

**SAY SOMETHING**  
ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM

1. LOOK for WARNING SIGNS & THREATS
2. ACT IMMEDIATELY take it seriously
3. SAY SOMETHING to a trusted adult OR SUBMIT AN ANONYMOUS TIP

The Say Something-Anonymous Reporting System is a program that gives you the power to look out for everyone.

Say Something system helps students keep Cooper safe

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Hawk mascot injects fun, community spirit into school sporting events

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# STUDENTS, STAFF ADAPT TO NEW NO-PHONE POLICY

Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

Students can still access their phones before first period, during fifth period, after school and in between classes.

ByHEATHER HOLZERSMITH  
*Quill* staff writer

Today’s youth love to mindlessly scroll on their phones, but what happens when you tell them to put their devices away? A new phone policy was implemented across all the schools in the Robbinsdale School District this year, prompting a variety of opinions

about the change from Cooper students and teachers.

Many of the teachers said that the policy was long overdue, because in recent years, there were no real consequences for students who chose to use their phones for the entirety of class. Students would often miss important instructions, which lead to poor grades and short attention spans.

“After the COVID-19 shutdown, students had become so accustomed to using their phones at will during online school hours that they brought that expectation with them when they returned to the classroom. Students were taking calls during class and watching shows on streaming services, and there were angry outbursts and defiant

when they were asked to put them away. Something had to be done,” Economics and World History teacher Mr. O’Brien said.

Once schools returned to in-person classes, students had yet to break the habit of using their phones during class time. The district’s new policy is designed to eliminate the phone habit.

Cooper joined the rest of the schools in the district in banning student phones during class

“Knowing when, how and why we use phones appropriately is something that will serve you your whole life, especially considering these phones aren’t going anywhere. They’re here to stay, so let’s build some good habits,” art teacher Ms. McNeil said. “For all we know, in 50 years, phones could be implanted on our wrists turning us all into cyborgs. As creepy as it is to imagine that, it’s a possibility, so why not build some good boundaries with technology today to maybe avoid that.”

One teacher who said that not having school-wide policy led to phones becoming an enormous distraction without much accountability for students was Ms. Major, an English teacher. She said phone use has been a big issue for a long time and young people need support in learning how to function while also owning a personal device. Through the new policy, she said students are getting a push in the right direction to enhance their capacity to stay focused and engaged in class.

Teachers are now working to implement this policy. Economics and Geography teacher Mr. DiSalvi states that, while he is giving specific instructions, he will try to subtly

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## Hawks welcome Assistant Principal Mr. Purvis

After being an assistant principal at Robbinsdale Middle School, Purvis filled the position left open when Ms. Smith became head principal

By NOAH PLAHN  
*Quill* staff writer

Cooper welcomed Mr. Purvis as a new assistant principal during the 2023-2024 school year.

The opening for a new assistant principal position dates back to the winter of last school year. Mr. Herman stepped down from his position as head principal of Cooper last winter after eight years in the position. With this vacancy, Cooper quickly needed to find a new head principal. Assistant Principal Ms. Smith stepped into this role on an interim basis at the end of last school year before fully becoming head principal during the 2023-2024 school year. With her new position, a vacancy was left at one of the assistant principal positions, which Purvis is now filling.

Purvis made the transition from his previous assistant principal role at Robbinsdale Middle School (RMS), which is a feeder school to Cooper. This means most RMS students will transfer to Cooper upon finishing middle school. As a result of that connection, Purvis’ past provides him with insight into Cooper’s students. For the next two years, Purvis will know a handful of students from every grade level and can guide the incoming freshmen students of Cooper as they enter their first year of high school and beyond.

Purvis previously worked as a science teacher before accepting the position of assistant principal at Plymouth Middle School (PMS), where he stayed for three years before going to Meadow Lake Elementary.

“I learned so much about the foundations of education. I probably grew more professionally during that time than at any time in my career. I learned a lot. But midway through the year, I was placed at Fair School. They were going through some transitions and needed some help, so I helped them out,” he said.

Eventually, Purvis had the chance to move back to the middle school level and took advantage of the opportunity.

“I’ve always been at middle school. I taught middle school science and then was at PMS. After that year was done, an opening came up at RMS and the rest is history. I was at RMS for four years and then came to Cooper this year,” he said.

Purvis added that his connection to the district goes back to even before he worked as a teacher and administrator.

Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

Purvis said he enjoys the fact he already knows many Cooper students.

“I graduated from Armstrong, which is crazy. What’s really funny is I feel more attached and more drawn to Cooper. It is the weirdest thing. I grew up in this area and graduated from Armstrong but I relate and feel drawn more to this building, which is so interesting. I never thought I’d say that, but being here makes you a believer. I love it here,” he said.

Purvis has many responsibilities and duties in his new role at Cooper.

“Right now, it’s BARR and MTSS, and then, of course, after-school supervision and duties. [I also make] sure that instruction across the board is being delivered at the level that we expect,” he said.

Another big aspect of his job is working with the students he previously had at RMS.

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## New state policy leads to removal of school resource officers

Police departments, school districts throughout Minnesota are waiting for legislators to better clarify the law

By CHIMUAL VANG  
*Quill* staff writer

New policy changes at the Minnesota state level brought the removal of police departments’ school resource officers (SROs) from many schools at the beginning of fall 2023, including the officers that were at Cooper.

Issued at a state level, a new memorandum led to a change in the corporal punishment statute, 121 A.58., which states that, “an employee or agent of the district, including a school resource officer or police officer contracted with the district, shall not inflict any form of physical holding that restricts or impairs a pupil’s ability to breathe or communicate distress, places pressure or weight on a pupil’s head, throat, neck, chest, lungs,

sternum, diaphragm, back or abdomen, or results in straddling a pupil’s torso or prone. Only under harm or a life threatening situation, may a School Resource Officer intervene.”

This new law brought a change in the restraining methods that could be used on students. This change brought many concerns within the law enforcement community about limits on what a SRO may do. Specifically, they are only allowed to act in a conflict of a life-threatening situation.

Pending further instructions or a change to the law, the Robbinsdale School District has removed SROs, as have most districts across Minnesota. Until this is resolved, SROs are not allowed around school grounds nor in the building. However, if 911 is called, the officers are allowed to be present at schools.

Due to the controversy around this new law,

Minnesota State Attorney General Keith Ellison has attempted to offer guidance that the way police departments are reacting to the law is based on some misunderstandings. He advised that SROs are still allowed to act, but are only restricted by the detaining method being used.

Despite Ellison’s statements, there is still speculation about the legal impact of using specific methods of detaining someone and the fact that those actions may possibly lead to accusations of causing injury to a minor. Therefore, the New Hope Police Department decided that, for the security of their officers, it was best to extract them from Cooper before any misunderstandings occur.

Currently, there is still no news on how this sit-

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## PURVIS

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“This feels like RMS 2.0. The kids are a little bigger, they’re grown, but it was simple. I already knew the freshmen coming in, and some of the sophomores and juniors, and apparently some of the seniors, too,” he said.

Purvis has a number of goals for the school year now that he is in this new environment.

“Right now, [I want to] get to know the rest of the students and staff. [I want to] learn high school and how it’s done, the ins and outs, the nooks and crannies. Most of the kids I already know, but it’s just the systems, and once you understand the systems that are put in place, then you can kind of operate the way you need to operate and be efficient and effective. My goal is just to be effective,” he said.

