showcase the rising talent in the music industry.

Not all Triton students thought Dean should have won.

"I think there were better nominees," stated senior Sadie Deveau regarding Dean. "Alex Warren for example. He went from living in a car with his girlfriend to joining the hype house and making a career for himself and getting pretty famous from that career. His music isn't that bad."

Alex Warren was also a first-time nominee this year, earning a Best New Artist nomination propelled by the success of his album You'll Be Alright, Kid and record-breaking hit "Ordinary."

Another nominee, Addison Rae was nominated for the first time this year in the Best New Artist category, backed by the success of her debut album



WTMX.com photo

"Addison."

The group, KATSEYE were nominated for two Grammy Awards this year: Best New Artist and Best Pop Duo/Group Performance ("Gabriela").

Another nominee for the Best-New Artist category was, Leon Thomas. Thomas was also nominated for five other Grammy Awards this year: Album Of The Year (MUTT), Best R&B Performance ("MUTT (Live From NPR's Tiny Desk)"), Best Traditional R&B Performance ("VIBES DON'T LIE"), Best R&B Song ("YES IT IS"), and Best R&B Album (MUTT).

Lola Young, who is best known for her song, "Messy" was nominated as well. Along with Young's nomination for Best-New Artist she was also nominated for Best Pop Solo Performance. Sombr, best known for "Back to Friends", "12 to 12", or "Undressed" was also up for Best New Artist this year, from the success of his debut album I Barely Know Her.

Lastly for other nominees is the group, The Marias due to the popularity of a new single, "Back To Me."

Senior CJ Weisenstein shared her thoughts about

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## Winter Olympics in Review

# The Best

### How Olympic Sports Build Community, Pride, and Worldwide Connections

By Olivia O'Leary  
Staff Writer

Every four years, the Olympics are held at a different location around the world with a variation of 92 countries involved in 2026.

The 2026 Winter Olympics has become one of the most watched sporting events ever to air. Many Triton staff and students hold the Olympics in high regard and make it a part of their daily schedule once it rolls around to the season: 23.5 to 24 million people in the U.S tuned in to watch some of the games.

"My favorite part of the Olympics was being able to watch the women's ice skating and watching the USA win gold for the first time in forever in hockey," said Central Catholic High School alumnus and college student John Parent.

Mrs. Michelle Kline, a guidance counselor at Hamilton-Wenham High School, said she enjoyed, "when the skeleton was going 80 miles per hour and they were going head first."

Only the best athletes participate in the Winter Olympics, making the unique sports even more interesting to watch as opposed to more typical games.

On February 6, 2026 the beginning of the Winter Olympics kicked off and they ended on February 26. A total of 2,800 athletes performed in the Winter Olympics, and they were all in pursuit of 116 medal events. The most popular events this year were snowboarding, skiing, figure skating, hockey, curling and bobsledding/luge/skeleton, with many different variations in each.

The most-watched event, one that has the USA's vote as the most entertaining, was the men's Canada versus US hockey game for the gold medal (see story below). In an article on NHL.com, the author explains how the game reached the most views by watchers of the Olympic Games.

"The audience peaked at 26.0 million live viewers between 10:45 and 11 a.m. ET during the overtime period in which Jack Hughes scored the game-winning goal for the United States," the article stated. The strong rivalry between the US and Canada became very popular which added on viewers. When they reached it over time at the end of the game and the US got the victory winning gold.

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## USA on Top of Hockey World Men's, Women's Teams Win in Thrillers

By Cole Smith  
Staff Writer

The 2026 Winter Olympics took place from February 6 to February 22, 2026, in Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo in Italy. The games featured thousands of athletes from around the world competing in winter sports such as skiing, skating, and most notably, ice hockey. Over the course of 16 days, athletes competed in more than one hundred events across multiple disciplines. One of the most exciting and widely watched sports during the Olympics was ice hockey, which delivered several dramatic games and historic results.

The Olympics saw strong performances from many countries. Norway finished at the top of the medal table, winning 18 gold medals and a total of 41 medals, the highest total of any country at the Games. The US finished second overall with 12 gold medals and 33 total. Italy also had a successful Olympics, winning 30 total medals. 92 total nations and 2,800 athletes competed in these games. A few participants won their country their first medal(s).

Ice hockey was one of the most anticipated sports at the Olympics. The men's tournament included 12 teams competing for the gold medal. Traditional hockey powers such as Canada, Sweden,

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# Music Preferences at Triton

By Asher Clifford, Staff Writer

Junior Marcus Torres was asked what he preferred as a music genre.

"I prefer the hip-hop genre," said Torres. "When I'm listening to a song, I'm looking for lyrics that should flow with the beat. It's also the creativity within each artist that makes it an entertaining genre. I feel like hip-hop artists are more experimental with their sound, and that's what makes it so different and interesting."

