



## Drama Festival

### METG Celebrates Student Theater Across Massachusetts

By **Chloe Belson**  
Staff Writer

Hundreds of high school students across Massachusetts prepared to take the stage at the annual Massachusetts high school drama festival on Feb. 28 in one of the largest student-theater events in the state. Organized by the Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild (METG), the festival brought together more than 100 one-act plays from high schools across Massachusetts.

The festival operates as a statewide competition that unfolds in three rounds: the preliminaries, semi-finals and state finals. Schools perform condensed one-act productions, and judges recognize excellence in acting, directing and technical theater. Of all the schools that participate, up to 15 advance to the state finals, where three are named winners.

The 2026 festival began with the preliminary round on Feb.28, followed by semi-finals scheduled for March 14. The state finals take place between March 26-28.

While competition is central to the event, students say the festival is just as much about community as it is about winning.

Ian Prime, a junior from Georgetown High School performing *Euridice*, said meeting other theater students is his favorite part of the experience.

"My favorite part of fest is the social aspect and getting to talk to so many people from different schools all day," Prime said. However, he admitted the anticipation before performing can be nerve racking. "My least favorite part is the stress before you go out to perform."

Students must also navigate strict festival guidelines. Productions are limited in running time and must set up and strike their sets within tight time limits.



A promotional infographic that was posted on the METG website via the St. John's Prep theater's Instagram site lists the names of the entrants into this year's One-Act Play Drama Festival.

"My least favorite part is the time limit we have to put on the shows and to set up our set," said Maya Abutal, a freshman from Essex Technical High School performing *A Trip to the Moon*. Despite the challenge, Abutal said she looks forward to the **THEATER from page 1**

## Budget Trouble Leads to Layoffs

By **Laura Ewell & Maecy Gay-Killeen**  
Staff Writers

The Triton Regional School Committee has approved a new budget for next school year, one which will lay off 26 teachers.

For the 2026-2027 school year, the budget will be \$57 million, making it a 4 percent increase compared to this year. The cost of special education, healthcare, staffing, and transportation are all increasing significantly, leading to cuts being made to staff.

Students at Triton High School will face fewer choices in next year's course offerings as the district deals with these budget cuts. A science/technology teacher, an English teacher, a math teacher, and three instructional assistants will be cut at the high school.

"The changes end up impacting electives like courses that are not required, so the breadth of how many course offerings we are able to offer will be affected," explained Superintendent Brian Forget. "The exact cuts are yet to be determined."

Next year's budget cuts will likely force the school to reduce or eliminate certain elective courses likely in the arts and sciences. With course enrollment already under way, any cuts could create scheduling conflicts for students and limit their abilities to take the classes they are most interested in. Overall, the cuts will mean fewer classes to choose from at the high school, larger class sizes in the middle and elementary schools, and fewer teachers in the schools.

When it comes to Triton Middle School and the district's three elementary schools, more teachers will also be cut. The middle school's team structure will likely be affected with the elimination of four teachers and two instructional assistants (IA's). Pine Grove Elementary will lose one classroom teacher and two IA's; Salisbury Elementary will lose three teachers and two IA's, and Newbury Elementary will lose two classroom teachers and two IA's. With fewer elementary school teachers per grade, class sizes will increase. Losing instructional assistants will also cause teachers to do more with fewer staff.

Additionally, there will be the loss of two district-wide staff: a part-time English Language Learners teacher as well as a full-time administrative support staffer.

**See BUDGET on page 2**

## What are You Taking?

### Reviewing the Arts & STEM Electives at Triton



By **Nathan Rettkowski** Staff Writer Members of one of Mr. Guerin's classes show off their robots (**Rettkowski**)

On March 15 in the high school library, many eighth graders flooded in, ready to learn of the electives they may choose in their future high school career. On March 5, another event two events, Future Freshman Night and the electives fair were held. Eighth graders were able to see the high school courses Triton has to offer, including electives, which are an essential for high school courses.

Overall, electives allow students to express their creativity as well as pursue courses that may be useful for their future careers. They also give students a chance to display skills not found in traditional classes. They are also some of students' favorite courses and are one of the biggest choices incoming freshmen have to make.

#### Triton STEM

Technology teacher Mr. Matthew Guerin teaches eight of the elective technology classes offered by Triton: Engineering Tech 1 and 2, Game Design,

Robotics, Coding, Architecture, Construction, and Graphic Design.

Guerin's favorites are the two engineering classes, his specialty since he majored in them during college. They are classes where students get to use a 3D modeling application called "Autodesk Inventor" and get to 3D print and design for engineering challenges. There is also an online coding section where students program robots on Vex VR.