On top of his goals, Purvis said he is looking forward to taking part in high school events.

“The thing I’m looking forward to is the thing that made me hesitate about coming to high school, which was events. The football games and other [events] give me an excuse to actually be there because I actually have to be there and I actually love it. I’m looking forward to seeing how graduation goes this year, too. I know that’s kind of crazy already looking towards the end of the year, but seeing what that’s like and seeing the work that’s put into organizing and setting that up and watching 300 or 400 some-odd kids walk across the stage. I’m very curious and I am excited. Like I said, it’s RMS 2.0, so a lot of the kids walking are mine,” he said.

One staff member who has been working closely with Purvis this school year is Assistant Principal Mr. Nelson. For 12 years, Nelson has been a staff member at Cooper; and he is currently the assistant principal for students in grades 11 and 12. Nelson said Purvis’ arrival at Cooper has benefited the school.

“The benefit is that he’s got a lot of experience. He’s coming from middle school and so it’s nice to see somebody in our high school that has a different lens than we’re used to. It’s been refreshing because it’s a little change. Also, he comes from RMS. A majority of our students come from RMS because it’s a feeder school. He knows a good number of students already coming in so that’s been a big benefit as well and we don’t have to learn about all the ninth graders here,” he said.

Nelson said he has enjoyed working with Purvis this year.

“I know him pretty well. My wife is an admin over at RMS and so I knew him through her. Mr. Purvis and I are kindred spirits, so we like to work hard but like to have fun as well, and because of that, we are able to joke around and lighten the mood and make sure that even though we’re a serious place, sometimes you need that comic relief to kind of help things out,” he said.

According to Nelson, his personal connection with Purvis has extended beyond a shared interest in working at Cooper.

“We’re also kindred spirits when it comes to our geekiness. He’s a big-time *Star Wars* geek, and I love all things pop culture, so when it comes to *Star Wars*, I dig it. When it comes to Marvel, he’s all about it, so he gets a lot of my weird obscure references, which is nice so I don’t have to try to explain when I say something sarcastic all the time,” Nelson said.

Another colleague Purvis works with directly is Smith, who said Purvis’ arrival at Cooper has been of benefit to the school.

“Mr. Purvis was the assistant principal at RMS for years, and so many of our students here at Cooper actually know him already, so that’s a huge benefit. Not only that, but he knows Robbinsdale. RMS is a feeder school to Cooper, so he has that background. Overall, it’s been a really smooth transition,” she said.

Smith said it has been easy to work with Purvis this school year.

“I think he fits right into the team, and I think it’s important that you have different members of your team that bring different areas of strengths, and so I think we have a good balance with our team,” she said.

As the school year moves forward, Smith said she’s looking forward to seeing Purvis bring his perspective to the way in which Cooper runs.

“I am looking forward to his continued connections that he makes with our students, I’m looking forward to some new and different ideas that we can try here at Cooper that possibly worked at RMS, and I’m looking forward to laughing [with] Mr. Purvis quite often,” she said.

# Reporting system designed to keep school safe

Introduced at Cooper this year, the Say Something program was first created after the Sandy Hook tragedy



Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

Posters promoting the anonymous reporting system can be seen on bulletin boards throughout the school.

By CHIMUAL VANG  
Quill staff writer

Cooper has implemented the Say Something Anonymous Reporting System as an official online resource during the 2023-2024 school year. This system allows students and staff to share information they may have about issues related to school safety so that officials can take action.

“Hopefully, this gives students

an opportunity to be more open about their concerns, so we can act upon it to avoid it from happening,” Head Principal Ms. Smith said.

The Say Something system is a program that any school in America can join. With the district’s permission, it was decided that Cooper could sign up for it on behalf of Cooper students’ safety and comfort.

According to the organiza-

tion’s website, the three tips that the Say Something Anonymous Reporting System upholds are, “1. Recognize warning signs and threats. If you hear or see something unorthodox in person or online, take note of it. This might be the early sign of something in the future.

“2. Act immediately if you notice these signs. If there is confirmation of these warning signs, please advise with proper behavior,

and report these signs.

“3. Say something. Tell someone you can trust, or a trusted adult, use the anonymous reporting system and speak up. Don’t wait and assume that someone else will come by to do so.”

This system was established after the mass shooting incident at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012. The Robbinsdale District and Cooper became aware of the system and worked together to make sure students have access to it in order to be liberated of their concerns. This system is now available and accessible to any students in grades six to 12.

Students can access the anonymous reporting system by going to the official website: saysomething.net. Students may also download the app on their mobile phones.

When students make a report, it will be sent to a trained crisis counselor, who then will gather the details and involve school administrators and law enforcement if necessary.

“It works as a safety net. Most students will feel more comfortable that way,” Assistant Principal Mr. Nelson said.

As a reminder, Nelson added that both students and staff can make a report. Though some people may be hesitant to use the anonymous reporting system for fear of being labeled “as a snitch,” Nelson encourages students to not be afraid and to report the issues that concern them about the school community’s safety.

# Seniors preparing for life after graduation

Whether it is applying to college or seeking out a job, members of the Class of 2024 are starting to weigh their options

By DRIANA SANMARTIN  
Quill staff writer

Seniors planning for life after high school have many resources and people to go to at Cooper for help and guidance.

The Get Ready room on the third floor is one place students can go if they want to start looking into colleges or just want some guidance about the future. Get Ready workers can provide some assistance if you currently want to start visiting your future school choices or if you just want to get some idea of what you’re looking into for your academic future. If you still aren’t sure of what you may want to do, Get Ready is there to help you look into career interests.

“Seniors who are not sure what to do next should come talk to Get Ready. We are here to help students troubleshoot what they want to do after high school and figure out what their strengths and interests are. Students should also explore what their career interests are on their own and do a deep dive for more information,” Ms. Ka Siab said.

Another resource available to students is their grade-level school counselor. Ms. Walters, who works with 12th graders,

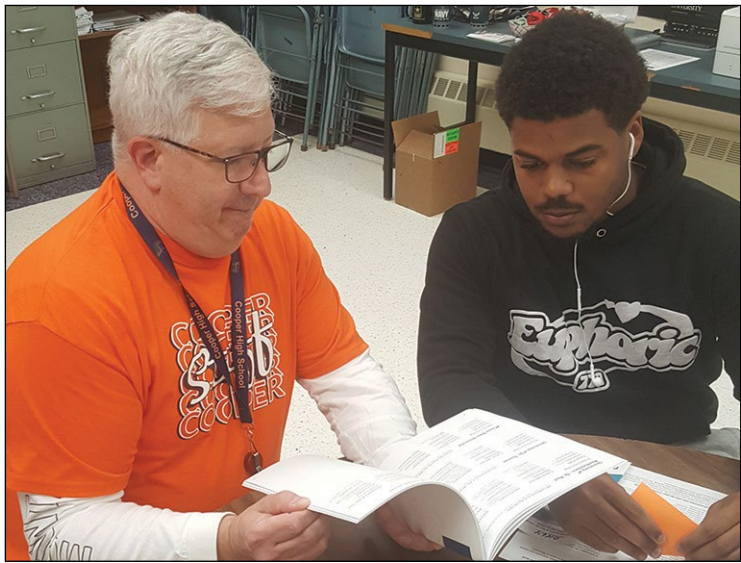


Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

Mr. Rosenblum in the College and Career Center helps guide many seniors.

said that seniors should begin by thinking about careers that would interest them.