Music is something that has been used for stress relief, improvement in cognitive function, and can even physically restructure the brain through neuroplasticity. While music can be heard everywhere in the world, people's taste in music varies widely, and that's true specifically for the students at Triton. Junior Shane Olson explained that he would listen to any genre as long as it had these key details.

"I listen to any genre, whether it's Rap, R&B, Pop, or Rock" Olson said. "But I would prefer storytelling hidden within the lyrics. It's fun to find hints laid out in the song like double entendres. Honestly, I'll listen to any song as long as I'm able to identify what they're saying."

Lyrics are what give a song its story. Yet many artists use violent language in their songs to express themselves. Still, for people who don't listen to that type of music, it may be concerning.

In the article, "Naughty or Nice? The Art of Creating Controversial Music," the author states that violence in lyrics can represent harsh realities that critique societal issues. Artists may use violence in lyrics to explain societal problems and use its shock value to push their point.

Junior Sam France clarified that he listens to one genre of music and doesn't intend to switch anytime soon.

"I listen to anything hip-hop/R&B related," said France. "But it has to be something that is a mix between those two

things. I don't really like old music, and other genres are usually too loud, too soft-sounding, or too unbearable for my ears. I like this genre specifically since it's a mix between that nice soulful sound and that grimy sound I can't help but nod my head to."

When listening to a song, the sound is also a huge factor. It's what makes the musical part a reality.

In the article "The Science Behind Why We Love or Hate Certain Music Genres," the authors say that it's because of musical tolerance. People's brains get used to a certain sound, and if a genre has patterns that are too different from what you're used to, it can feel jarring or even unpleasant. This is why people who might like country, classical, or jazz might dislike rap, pop, and rock, and vice versa. It's because their brains aren't used to listening to the type of sounds the genre gives off.

Junior James D'Amato described his music taste as basic because his preference is for anything popular.

"I discover my music through anything popular," said D'Amato. "I listen to Drake, Kendrick Lamar, and The Weeknd. If you name something popular, I've probably heard it."

Artists are what represent a genre of music and are the ones who make the music and build on top of what the genre already is.

According to 'It punched a hole through political correctness': How Eminem's The Marshall Mathers LP sent shockwaves through the '00s," the author explains that Eminem's intense, sometimes concerning, and often political lyrics were what made him controversial. His background of being a white kid who grew up in a black neighborhood made him an instant hit because of how abnormal it was. In fact, he was compared to Elvis Presley, who was famously known for his contribution to the 50's black R&B music. Just like Elvis, Eminem received backlash because he was dominating a genre created by black artists. However, this was balanced by the respect earned from both of these artists because of how much they did for both genres and the future of music as a whole.



iStock photo

# Dear Helga

Improving Grades, Managing Work

**Dear Helga,**  
How do you prioritize your coursework, especially when it all piles up and things are getting busy in life?



Dear Helga

Dear Struggling Student, I'm sorry for your struggles. When it comes to prioritizing class work and not letting it build up, there are a couple of things you can do to alleviate stress. One thing you can do is utilize your study period to get some of your work done, leaving less to do at home. Another tip is to do work as soon as it is assigned. This ensures that by the time another assignment is given, all your other ones are already done. Hope this helps. Sincerely, Helga

**Dear Helga,**  
My teacher isn't helping me improve my grade. I go to ask for help, but they just tell me to look back at the reading. What should I do for more help?

Dear Grade Improver, I'm sorry you are struggling in your class and aren't getting the help you feel you need. If looking back into the book isn't helping, try asking your friends and see what is helpful for them. I find it useful to make flashcards or a Quizlet to study. Sincerely, Helga

**WRITE to Dear Helga:** Solicit advice from Helga by submitting a short question of 50 words or less to: [james.allen@tritonschools.org](mailto:james.allen@tritonschools.org)

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Finland and the US were among the favorites. The tournament featured intense competition and high-scoring games. In total, 30 games were played and nearly 200 goals were scored throughout the tournament. However, statistics wouldn't compare to what happened in the finale.



The USA Men's Hockey Team celebrates winning gold (ESPN)

The women's game was closely contested and went into overtime. Team USA defeated Canada 2-1 in overtime on February 19, 2026, to win the Women's Gold Medal. After trailing for most of the game, Hilary Knight tied it with 2:04 left, and Megan Keller scored the winning goal in sudden-death overtime.

In the men's final game, the US won 2-1 after Jack Hughes scored the game-winning overtime goal. This victory gave the United States its first Olympic men's hockey gold medal since 1980, another powerhouse team. Canada fin-

ished with the silver medal, and Finland earned the bronze medal. The tournament also featured outstanding performances from individuals. NHL star Connor McDavid led all players in scoring and was named the tournament's MVP.

Whittier student Jack Ferreira, was excited about the outcome.