Senior Daniel Jones would recommend the class. "If you have the chance to take this as your science class I would absolutely take the opportunity," said Jones. "It gives you the chance to work with technology that will very likely help you in your future, especially if you decide to do anything with computers or a sort of you know art or creative field especially."

"I find that even if it doesn't help you out the

**See ELECTIVES on page 2**

## The BIG 3

### Reviewing Maine's 3 Largest Ski Areas: Sunday River, Saddleback, and Sugarloaf

By **Gracelyn O'Neill**  
Staff Writer

When asked 'What are the largest ski areas in Maine?' any weekend will automatically say the *big three*; Sunday River, Saddleback, and Sugarloaf.

All three areas offer something the other one doesn't; but one thing they all have in common is some of the best skiing in the Northeast. Between high speed lifts, extravagant lodging, and raving apres-ski life, these mountains are neck-in-neck for the top position.

With 193 trails and 884 acres of terrain, **Sunday River** offers a very diverse trail map for skiers of all levels. As one of New England's largest and most reliable ski areas and it being just three hours away from Boston, the resort hosts millions of skiers from all over the world every season.

Compared to its surroundings, Sunday River has some of the cheapest prices on lift tickets, starting at \$67.

"Theres more intermediate terrain sprawled across all eight peaks of the mountain," says math teacher Mr. Maxwell Girouard. "They have a lot of good glades, but not many steep trees. They are very good at moving people around, so lift lines are never excessive like other mountains can be. But I've been snowboarding there before Ikon bought them out, and it has gotten better since then, you can see more investment."

Roughly four hours from Boston, **Saddleback** is one of the best family ski resorts, according to *Boston.com*. The hefty variety of beginner all the way to advanced terrain assures an enjoyable experience for the whole family.

For daredevils, Saddleback also is home to some of the most gnarly tree skiing in the area. Unfortunately, lodging can be a bit of a struggle due to snowmobiling being so popular in the small town of Rangely, which results in hotels booking quickly. Still, with 600+ skiable acres and a 2,000 foot vertical drop, Saddleback has it all.

**See SKIING on page 2**

# There's No Such Thing as a 'Bad' Ski Day at These Big-3 Maine Mountains

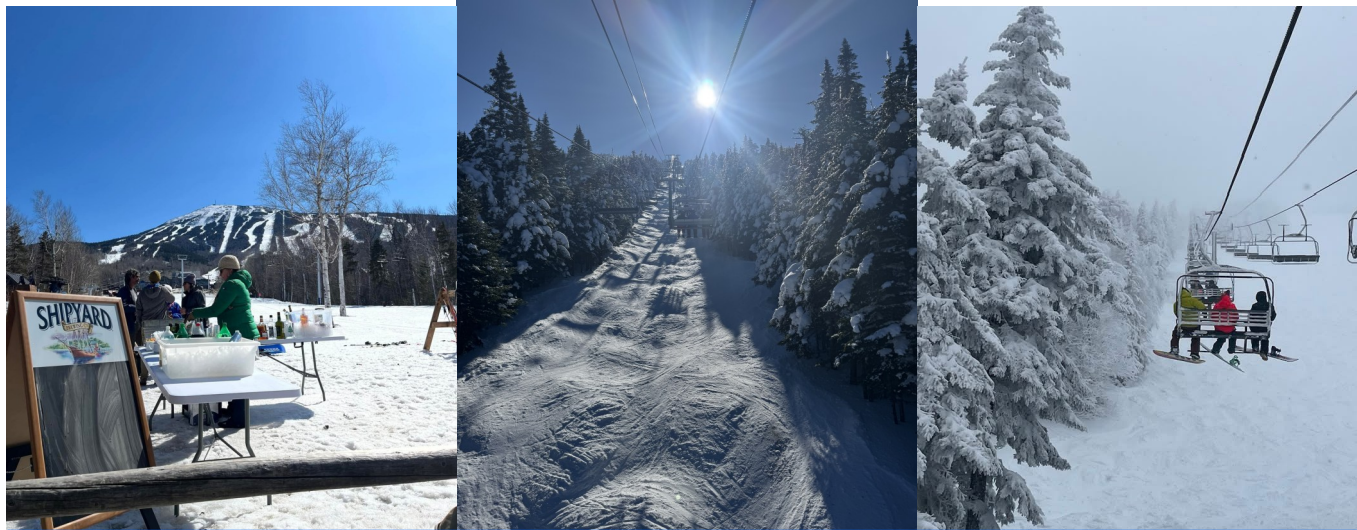
## SKIING from page 1

"Saddleback is a really big mountain with all level terrain and it has really nice open glades," sophomore Carolyn Silva explained. "It is in the middle of nowhere, and there aren't really any places to eat, but it's worth the really long drive in the end. One thing that I really like about Saddleback is how easy it is to navigate. After skiing there for a morning, you'll know the mountain by the afternoon."