“You should start to get a good idea of what types of careers would interest you and then find post-secondary options that align with that goal. You shouldn’t start applying to schools until the fall of your senior year, but by junior year, you should be considering schools,” she stated.

An additional place to go for guidance would be the College and Career Center. Overseeing that room is Mr. Rosenblum, who can help get students going in the

right direction.

“We work with students and staff in the building to help them figure out life after high school. Whatever that may be, college, trades or trade school, work, military, internships, etc., we are here to work together to help students get going in the right direction and succeed,” Rosenblum said.

For some students, the idea of enrolling in college can be overwhelming. In this case, Rosenblum said students should look for something outside of school in case that is where their

future interests may be.

“I would encourage every student to try to take some classes, or at least a class, in something outside of high school. College isn’t for everyone, but even if you want to be a technician or a lifeguard or anything, you have to take a class or attend some training somewhere along the line,” he said.

While in one’s senior year, students may start stressing or feel that making decisions about the future is becoming too much to handle on their own. Ms. Yang from Get Ready said it’s a good idea for seniors to seek out help if they are feeling this way.

“I also strongly advise students to look into mental health services if they are feeling lost, unsure, and/or just overall overwhelmed,” she said.

With so much to take in and think about, Walters said seniors should remember to keep their heads up and keep moving forward since there are a lot of opportunities and people who can help guide them.

“Just be your best self. High school can be tough sometimes, but it’s necessary to move on to your next step. There are lots of different supports for you at school so take advantage of that,” Walters said.

# Student Council working on plans for rest of school year

The group’s leaders work with students, staff members to develop initiatives that will benefit the larger Cooper community

By LEO PEREZ  
Quill staff writer

The team that leads the Cooper Student Council has shared plans for the 2023-2024 school year, which is full of events that will support the school and its students.

The Student Council advisor is Ms. Geise, who has been working at Cooper for 16 years and has been advising the council for 14 years. Geise explained that her work with the council is limited as “only the [student] president and vice president actually form the meetings.”

According to Geise, the Student Council tries to make decisions that will benefit students directly by working with school officials to create and fund events for students. The students in the

group are elected by other students to represent them, which also betters their leadership skills.

Two current leaders in Student Council are president Darien Muhen (12) and vice president

events is Hill, the youngest leader on the council. As a sophomore, he is now in his second year on Student Council. Being the youngest member to be elected as vice president, he said he finds the job to be

**Student Council President Darien Muhen (12) said some events she and the group have worked on this school year have included a suicide prevention program and the Hispanic Heritage Month.**

Chad Hill (10). Muhen has now been on the council for four years. Some upcoming events she is helping the group plan for include a suicide prevention program and the Hispanic Heritage Month.

Also leading the group’s

challenging at times because “other members believe [he] doesn’t have the skillset to properly work effectively” due to his age.

Despite this, he said he works hard on the events he contributes to, including Cooper’s homecom-

ing events in September. Additionally, Hill said the group is also beginning work on a cultural festival that will be held in January 2024.

In order to become part of the Student Council, six representatives from each grade are chosen every year. Interested students can fill out an application form online. Once the applicants are tallied, the other students in that grade level vote for the classmates they want to have represent them on the council.

Once the representatives have been chosen, Muhen said they meet in the Media Center during the 5A advisory session every Wednesday. Muhen added that the council is doing the best they can to make sure this school year is the best it can be for Cooper students. She added that they’re “just getting started.”



# Students question parking permit costs

Seniors, juniors consider whether or not it is worth the price tag to drive themselves to school every day



Photo by BETHZY ARIAS-PLIEGO

Despite some students thinking the cost is too high, many Hawks still elect to drive to school.

By BETHZY ARIAS-PLIEGO  
*Quill* staff writer

Cooper’s student parking costs are higher than other area schools, which is causing some concerns among students.

Students who park at Cooper have to pay to do so. It is a requirement to pay and students who attempt to park without paying will have a boot placed on one of their car tires until they pay. The yearly cost to park is \$170, while paying per semester is \$90. Lastly, the daily passes are \$3.

Students who decide in the morning to drive and buy a daily pass must go to the school bookkeeper, Ms. Wade, in the school’s

front office to get one. She will make sure you pay for your parking permit in order to have your car parked in the student parking lot.

If students don’t pay the fee, they will get a warning, and if they don’t listen to the first and second warnings, the third one will lead to them getting a boot on their car. The student then has to go to the bookkeeper and pay to get it removed.

Student reactions to the parking pass prices tend to be negative. Madi Watters (12) said that passes are “too expensive” and other schools “seem to offer a cheaper price” for students to park at the student parking lot.

“Having to pay for such a

high price is stupid because it’s way too expensive. Some spots are also too close to even park, and there is also less space with the trash cans being tied up. The prices are disagreeable and it is way too much. They should cut it in half and reduce the prices lower,” she said.

Despite these concerns, Watters said she bought two semester passes last year and the full-year pass this year.

Much like Watters, Paloma Orozco (12) said the prices are way too expensive and that having the prices so high is why there is always open space in the student parking lot. Orozco said she uses the \$90 pass for the semester.

Meanwhile, Axe Swanson

(12) said they believe that the prices should be lower and that the school is “doing us dirty” with the prices

“It’s not good that we have to pay to park somewhere that we need to be,” Swanson said.

An additional issue Swanson faces is that they do not live in the school district, so they do not have a bus and are forced to drive

“I wish that the prices were way cheaper,” Swanson said.

Another student whose unique situation leads to having to pay for parking is Carissa Chilson (12).

“For me, it was \$45 for the semester because I am in PSEO so I’m not here all day and they cut the cost for me,” Chilson said.

In her situation, Chilson said she thinks that the price for parking is fair. She also believes students should pay for parking because it’s a privilege to drive to school.

At the same time, she said that the ability to pay for parking depends on a person’s family situation. For example, she said “it would be nice” if students getting free and reduced lunch prices could have a free parking permit. Chilson added that she uses the semester pass option because it’s easier than paying for the whole year at once.

Another senior who had mixed feelings about the parking costs is Ricardo Castillo (12). He said that the prices are “a bit too much” and should be lowered.

“I feel like it should be \$50 for the semester and it could all just be \$100 in total,” he said. “Paying \$90 to almost \$200 is outrageous for a student parking lot and we aren’t even at a university.”

# New book club attracts lovers of mystery genre

Participants, who receive free copies of the selected books, meet monthly during HLL

By DRIANA SANMARTIN  
*Quill* staff writer

Cooper’s latest club venture is the Mystery Ink Book Club, which just started this school year. A club tailored to avid readers, the Mystery Ink Book Club ushers in a fresh opportunity for like-minded individuals to come together and dive into riveting discussions centered around the thrilling world of mysteries within each book they explore.

The club was started by Media Center Coordinator Mr. King, who was inspired to launch the book club after a previous survey conducted among AVID students revealed that they liked mysteries.

“I got the idea to have a book club based on mystery novels several years ago when a survey we gave to AVID students showed that their favorite genre of books was mysteries. I ran this club once back then, but it’s expensive to give books away, so I can’t necessarily do it every year,” King said.

The book club meets fifth period during both HLL A and HLL B on approximately the last Friday of each month. King said this schedule provides a generous window for students to fully immerse themselves in the assigned books. Additionally, they can also engage in discussions through the group’s Schoology discussion page as they read along.

