



The arrival of this year's yearbook came only about one week after last year's smaller, soft-cover books were distributed. But even the one-year-late 2010 editions were an improvement from the [2006 yearbooks](#), which students didn't receive copies of until two years later.

The book's staff, content and design were [overhauled this year](#). There are stories and journalistic coverage of major events from the past year laid across creative page designs. And for the first time the book was not a senior-centric publication; but rather included the entire school, from 7th grade to 12th.

(To read more about the process of making the 2011 yearbook, [click here](#). To read more about the two-year delayed 2006 yearbook, [click here](#).)

Some seniors had initially been wary that including underclassmen would take away from the book's focus on the graduating class, explained 18-year-old Jessica Sandell of Roslindale.

But, if anything the book expanded its coverage of the senior class, while finding space to include each member of the 1,200-plus student body. A senior supplement book that will include prom, graduation, and class superlative coverage will also be distributed later this summer.

And, said Sandell of the younger classes, "They're part of the school, too. At the end of the day, I'd like to know who I went to school with," since friendships and relationships often cross grade-lines.

She and some others purchased the book early in the year, saving \$30 off the last-minute price of \$65. As Sandell swapped books with 18-year-old Kyle Zene-Moore, he lamented over having to cough up nearly double the early-bird price when he purchased his moments earlier.

"Honestly, I'm surprised we got them before we left," said Zene-Moore of Roxbury.

Seventeen-year-old Darina Paulino was also initially hesitant to commit to buying a copy.

"At first, I didn't want to because I didn't want to pay for it. It would have just sat on a shelf somewhere collecting dust," she said after excitedly discovering her photo in the book. "Then I felt like I had to because they're my friends and I'm going to miss them."

Along with including younger students in the book's pages, the yearbook club opened its doors to allow underclassmen to help make it.

"Overall, it came out amazing – much better than we expected. And, hopefully [the younger club members] will continue to make it better each year," said graduating yearbook club staffer Christina Perry, 19, of Dorchester.

Fifteen-year-old sophomore Kerlie Merizier of Hyde Park said she plans to return to the yearbook club staff when the process begins again next fall.

"I'm proud of it. I think we pulled it together," she said, while helping pass out and sell remaining copies to seniors.

"It's really nice. We worked hard and it shows," added Stephanie Robinson-Clark, 17, of Roxbury, one of the 23-member club's six seniors.

While there were at least some typos, including a few names and photos that didn't match up, a sales representative from the book's publisher [Walsworth Yearbooks](#) explained such mistakes are inevitable in any student-driven

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publication.

"The reality is there's never a perfect yearbook. It happens," said Michelle Sidwell, whose company was contracted by the O'Bryant school to publish its yearbook for the first time this year and donated full color printing services for the entire book.

English teacher Betsy Lazo, who joined the O'Bryant school four years ago, took over as yearbook club adviser this year and led the campaign to improve the book's quality and punctuality. Only around one in every 10 students ordered a yearbook, but the staff expects that by establishing a solid product this year, skepticism will fade and sales figures will rise in the years ahead.

"I think we're still a work in progress, but I think for all of the hurdles we had, we did OK," said Lazo, adding that she's hoping to find a way to make up for errors, possibly with a corrections page in the senior supplement book.

Senior Binyam Sirmollo, 19, of Jamaica Plain was ecstatic with his copy as he quickly moved from one classmate to the other to make sure he had a signature from them all as the final hours of his high school career dwindled away.

"This year it's amazing. It represents what our class has been through this past year. I'm going to cherish it for life," said Sirmollo adding he plans to keep his copy within close reach on his dorm room desk at college next fall. "The fact that she [Ms. Lazo] got it done on point [on time] means a lot."

Susan Helmy, 18, of Roslindale and classmate Sharel'le Olivier, 17, of Mattapan expressed pleasant surprise with the book's quality.

"I'm going to have everyone sign it," Helmy said. "Everyone wants one."

Everyone, including 18-year-old Tanya Lanchester, who didn't order a copy because, based on past year's books, "honestly, I thought it would be crap."

"I definitely regret it. I need one, whether people get a chance to sign it or not," said the determined Dorchester teen. "There's no trying [to get a copy]; I'm definitely going to get one."

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