Lastly, known as one of the most lively mountains in the East, standing at an overwhelming 4,237 feet, is **Sugarloaf**. Offering the largest vertical drop in the region, Sugarloaf is the second highest peak in Maine and attracts tourists year round.

Between its winter specialties and its summer mountain-biking trails, Sugarloaf is never a dull place. With fabulous lodging, excellent terrain, and a raving party scene, you really can't go wrong in any category.

"Sugarloaf is my absolute favorite mountain," says English teacher, Mr. James Allen. "It's where I grew up and learned how to ski. In my junior year of high school, a few buddies and I bought season passes for about \$200 and made the two-hour drive almost every weekend." Allen then explained that over all the mountains Maine offers, Sugarloaf is the true 'Mainer's' mountain. "It has amazing above-treeline skiing and it's a big enough mountain where you can get lost."



From left to right, Sugarloaf Mountain is the tallest ski mountain in New England; Sunday River on a bluebird day; Saddleback brags about terrain and great snow (O'Neill images).

The 'Big Three' aren't just the biggest mountains in Maine, they are some of the highest peaks in New England. With expert to beginner skiing, thousands of tourists make the trip across these areas each winter. From the first snow flakes, to the last bit of slush, Sunday River, Saddleback, and Sugarloaf offer a good time and great skiing.

## See THEATER on page 2

excitement of the awards ceremony at the end of the day.

For many participants, performing in front of an audience of fellow thespians creates a unique, supportive environment.

"I look forward most to meeting new people and performing in front of an audience of entirely theater kids," said Heidi Sanger, a Triton High School senior, whose school is performed *New in Town*. "It is the most supportive audience I have ever performed in front of."

In addition to the competitive festival, METG also hosts the Massachusetts Theater Celebration, a non-Competitive event where students perform their work and receive feedback professional theater practitioners. The event focus on collaboration rather than

judging and allows students to participate in short workshops and discussions. This year's celebration took place on March 7.

Schools that participate in these events may also be selected to represent Massachusetts at the New England Drama Festival, which brings together two schools from each of the six New England states for performances, workshops, and discussions about theater education. The 2026 festival will take place April 30 through May 2.

For nearly a century, METG has supported theater education across Massachusetts by working with teachers and artists, advocating for arts funding, and encouraging students to develop leadership and creative skills.

For many, the drama festival represents more than a performance. It is a chance to connect with a statewide community of students who share the same passion for theater.

## BUDGET from page 1

In November 2025, The Triton School Committee and District Administration started discussing budget proposals. The first budget draft by the District was higher than last year's budget by \$4.6 million and was rejected by the school committee. The administration worked to cut it back another \$2.56 million. Those cuts will mean a reduction in teachers and course offerings.

In a recent email, Forget wrote to Triton staff sharing his thoughts on the recently approved budget.

"As you likely already know, this was not an easy budget to develop," Forget wrote, "as we are tasked with threading the needle between what we need in order to provide high-quality services for our students and what Triton's three-member towns can afford. All of this occurs in the larger context of substantially reduced state funding for school districts in Massachusetts, particularly smaller school districts like ours."

Readers can find information on this year's budget process with meeting-by-meeting summaries by visiting [www.tritonschools.org](http://www.tritonschools.org), clicking on the "finance and operations" department, and following the "budget" links to the FY2027 budget documents.

Included Savings, Reductions, or New Anticipated Revenues		
Location	Position/Item Reductions	FTE
NES	Classroom Teacher (Grade 2 - Current Grade 1 Student Cohort - See pg.12)	1.0
NES	Classroom Teacher (Grade 5 - Current Grade 4 Student Cohort - See pg.12)	1.0
NES	Instructional Assistants - Reduction of 2 Assistants	2.0
PGS	Classroom Teacher (Grade 4 - Current Grade 3 Student Cohort - See pg.12)	1.0
PGS	Instructional Assistants - Reduction of 2 Assistants	2.0
SES	Classroom Teacher (Grade 5 - Current Grade 4 Student Cohort - See pg.12)	1.0
SES	Classroom Teacher (Grade 6 - Current Grade 5 Student Cohort - See pg.12)	1.0
SES	Special Education Teacher	1.0
SES	Instructional Assistants - Reduction of 2 Assistants	2.0
Aggregate Elementary School Reduction Savings:		\$ 696,658
TRMS	English Teacher	1.0
TRMS	Math Teacher	1.0
TRMS	Science Teacher	1.0
TRMS	Social Studies Teacher	1.0
TRMS	Instructional Assistants - Reduction of 2 Assistants	2.0
Aggregate Middle School Reduction Savings:		\$ 476,216
TRHS	Science/Tech. Education Teacher	1.0
TRHS	Math/Business Teacher	1.0
TRHS	English Teacher	1.0
TRHS	LIFT Program Change - Teacher shift to Instructional Assistant with Therapist	n/a
TRHS	Instructional Assistants - Reduction of 3 Assistants	3.0
Aggregate High School Reduction Savings:		\$ 345,105
DISTRICT	English Learner Teacher (combined reduction)	0.8
DISTRICT	Business Office Administrative Support Staff	1.0
Aggregate District-Wide/Central Office Reduction Savings:		\$ 140,290
Total Personnel Reductions & Savings:		FTE Savings 25.8 \$ 1,658,269

\* All positions listed above assumes both salary and medical/dental benefits.