One book club member who has enjoyed her experience so far is Becky Ochieng (12). They said they are excited about the chance to make more time for reading, especially with all their other commitments like extracurricular activities. The book club, for them, is like a fresh and welcome opportunity to dive into some good books.

“I joined the book club because I have a sense of passion for reading but always feel like I have little time to read due to extracurricular activities and others. Being a part of book club gives me time to connect more with books and engage in discussions with my peers who also share the love for reading,” Ochieng said.

Arun Saraswat (9), another member of the book club, shared that he joined the club with the hopes of not only discovering new friendships and enhancing his discussion skills, but also exploring different genres and expanding his reading horizons. He mentioned that the book club serves as a great platform for personal growth and intellectual enrichment.

“I joined book club because I am new here and wanted to be more outgoing and make more friendships here. I hope to take away the ability to be able to discuss a topic more in-depth,” Saraswat said.

Meanwhile, book club member Charles Nichols (11) expressed that his reasons for joining the book club were multifaceted.

“I decided to join the Mystery Ink Book Club for a few different reasons. One of them is that the media staff is great, and I would love to spend more time in the Media Center. Another is that I heard about the club from my sister a few years ago, as she was in it when she went here. Another reason was the fact that, last year in English class, we had a book club unit, and it was fun, so I thought it would be fun to join this one. Yet another reason would be that I was looking for a good book to read, so why not join a group reading the same book together?” Nichols said.

Finally, book club member Aicha Souare (12) revealed that her interest in the book club stemmed from her current fondness for books. What particularly appealed to her was the club’s unique ability to transform reading into an enjoyable experience rather than a chore. For Souare, it’s all about relishing the joy of reading.

“I choose to join a book club because it’s fun and I love reading, so having a thing that lets me read without being like an assignment or something is great for me,” Souare said.

With the new book club in the

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remind students to put their electronics away. He said his goal is never to get in a power struggle or to force a student to turn in their phone; rather, his goal is to get each student to re-engage with the lesson. This is the same for most teachers at Cooper.

“Each class period, I state the expectations clearly: phones away, headphones out of ears during instruction. I keep track on a clipboard and I let students know when they’ve violated the policy,” math teacher Ms. Fair-Manke said.

Fair-Manke said she is taking an organized approach and calmly reminds students that they are in the midst of a lecture. This is similar to special education teacher Ms. Stoltz, who says she reminds everyone of the expectation at the beginning of class. Next, she makes individual reminders, quietly and calmly. The individual reminders have proven to be really effective, she said.

All of the teachers said that students comply well with this policy. Fair-Manke said that students have been overwhelmingly cooperative, with most putting their device away after one reminder. O’Brien was also impressed with students in accordance with the phone policy.

“I have been very pleased that most students have been compliant with the new rules,” O’Brien said.

Careful analysis of what teachers said makes it apparent that they all find this new phone policy to be beneficial. While this may be true for the teachers, Cooper students have some conflicting opinions.

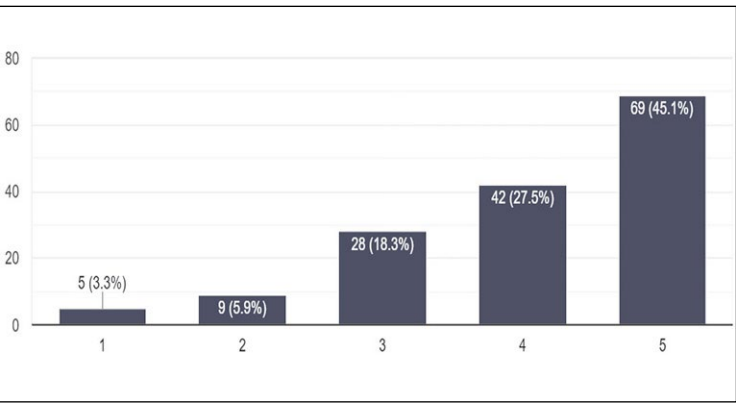
Students of all grades were asked to fill out a five-question survey about the new policy. Out of the 153 students who responded, 27.5 percent of them were freshmen, 30.1 percent were sophomores, 24.8 percent were juniors and 17.6 percent were seniors.

The first question asked was: Do you think the use of your phone positively or negatively impacts your ability to learn? Ninety students said their phone positively impacts their ability to learn, while 63 students said

the next topic: Do you think this new phone policy is helpful? While the data seems to be split, more students said that the policy was not helpful. Eighty-seven of the students said no, while 66 students said yes.

At the same time, more students did agree that teachers have been enforcing this policy well. One hundred and nineteen students said “yes” to teachers enforcing this policy well, while 34 said “no.”

“I think phone policy should vary



Infographic by HEATHER HOLZERSMITH

Less than half of respondents report having trouble putting their phones away, it negatively impacts them.

The next question asked students to rate on a scale of 1-5 how well they think they can control their phone use. On the scale, a one indicated that they have trouble controlling their use, while a five indicated that they have no trouble at all. The modal status of the resulting bar graph indicated that 45.1 percent of students don’t have many troubles putting their phone away during lectures.

Following that question was

from teacher to teacher, depending on their class and/or teaching style. Allowing students to go on their phones in classes that are self-paced while not letting them go on their phones during more lecture-based classes, might just be a good medium,” one student wrote in a survey tab that allowed for additional comments.

Students said they didn’t mind the policy because it varies from each teacher and how the class is structured. Mainly, student responses indicate

## NEW STATE POLICY LEADS TO REMOVAL OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS continued from page 1

uation will be resolved at a building or state level.

“The legislature announced that the limit of contact a school resource officer has with students will now be regulated, but it’s still concerning how much regulations may limit,” Administrative Intern Mr. Mahan said.

Mahan said he believes that SROs are not always a deterrent toward violence and misconduct between students. However, he added that teachers are not trained to break up fights like SROs are.

According to Assistant Principal Ms. Jefferson, there is concern that the lack of SROs may result in

worse offenses at school.

“We hope that the trust level will go back up between the school and SROs. With students getting into constant conflicts, we and our administrators will handle it until we can’t,” Jefferson said.

With the absence of SROs, Cooper and other district schools no longer have the presence of area law enforcement departments. Without police officers patrolling the school halls and school grounds, it is unclear how students may or may not feel about this sudden shift.

While some students may dislike police officers and some may not, Jefferson said she believes

that every SRO should always have proper etiquette, training and administrative knowledge before deployment, which has always been the case for Cooper’s SROs. This has been helpful as Cooper SROs have handled misconduct on school grounds in the past.

“We are lucky to have good SROs,” Jefferson said.

In fact, Jefferson added that her daughter works in a school resource officer department. One saying Jefferson’s daughter told her was: “Hate me if you want, condemn me if you want, you will still call for help.”

If pressure and complaints

against the legislation are given by parents and staff members, there may be a return of Cooper’s SROs. With roughly 1,600 students in the school each day, it is easy for negative encounters between students to occur. If there is no proper security when an issue occurs, there may not be a way to resolve it before it escalates without SROs in the building.

“This has been a recurring issue for almost 15 years now, and as of now, the situation is still very foggy,” Mahan said.

If and when the law is changed, SROs may be allowed back onto school grounds.

## NEW BOOK CLUB continues on page 4



Open lunch gives Hawks a chance to leave building

The ability to spend fifth period away from the school has its benefits, drawbacks

By AMARILYS BALMACEDA  
Quill staff writer

The juniors and seniors who got enrolled for open lunch during the first week of school do different activities in that free time outside of the building. This time can be used for getting food or relaxing, depending on the student and how they use the privilege.

