

# ALAS NEWSPAPER

*Created by youth.*



*“You’re never too young to lead.”*

*- Kofi Annan*



# What A.L.A.S Learned

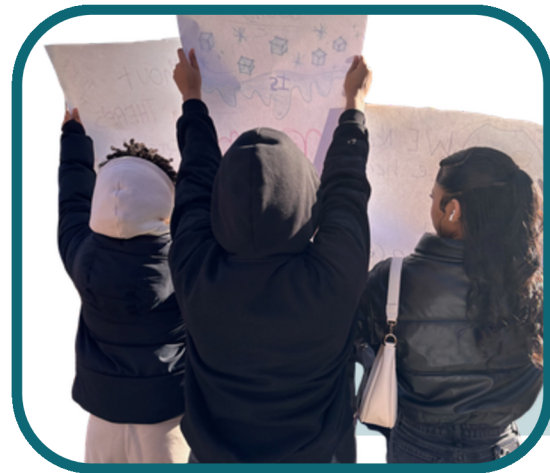
Throughout these weeks, the A.L.A.S students have learned different techniques and methods that can be applied in the real world. In this article, we will be focusing on the application and understanding of our **Amendments**.

When it comes to the Amendments, many ALAS students were not familiar with their rights, which is an issue, since these protections exist to ensure the government upholds and safeguards our freedoms.

One of the key amendments we have been utilizing the most is our **1st amendment right**, which **protects our freedom of speech, press, religion, assembly, and petition**.

On **April 9th**, Abbott Lawrence Academy held a youth-led Anti-ICE protest that ALAS was invited to join. The youth walked around City Hall, Common Park, and Essex Street to spread awareness with chants and small speeches.

This was a big learning experience not only for the youth but for anyone who would like to gain the ability to bring awareness while still staying within the guidelines of the amendment.





### *Policy Watch*

Policy Watch addresses local and federal issues. Recently, they have been focusing on ICE in Lawrence locally, and nationally on youth e-cigarette use, substance abuse prevention, mental health programs, and foreign policy topics like the 4 P's and U.S.-Cuba relations.



### *Media Team*

The Media Team is working on a social media post about the national minority health month. They're creating a poster on why it matters and showing people what we're doing in ALAS.



### *Press Team*

We're working on making the newsletters and providing information for the community. Letting the public know what we are learning, but also interacting with the community to know their opinions.

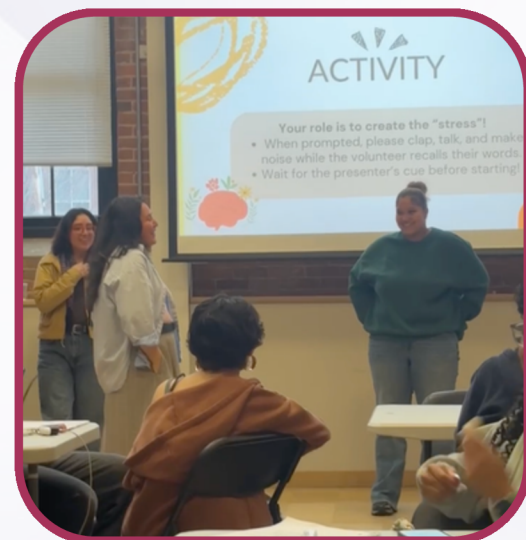


## *Guest Speakers from the Boston College School of Social Work: Tati, Fabi, & Rebecca*

### **Boston College School of Social Work**

came to A.L.A.S to do a workshop about the diverse meanings of mental health in daily situations, how to protect our emotional well-being when facilitating in the community, and a demonstration of how stress can feel in different environments.

Some of the most important topics about this presentation were how they explained how the mitochondria work, the meaning of the frontal lobe, and how stress can affect us as youth leaders in the community.



# LPS School Committee Forum

The Lawrence School Committee Board oversees and makes decisions for Lawrence Public Schools, focusing on budgeting, programs, hiring, and community concerns. The forum allows people to share issues like safety, education, and funding, but many youth felt that there could have been better outreach efforts. Due to language barriers, it also made it harder for some community members to participate, confusing. Overall, this shows the need for more inclusion, transparency, and accessibility, especially for youth voices.