Page 7 of Triton's Final Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2027 lists the staff reductions and total savings the school committee approved during its meeting on March 11, 2026. The cuts are the equivalent to the loss of 25.8 full time teaching positions ([tritonschools.org](http://tritonschools.org)).

## ELECTIVES from page 1

professional setting just the knowledge of how to be able to you know 3D model and 3D print and all that could help you out in the future just even for your own entertainment and enjoyment so I say this is very much a worth"

In the robotics class there are about five groups for two students and every group has their own robot, which they build for a course in the workshop. They have three official attempts to get the fastest time possible. They try to make and design a robot that can make the fastest time.

Teacher's Assistant and senior Luke Aham recommends the class and the club that accompanies it.

"I took the class sophomore year, and I wish I could do it again," said Aham. "You can do the club, but it's not the same as doing it in school. I think it's so much more fun with all your classmates and everyone will let full classroom with Mr. Guerin. He is new but he's having a great time with it. You can 3D print so many parts there's so much materials that you can use to your advantage and build whatever you want. It's such a fun and creative class, I'd recommend it to anyone."

## Triton Music Arts

Music teacher Craig Kemp teaches all the music courses for the Triton Arts Department, including, Intro to Music, AP Music Theory, and Sound Recording Technology. He enjoys teaching all of his electives and loves the variety of different lenses he can look at music through in all of his classes.

"Music in general is a combination of all the other skills in all the other subjects in one," said Kemp. "Like for example, there's a lot of mathematics that goes into creating music. You have to have the timing accurate. You have to pitch, which is also getting into science and frequency. There's a lot of physical activity, when you're making music as well making sure that your posture and your breathing is correct. There's history. Where was this piece written? Who was it written by? What was it written for?"

What's the message of it? It gets into English too, there's a lot of poetic nature when you have words that you're singing. So to me music is a combination of all the other disciplines for one purpose and one goal."

In Choir/Chorus students practice singing for concerts, so in the first semester students prepare songs for the winter concert and then for the second semester, prepare songs for the spring concert.

Senior Luke Borchers has loved being in Kemp's classes. "Kemp is the best teacher I've ever had," said Borchers "He's more like a friend and less like an educator. He knows how to interact with his students and I genuinely think that he's one of the best teachers here at Triton. In terms of friendliness and overall teaching style"

In intro to music, students can learn to play and compose with instruments. In sound recording technology students learn to mix and use technology and run live sound.

## The Importance of Electives

Principal Patrick Kelley believes electives are an essential part of student life.

"For most of our students, electives give them a place where they can better understand themselves and their interests," said Kelley. "To see if that's something that they'd like to pursue in the future. The school day, whether you're typically someone that's really successful academically or not, can be hard at times. Being able to have a class that you consistently look forward to, that you're consistently excited about going to, that sparks your curiosity in a different way, is something that has real value."

He said electives at times provide exposure to new things. He's impressed when he sees "people testing out metalsmithing who he wouldn't have expected or someone that might be trying out something with robotics or just something different than what they might have initially guessed.

"It gives them a different type of insight into what they might want to do in the future."

# Dear Helga Studying Ideas, Stress Reduction



Dear Helga

Dear Helga,  
I can't find a good type of studying that works for me. Do you have any studying suggestions I could use (particularly in science)?

Dear Study Finder,  
Finding a good study method can be hard, and it depends on how you learn best. If you are a visual learner, try taking hand-written notes or watching Youtube videos. For science, a good channel can be the organic chemistry tutor. Try talking with your teacher and seeing if they have extra worksheets or practice for you to complete. Flash cards are also a helpful way to test your memory.  
Sincerely, Helga

Dear Helga,  
How should I deal with stress that is a combination of school work and college applications in my senior year? I have sports, academics, and AP classes as well as all these college and scholarship applications. How do I balance those things?

Dear Stressed Senior,  
You are in a tough position right now. What's most important is you focus on yourself and your needs. Get as much sleep as you can, and don't add any more commitments. Set goals for each day and do it one day at a time. But always make sure you're taking care of yourself as your top priority.  
Sincerely, Helga