The open lunch system has been at Cooper for many years. This program is made for juniors and seniors who are on track to graduate. Juniors need 22 credits and seniors need 33 credits to leave during fifth period.

The process begins after fourth period when students need to check out through the main foyer of the school. The line to go out is crowded at the beginning because everybody wants to have enough time, which makes the ID scanning harder.

“I’m here all the time and sometimes I have five people at the same time who want to go out immediately,” hallway supervisor Mr. O’Toole, who helps with open lunch, said.

After leaving, students have the full hour of fifth period to eat or merely hang out away from school. Staff members understand why this free period is important to students. For example, guidance counselor Ms. Bivona said it is important that “students can just have a beautiful time outside the building.” Of course, O’Toole added that whoever wants to go out has to be ready with their ID to enjoy their time.

One issue with open lunch is that the period may be used in negative or unintended ways. Assistant Principal Mr. Nelson said this is something administrators are concerned about.

“When they’re out, we don’t know what they are doing,” Nelson said.

For example, students may walk away from the school and come back late or not come back at all. Nelson said that, when this happens, the administration will take action.

Most students use fifth period to go to area businesses that have food and drink. The places where they go most often are Comer Park, Hy-Vee, McDonald’s and Caribou Coffee.

“I walk to Caribou or Hy-Vee with my friends then we come back trying to be on time,” Robin Jarman (11) said.

One issue with open lunch relates to the weather. Walking to get food is an option for students who do not have a car until the cold weather comes. That is the reason why some students don’t take part in the open lunch program

“I don’t want to be out because I don’t know where to go and the weather changes quickly,” Briseida Velazquez (11) said.

While there are diverse reasons why students do or do not take part in open lunch, Bivona said that it can be a good way for responsible students to go out and “breathe the fresh air.”

NEW BOOK CLUB  
continued from page 3

picture, members are excited about making new friends and having some memorable experiences. It’s hoped these good times will spread to future members and rekindle an excitement for reading and discussion. According to King, it’s all about connecting, sharing stories and having a good time while exploring great books.

For students considering joining the club, the diverse lineup of books in the coming months promises to offer something for every literary taste. Whether readers are into spine-tingling thrillers, thought-provoking historical fiction or captivating mysteries, the book club’s upcoming selections have it all. Currently, the group is finishing *Pretty Dead Queens* by Alexa Donn, after which *Frightmares* by Eva V. Gibson awaits them. Next up will be *The Black Girls Left Standing* by Juliana Goodman, *Lock the Doors* by Vincent Ralph and *The Red Palace* by June Hur.

School contends with teacher shortage

From unfilled full-time classroom positions to a shortage of substitutes, staff and students alike try to find solutions



Photo by CHIMUMAL VANG

Ms. Major is a Cooper English teacher who volunteered to take on extra juniors due to an inability to fill an open position in that department.

By NOAH PLAHN  
Quill staff writer

Cooper has been met with an increasingly difficult situation this school year due to a number of unfilled teaching positions, people on leave and an inability to find substitute teachers. The English, Physical Education, Family and Consumer Science and EL departments have specifically been affected by these conditions.

One prime example of a department affected directly by these challenges is the English department. Heading into his second year at Cooper, English teacher Mr. Buzzard, who worked with ninth and 11th grade students, resigned on August 28, the first day of teacher workshop week. After this, the English department was left in a predicament as the start of school was nearing and they were missing a teacher.

As Cooper administrators began their scouting process for a new English hire, many substitutes were in and out of the building to temporarily fill this vacancy. When substitutes weren’t available, other Cooper staff members volunteered to take over during different periods of the day.

In the midst of all these scheduling challenges, a beacon of hope arose on September 25 as a candidate to fill the position full-time was finally found. Ms. Mucha arrived as the new English teacher. However, she ultimately only stayed for a short-lived, five-and-a-half school days.

Midway through the day on October 3, Mucha went to English teacher and department chair Ms. Eisfelder and said one word: “Goodbye.” Later, Mucha went to the main office, placed her belongings on the desk of head secretary Ms. Olson, and said, “I’m leaving and I don’t know if I’m going to be coming back.”

Cooper Head Principal Ms. Smith did not have a final conversation with her but still provided her input on the situation.

“This was obviously not a good fit for her. Teachers that are here love our kids and want to be here, so I want my teachers to want to be here, so obviously this was not the place for her,” she said.

Mucha’s exit left ninth- and 11th-grade English classes without a teacher once again. Eisfelder said the English department had to make many adjustments following Mucha’s abrupt leave.

“We talked about trying to contact some of the pre-service colleges because we are in such a big metropolitan area. It would be great if that was someone’s job to connect with education depart-

ments and undergrad colleges and say, ‘Hey, do you have student teachers coming? Do you have mid-year graduates that would be looking for jobs?’ But none of us have the time to do that and make those connections, and none of us are recent enough graduates from college who still have those connections,” she said.

The next idea was to try an rearrange students, class sections and English teacher schedules to find new places for the affected students.

“So we wondered, looking at numbers, would it be possible if anyone was interested in teaching another section and then just kind of dispersing the students from those sections into those classes, and we were fortunate in finding two staff members in our department [who] were willing to do that,” she said.

While filling the open position had an impact on Cooper teachers, it also had an impact on students. Ansu Fofana (11) is a student who had Mucha’s 11th grade English class.

“I’m a little busier, but it’s okay. I’m looking forward to working with more students. I mean, that’s why I’m a teacher: I like to work with kids. My new students are now finishing up their personal essays, so I’m going to get to know them through their writing,” Ms. Major said.

“Honestly, not having a teacher was really hard. We had no type of guidance in any shape or form. We were literally on our own. We had to find out how to write an essay, how to do an outline and we had to pace ourselves,” he said.

For some students in the class, the constant change was disorienting and sowed seeds of doubt. According to Angel Ramirez Vega (11), it was difficult to manage schoolwork without a teacher.

“It was more confusing overall, just like a different teacher every day. I often asked myself, ‘Is this the right classroom?’” he said.

Eisfelder said she understands the challenges these students faced with the constant changes.

“It makes me think about making sure everything is super organized so if I am out, someone can maybe help me out and have kids continue to move forward. I just think about where are these people, what is happening to our field that they’re not people interested and who is trying to solve

that because I love my job,” she said.

One of the English teachers who stepped in to permanently cover an unfilled section of English 11 is Ms. Major. In fact, for weeks before she officially took over, Major subbed for the class and graded the schoolwork of the students. Now, Major is one of the two teachers adding members of that classroom to her own.

“I am excited to have another group of students to work with. I know a bunch of students were transferred into a bunch of different classes in [the middle] of our unit, so on my end, I’m doing my best to accommodate kids and be flexible because I know it’s really hard to not have a teacher and then jump into a whole new unit,” she said.

Major said her workload has changed through the process taking on a new group of students.

“I’m a little busier, but it’s okay. I’m looking forward to working with more students. I mean, that’s why I’m a teacher: I like to work with kids. My new students are now finishing up

situation for me to have to keep asking for the same classes to be covered,” she said.

Olson pointed out that Cooper teachers play a critical role in helping make sure that all uncovered positions are filled on a daily basis.