"As someone who grew up playing and watching hockey, the ending of the US and Canada game had me going bananas," he said. "It was up there for one of the greatest things I've ever witnessed with my own eyes. Screw Canada. USA on top!"

and family. Though Dean was extremely shy, it didn't stop her from being involved in musical theater, singing in her local gospel choir, and taking part in local singing competitions.

By age 15 she was accepted into the BRIT School, which is a very highly selective performing Arts school in South London.

At age 17, Dean knew that songwriting and performing is what she wanted to do with her life when her teacher played a live version of Paul Simon singing 'Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes' with a South African group and Dean stated that it "just sparked something."

Dean has two studio albums released, her first album being 'Messy' in 2023 and with her newest album titled, 'The Art of Loving.' She also has another two live albums with a whole mix of songs she has released.

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Dean and other artists.

"I like her. but I feel like I only know one song," said Weisenstein. "But she is definitely a good singer and fits the bill for the award. Also hot take — and she wasn't nominated for this award — but I wholeheartedly think that Jessie Murph should have won the award. I also feel like Sombr and Alex Warren has a few more hits than Olivia Dean does."

After researching Olivia Lauryn Dean from many articles found across the web including, [oliviadeano.com](http://oliviadeano.com), [billboard.com](http://billboard.com), [allmusic.com](http://allmusic.com), and [britannica.com](http://britannica.com), it's clear to see that the artist has had a grand rise.

Dean was born 26 years ago on March 14th, 1999, in the London Borough of Haringey. She spent most of her childhood in Highams Park, England.

Her childhood was filled with music

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While there are so many different sports participating in the Olympics bringing in millions of views on average, there is the sport that was the least popular for the 2026 winter Olympics, which was curling and niche sports such as skeleton.

Looking ahead, the 2028 Summer Olympics will be held in Los Angeles, California, which should bring in a large

number of US viewers and fans.

The Olympics will continue to show most athletes' strongest skills. The buildup over four years gives athletes more time to prepare and anticipate, which is why it has become such a huge deal to US viewers. It is not every week that here is a sporting event that includes the substantial amount of skill and stamina that is needed to win gold in the Olympics.

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"I struggle with a bit of personal stuff, and it makes it hard for me to do some things, and it wasn't me (just) dropping out," said O'Neil. "I'm coming back for the fourth quarter, but I honestly felt like I really just needed a break; that may sound out of the ordinary, but a break is really what I needed."

Despite the rationales students may have for leaving school early, the impact is felt by more than just those students.

"It always makes me sad when this happens, and I wish they had asked for more help," said Wagner. I think it's very important to finish high school — even if it's only to prove to themselves and future employers that they can do it.

"High school offers growth outside of just academics, and I think being part of a community is important to our development as adults. Even if people choose not to go to college, learning how to learn is important to our future success in everything we do."

## Reasons for Dropping Out

Massachusetts recently released its 2025 data, showing a slight improvement in keeping kids in school:

- Statewide Dropout Rate: Approximately 1.9% – 2.0%.
- Urban vs. Suburban: Large urban districts like Boston saw a drop to 3.6% in 2025 (a record low for them), showing that even in high-pressure areas, retention is improving.
- The so-called "Grade 9 Wall" continues to be an issue. Statewide, 9th grade remains a critical "make or break" year. Students who fail even one core course in 9th grade are statistically much more likely to drop out later.

## The Contagion Effect

Former Triton student Michael Jolivet was one of the first in the Class of 2027 during his junior year said that his decision may have affected others, too.

"I feel like it (dropping out) kind of had something to do with my other friends

dropping out, but at the same time, their families need to approve of it too, so that's a whole other thing, so maybe a little.

Jolivet's decision to drop out having an effect on his friends' decision to do the same is what is called the "Contagion Effect" according to researchers. When the "first" student drops out, it can normalize the idea for others who are already struggling, or thinking of doing the same, making the "unthinkable" choice seem like a viable exit strategy.

## The Work-First Reality

Differing from Jolivet, Russo found success in the workforce and a better sleep schedule as a result of dropping out. For many MA students, the immediate "win" of a paycheck outweighs the long-term promise of a diploma, especially if they feel the school curriculum doesn't translate to real-world skills.

According to researchers, this is known as the "work-first" reality that students find if they have success finding a job after dropping out.

## Other Factors

As Mrs. Wagner noted, many students are dealing with "adult" problems (supporting family, health issues) while trying to be "full-time" students.

In Massachusetts, workers with a high school diploma earn roughly \$10,000 more per year than those without one, largely because the diploma acts as a "signal" to employers that a person can make a long-term commitment.

"If I could say something to students who are thinking of dropping out, I would say that they shouldn't close a door or eliminate future choices," said Wagner. "It's great to have choices in life. They may not know what they want to do in the future, and they may find they need a high school diploma for what they want to do."

"I am sure they will never regret graduating and won't say, 'I wish I had never graduated high school,' but they may regret it if they don't."