On **March 31**, the School Committee met at Lawrence CommunityWorks.

The following are quotes from our ALAS Youth who attended the Forum and how they felt it went:

**“What I observed at the school committee was that they were so focused on running out of time that we ended up running out of time. This was meant to be for the youth who created questions to get their questions answered, yet rarely were any questions answered. On top of that, many of the questions were not properly answered; either they took a different direction, or they spent too much time stating how Lawrence is the best. The mayor was on FaceTime at some point, which seemed very unprofessional, especially since he only answered 2 questions. This school committee could have been run more smoothly, maybe next time it can be more neat.”**

**- A. Mejia**

**“From the time I was there, I was really interested and never got bored. I wish I had stayed a little longer. I found that the event was very rushed and straight to the point; some people were cut off, and stuff was awkward. I also didn’t like how the translation was going, with translators leaving stuff out. With my impression being disrespectful, it was my first time going to a school committee [forum] like that, and I would definitely do it again to just watch. And see how my community comes together and ask questions.”**

**- J. Orellana**



# Local News

**Public Trust & Leadership Concerns**  
The controversy has led to calls for leadership accountability, including demands for the mayor to address the situation. Raises larger issues about trust between the community and local government.

## Community Development Funding (FY2027 Plan)

Lawrence is expected to receive about \$2.4 million for housing and community development programs. Residents can submit feedback during the public comment period.



## Affordable Housing Efforts

Local organizations like the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council received funding to support new housing development projects.

**Education & Community Communication**  
Ongoing updates from Lawrence Public Schools to improve communication and progress within the district.

**Community Voice & Participation Issues**  
Recent local forums (like school committee meetings) raised concerns about:  
Limited youth participation  
Language barriers and translation issues  
Need for more inclusive community engagement



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# LCW Gala



The gala took place at the Elks Lodge in Lawrence, where awards were presented to community members acknowledging their contributions to Lawrence, as well as performances by Movement City Alumni, and a few speeches were delivered, including a speech by the Vice President of the City Council.

ALAS students got to apply their networking skills by connecting with organizations within the Lawrence community and exchanging business cards. Shoutout to our ALAS representatives, **Amaya, Alina, Justin, and Schoanna**, who each represented their cohort by introducing ALAS and sharing the impactful work they've accomplished so far.



**Gabriela Betances** - Atrius Project Director

**Yami Villaronga** - Youth Coordinator and Leadership Organizer





# City Hall Field Trip



**April 7th, 2026**

A.L.A.S went on a field trip to the Lawrence City Hall, where they were guided by **Commissioner Angello Nunez**. He led the group through the different areas of local government, giving the youth a chance to meet many of the people who keep the City of Lawrence running.

During the visit, the youth explored several departments, including the Public Works room and the new City Council forum room. This experience gave them a clearer understanding of how the different departments work together to support the community. They also learned that each role, no matter how big or small, plays an important part in making the city function.

The trip helped students see how local government operates and inspired them to become more involved.



# Guest Speaker

Wangeci Gitau (she/they) is a Kenyan-born writer, activist, and educator based in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Her work focuses on immigrant, queer, and African femme experiences. She is the author of several poetry collections and co-founder of Exposed Brick Literary Magazine.



On April 8, 2024, she led a workshop called “Overcoming, Softly,” where participants reflected on meaningful photos, practiced grounding exercises, and used creative materials like magazines and books to explore memory, emotion, and storytelling.

Wangeci also taught the A.L.A.S Youth a method called the “Butterfly Breathing Method” to regulate our stress during work and even personal activities.

On top of that, the A.L.A.S Youth got to tap into their writing about personal experiences through their favorite pictures to use their creativity in poems or brief descriptions.



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# Spotlight of the week!



## Massive shoutout to Mailey Guerrero!

This week's spotlight recognizes an outstanding individual who is currently a sophomore at Greater Lawrence Technical School and is involved in the Media Team and Career Exploration cohort. Massive shoutout to Mailey Guerrero! Mailey, you are a remarkable person who is very willing to try new things; your positive attitude and dedication stand out. Her creativity shines through in her work, inspiring those around her to think outside the box. We are proud to have Mailey in ALAS and can't wait to see all the amazing things she will accomplish in the future.