“One of the things that’s really important to me is to build relationships with the teachers and let them know that the work that they’re doing is important, not only to me, but to the students too, and by building those relationships, sometimes it’s easier to fill the classes. It’s challenging to have to ask for coverage for the same classes every single day. When I’m not able to cover the classes, I have to go to our principal team and say that I couldn’t do it, and that’s always hard for me to do. I feel like I’m letting them down by not getting the work done,” Olson said.

Eisfelder said she has often stepped in to help fill openings due to the lack of subs.

“I think it’s affected the whole building. People are giving up their prep times, which is great. There is compensation, but it’s pretty small and people don’t do it for the compensation. For the most part, they do it to help each other out, but it’s chaotic for those kids to see different adults. There is no continuity for instruction and often there are no notes and things left especially with big gaps like this,” she said.

Also playing a role in getting teaching and substitute vacancies filled is Smith, who said this task does have an impact on her job as well.

“It has changed my workload in the aspect of an increasing level of stress. That stress is due to being concerned about our students not getting a consistent education,” she said.

Due to the ongoing issue of needing substitutes to cover open classes, the Robbinsdale Area School District recently decided to increase the amount that is paid to staff members who substitute for classes without a teacher.

“It’s always a little bit easier to do something when you get paid to do it,” Olson said.

In addition to the changes made in the English department to address the open position, a long-term sub was recently found for the open spot in the Family and Consumer Science department, Mr. Herman, who started on October 16. Meanwhile, the EL vacancy is still being worked out and the Physical Education department is finding more consistency getting teachers to cover its open classes thanks to the increase in substitute pay for Cooper staff members.



# Locked doors are an aggravating issue

After the replacement of the school's blue fire doors this summer, getting through those doors has been a problem



Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

Whether it is using shortcuts through the back stairwells or traveling through the second-floor Y, closed doors are a daily obstacle.

By HEATHER HOLZERSMITH  
*Quill* staff writer

The doors in Robbinsdale Cooper High School aren't functioning correctly, which is resulting in students and staff being late for class. When walking to class, the doors are locked in certain places throughout the school, turning passing time into some sort of maze. With only five minutes to get to class, there really isn't any time for these hindrances to be in the way.

The main reason why this is an issue is because it is a safety concern. Students not being able to get to where they need to go is a huge problem. If there were to be an immediate threat of violence in the building or a fire, the doors not opening could subject students to danger.

Another main reason why the door situation is a hindrance is the short amount of passing time. Five minutes is already a small amount of time, so throwing in obstacles does not benefit anybody. The back stairway in the Media

Center circle is almost always locked for no apparent reason. If that were open, there would definitely be a decrease of the traffic in the stairways.

Recently, people have resorted to holding the door open for each other, especially doors opening to the outside of the building. Hopefully, this issue gets fixed before winter falls upon us, because people will most likely not enjoy having to hold the door and wait for people to scramble inside in an attempt to escape the cold air.

It's astonishing how every year there's something functionally wrong with the school, first the bathrooms, now the doors. Over summer break, the school sits unused for around three months. The empty corridors are silent without the sound of indistinct chatter and feet trampling and squeaking on the linoleum floors. Much like our brains over summer vacation, the school gets a reset, forgetting all the concerns of the previous school year. One would think this would be the perfect time to make sure

everything is working properly, but this clearly was not the case with the doors.

This past summer, new doors were installed throughout the school and the key card systems were reset, meaning some staff key cards work and others don't. That means staff members have also been running into the issue of the doors not operating correctly, which is especially a problem considering this is their workplace and they need to be in class on time more than anybody.

As a result of these problems, staff and students alike have to stand and wait, tapping the glass in a desperate attempt to get someone's attention. With only five minutes to get to class each period, there's really no time to wait around for someone to open the door.

During passing time, the doors make it more difficult to get to class efficiently, leading to people crowding the hallways and standing around like a bunch of zombies waiting for a wall to come down. People just sort of slowly shuffle their feet with a sorry look in their

eyes. (They're probably thinking about how annoying it is that the doors are broken.)

What is more, the doors connecting the hallways and circles don't stay open and the door stoppers are seemingly ineffective considering they lay loosely on the floor susceptible to students kicking the door stoppers down the hallway.

Clearly, the school really needs to invest in a way to keep the doors working properly or at least keep them open during passing time. The safety issue is a huge problem because it's not up to the standards with how schools should be operating. The simple untimeliness of the doors working or not working is causing an increase of big hallway traffic jams.

Nobody enjoys standing behind someone staring at the back of their head for a solid 60 seconds waiting to get to class. If people were moving any slower in the hallway, they'd be going backwards. Would you want to be the student trapped behind a crowd of people trying to get through a door?

## "Just getting by" is poor strategy for high school

Too many students have resigned themselves to doing the least amount of work possible

By JACKSON PRIMMER  
*Quill* staff writer

Students at Cooper at times seem to fall under the category of "just getting by" when it comes to academics. However, is that really the right approach to take to one's schoolwork? Of course, students may want to succeed, but, ultimately, the poor results come down to two things: a lazy approach by students and an overly forgiving grading system.

In daily life, students may have an overwhelming workload as they try to maintain school, a social life, jobs and taking care of family. Although these may be factors that can hinder a student's ability to complete schoolwork, often students look for reasons to not have to do anything versus finding the motivation to complete the work. Students would much rather scroll through social media, watch Netflix and play video games until 1 a.m. instead of doing their homework or studying for a big test. The next thing you know, they fail that test, or, worse yet, don't go to school altogether because they don't want to fail the test.

Due to this missed test, these lazy students roll around for weeks until the end of the semester with a NC or D-. When it comes down to the wire, the student then comes in and hands a stack of missing work to a teacher, begging for a passing grade and promising they'll do better in the future. More often than not, the teacher falls into the trap by taking the work. This can be very problematic as it shows these students that they can do whatever they want and coast through high school without applying themselves, which will ultimately set them up for failure as they go into college or jobs that require deadlines to be met.

Another way this issue takes root is through the students' home lives. If students are taught that they are always right, if they develop attitude issues, or if they have been given everything in life, this can cause laziness. Most of the issues that reside within a student can be traced back to home lives and start with the parenting they received.

When students aren't taught to respect their elders and pay attention in class, the struggle that students have in class is amplified. The current mentality is, "You're not my parent. You can't tell me what to do."

I remember when I was younger, my fear of teachers made me want to do well. When I was a freshman, I walked into this school with a respect for all of my teachers and also a fear of them. When they could sense this, they knew I was a student worth helping out and they knew I would push my limits to do well in class.

If a student is just showing up because they have to and proving that they have no desire to do well in class, why would a teacher want to put extra time and effort into helping this student? People are willing to put in what they receive, and this causes an endless cycle of students not trying and some teachers eventually giving up. As a result, the students finish with low grades.

Overall, I think the current-day student mentality is plagued by the notion that "I can get by with minimal effort." As a result, they have a lack of motivation to actually try at school. Looking around in my classes, I see untapped potential that is just waiting to shine if these students would just apply themselves. I hope they figure it all out sooner rather than later.

## Full editorial policy of the Cooper High School *Quill*

The purpose of *The Quill* is to function as an open and public forum for the thoughts and opinions of the student body of Cooper High School, as a means of expression for the *Quill* staff, and to help create a more solid community for our school through news, information, thought, humor and opinion. Student editors are responsible for all *Quill* content decisions.

*The Quill's* policy regarding profanity and obscenity will reflect the practice of professional daily publications of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. It is under the final control of the student editors to strike any

unnecessary words from quotes that are considered offensive if these changes are within reason and still accurately retain the meaning of the quote.

Editorials will be presented in their respective section of the paper if the issue concerned is timely and of consequence to the community. However, editorials will not be printed that intentionally offend or hurt any racial, ethnic, gender or religious groups in the school.

All news stories, editorials

and advertisements should be of a content pertaining to the interests of the Cooper community and surrounding communities. No material will be refused based solely on the views expressed therein.

News and feature stories are under the creative control of the staff and editors. The staff of *The Quill* will attribute each article to its own writer and will make every effort to retain accuracy in facts and quotes. If a mistake of significance is made, the following

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Illustrations and photographs should be tasteful and not be offensive toward any groups based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Advertising space will be available to all advertisers, yet the editors reserve the right to deny space to any advertisement based on the previously stated policies. The cost of advertising will be determined by the advisor and the advertising manager.

Electronic distribution of *The Quill* will be handled by staff members on the day of the paper's release.

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# Premier Performers

The story of the musicians and artists who bring their talents to Cooper

## Kiana deWeever

By SAMARIA'H SHABAZZ  
Quill staff writer

Kiana deWeever (12) is involved in many arts-related activities.

"I am very into art, so my involvement list for art-related activities is almost endless," she said.

According to deWeever, she was influenced by her mother to pursue choir.

"She suggested I take it up since she was in it. I grew up in a very musical household, whether we were singing or dancing," she said.

Her experience with choir has gotten better for deWeever over the years.

"My first few years in choir weren't the best," she said. "I constantly moved and had trouble making friends, but I never stopped joining. I absolutely love singing and being around people who had the same interest as me was fun for what it was

worth."

One of deWeever's favorite choir memories involved getting ready in a hurry for a big performance.

"My favorite memory while in a choir is probably when I participated in the Honor Choir for ninth and 10th graders. I was given music sheets months in advance, but didn't have the time to actually listen to the tracks or sightread the music, making the first time I ever heard those songs the night of the concert," she said.

Outside of music, deWeever said she enjoys math and creative writing.

"They both give me the opportunity to show different sides of myself," she said.

Next fall, deWeever will go to college.

"I am currently enrolled at HTC getting my generals done for my carpentry degree, then I plan to go to Dunwoody for an architecture degree," she said.



Photo by C. VANG

## Eleanor Blanchet Paynes

By SAMARIA'H SHABAZZ  
Quill staff writer

Eleanor Blanchet Paynes (12) is involved in the school's music and performance programs.

"I am in three music classes, which are Wind Ensemble, Concert Choir and Bel Canto. After school, I am in two other musically involved activities, Marching Band and Bella Voce. I also tend to do musicals every year," they said.

Paynes has been into music since fifth grade.

"I've been in a band since fifth grade playing flute, but I also play other instruments. I've been in choirs and singing since fifth grade also," they said.

Paynes said they enjoy the community they have with their classmates.

"In band, I enjoy being around people who love to play their instrument as much

as I do. It's a nice community in band. For choir, I really enjoy singing with others. Singing and music in general have been a huge part of my life since I was little. Music has helped me get through a lot of the rough things that life throws at you," they said.

Paynes is a section leader in Marching Band.

"I love being able to help others learn how to march and memorize music," they said.

Paynes said their favorite classes include music and drawing. Meanwhile, Paynes said their after-school activities involve writing music.

"I love writing lyrics and making original songs," they said.

Paynes will attend college next fall.

"For college, I plan on getting my generals at North Hennepin Community College. Then, I plan to go to Minnesota State Mankato to become a music therapist," they said.



Photo by N. PLAHN

## Joe Knudson

By AKEYA EASLEY  
Quill staff writer

Marching at the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Chicago last year is what Joe Knudson (12) recalls as his most cherished music-related memory. Knudson started his musical journey in his sophomore year of high school. He said he was hesitant at first, but is now content with his decision.

"I just enjoy creating music with others, so being in the marching band has launched my love for music even higher," Knudson said.

In addition to marching band, Knudson shows his school spirit doing pep band throughout the year as well.

Knudson has been given a leadership role in band as a section leader for two years in a row, for which he expressed his gratitude. He said he finds joy in being

someone who people can depend on and receive help from.

"Watching them succeed is a beautiful feeling," he said.

Knudson added that he has the best of both worlds in marching and pep bands as he gets to play for the band and also watch Cooper sports teams play.

Outside the hallways of Cooper, Knudson said he likes to socialize with friends and watch football and soccer. Inside the classroom, he said math and wind ensemble are his favorite subjects.

"I've always loved math and it gives me a great sense of accomplishment to find the right way to solve a problem," he said.

Knudson's future looks promising as he wants to study math at a four-year college. His future in marching band and pep band are undecided because he said he wants to focus more on his studies.



Photo by C. VANG

## Precious Garwoloquoi

By AKEYA EASLEY  
Quill staff writer

Not only has Precious Garwoloquoi (12) been in Concert Choir at Cooper since freshman year, she has been in numerous choirs throughout elementary and middle school.

"I have enjoyed being able to sing with so many people, different schools, and different teachers, and going to many different places. Almost getting the chance to be in All-District for fifth grade was a dream come true," she said.

Performing at the Fall Festival was one of Garwoloquoi's favorite music memories.

"It's so fun and I can't wait to do it again," Garwoloquoi said.

While she hasn't taken on any formal leadership roles in the arts, Garwoloquoi remains open to the possibility. She

said her main focus is to continue her journey in choir throughout her senior year, with an important performance lined up at the graduation ceremony.

Garwoloquoi holds her AVID and choir classes close to her heart and said they have played a pivotal role in her growth and development. Outside of school, Garwoloquoi pursues fun hobbies like power walking and added that she tries to maintain a balance between artistic and physical pursuits. She is currently interested in learning Japanese, which she said connects to her determination to explore new languages and cultures.

As she approaches the end of high school, Garwoloquoi has ambitious plans. She hopes to attend a community college to gain some credits before pursuing her dream of becoming a fashion designer.



Photo by C. VANG

# Art teacher returns to Cooper

Ms. McNeil stepped away from her position at the school for three years before returning

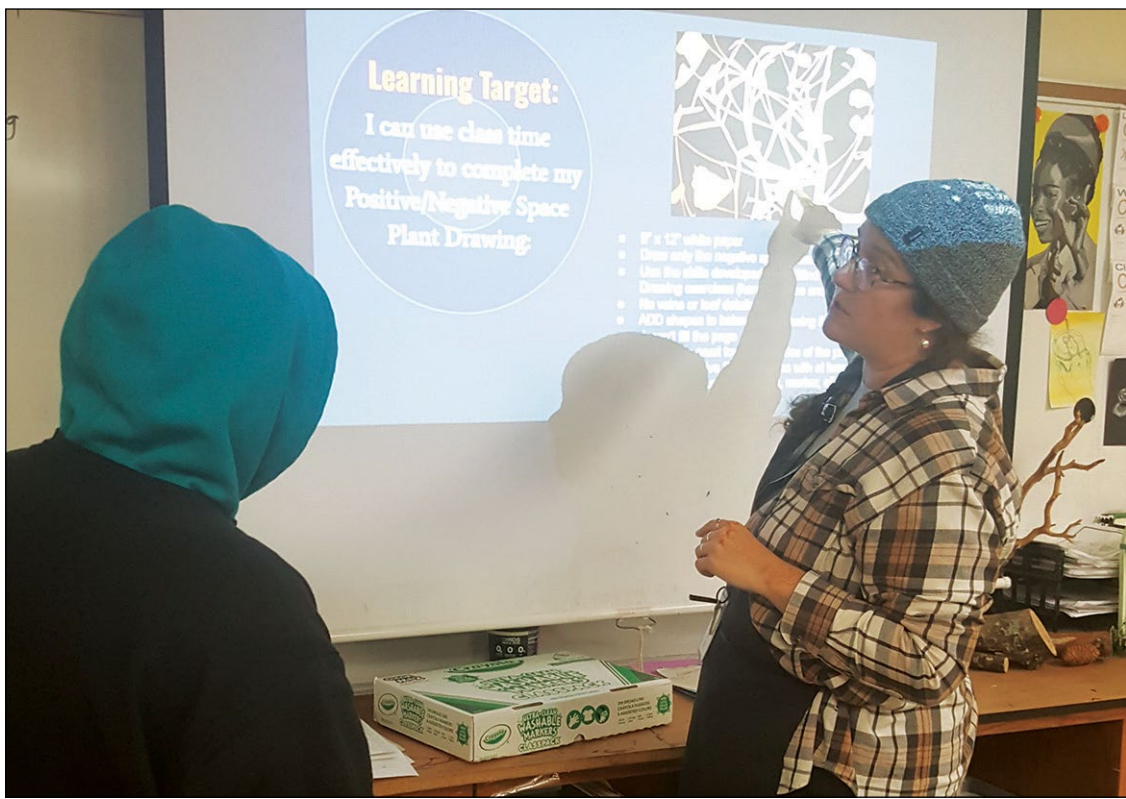


Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

Ms. McNeil works with Hawks students in her Drawing 1, Drawing 2 and Photography classes.

By AMARILYS BALMaceda  
Quill staff writer

Ms. McNeil is a new Cooper art teacher this year, but she's not new at all. In fact, she was here three years ago. Now, she's back in the art department, where she is teaching Drawing 1, Drawing 2 and Photography 1 this year.

McNeil is 35 years old with a B.F.A. in visual arts and ceramics, and a M.Ed. in trauma-informed education.

As mentioned before, she is not new at all because she was here when the current seniors were fresh-

men. During the three years when she was away from Cooper, McNeil was working in a health clinic helping Latino-American families.

"I learned a lot and I really missed my students," she said.

While many things have changed, she said the spirit of Cooper is the same and she has enjoyed working with her new students.

Art students said they are glad to be with her in class and HLL sessions.

"She is kind and I feel comfortable with her as my teacher. Her room is always a place to have a relaxing time or have fun, mostly in HLL,"

Fred Butters-Napue (10) said.

McNeil said she loves her students in high school because the high school level is better than the middle school level, where she also has taught in the past. She said Cooper is like a big team. Perhaps not everybody gets along, but everyone is looking to make dreams come true, everybody plays a part and everyone is important.

Overall, McNeil said she feels like she is where she belongs, making art and teaching how to make art.

"I enjoy my job and being with the students, hearing about their lives, dreams and careers," she said.

## Sekiro great for gamers wanting a challenge

The 2019 release by FromSoftware Inc. is regarded as one of the hardest games ever made

By LEO PEREZ  
Quill staff writer

*Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice* is an award-winning video game produced by FromSoftware Inc. and published by Activision internationally back in March 2019. I think more people should try and succeed at playing *Sekiro*. It has a multitude of positive attributes, including gameplay features, beautiful scenery and locations, deep character storylines and compelling enemies. In fact, the game has been regarded as one of the hardest games ever made by FromSoftware. This is one of the best games to play if you want a challenging, story-rich, controller-breaking experience.

In the game, you start as a Shinobi, a nameless bodyguard in a strange land in Japan, guarding the heir and host of an all-powerful dragon, Kuro, whose special blood can grant a person the ability to resurrect from death infinitely. However, he wants this power to be erased so no one else can have the power his blood possesses.

Eventually, you face Genichiro Ashina, a samurai lord who wishes to have this ability all to himself. Additionally, you also face the soldiers of the Ashina clan, monsters of the spirit realm and mythological creatures. In the end, you can choose one of four endings that give different rewards when you start a new game.

One aspect of the game that makes it memorable is the gameplay. The gameplay has been praised by many people and it has been in many discussions of how a good game should be



Photo by FROMSOFTWARE INC.

A rich story and beautiful scenery are among the game's many features.

made. First, the swordplay in *Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice* allows for a variety of moves, from standard sword swings to heavy stabs. You can also engage in combat arts that allow you to pull off very anime-like moves, such as "one mind" and "dragon flash."

The game also features good blocking and deflecting. Blocking works like it might in any other game, but deflecting is something special. If you time a block at the perfect moment against an enemy's attack, you deflect it and take no damage to your block meter. However, if you try to block the entire time, your posture meter will fill up and will leave you defenseless for the next second, which means death.

The next feature is movement. In the game, you can use your arm grappling hook to get on top of buildings

or even get to some bosses. There's dashing and running, which allows you to double jump on some walls and even jump off of enemies. Additionally, there's the "Mikiri counter." With this move, if an enemy tries a stab attack, you can dash into it and counter it. When it comes to regular enemies, you can instantly kill them, but when it comes to bosses, it only adds to their posture bar. This allows you to use some of the coolest ways to take down an enemy.

Another aspect of the game that will appeal to players is the scenery. Some of the locations in this game are downright beautiful, ranging from Japanese towers and sakura trees to spirit realms and giant lakes. If you are a per-

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## Scott Pilgrim is an underrated cult classic

With an anime series on Netflix coming soon, it is a great time to watch the original film

By KAEDEN KNOBLAUCH  
Quill staff writer

*Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* was directed by Edgar Wright and released on August 13, 2010. I chose to review this film because I've loved video games ever since I was a kid and the film almost seems like a video game turned into a movie. Another reason I chose this film is that I love Edgar Wright's cinematography and how he directs his films. The Edgar Wright film *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* uses editing and cinematography to teach the viewer the importance of growing up and becoming more mature.

The plot of the film focuses on

Scott Pilgrim (Michael Cera), an unemployed, 23-year-old bass guitarist in an up-and-coming garage rock band. Scott is dating a 17-year-old high school girl, Knives Chau (Ellen Wong), as a rebound after a bad breakup. Scott's life is in an aimless holding pattern until Ramona Flowers (Mary Elizabeth Winstead) suddenly appears. Ramona has just moved to Toronto from New York City to find peace and quiet and leave her past behind. No one knows what her past is, but Scott will find out very soon as he tries to make Ramona his new girlfriend. However, before Scott can begin dating Ramona, he must prove himself by defeating the league of her seven evil exes, who con-

trol her love life.

The first scene I have chosen to talk about is when Scott has to fight Ramona's second evil ex-boyfriend. During the scene, Scott is losing to Lucas Lee by a lot, but Scott remembers that Lee used to be a former professional skateboarder. Scott challenges Lee to grind down a rail that would be impossible for any normal person to do. When Lee does grind the rail, he is shown at one point to be going over 200 kilometers per hour. This moment looks like it's taken right out of a video game cutscene. The special effects in

**SCOTT PILGRIM**  
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# Runners get \$80 shoe vouchers

Gift certificates from Twin Cities in Motion help cross country athletes buy new shoes



Photo by TONY JONES

The Hawks athletes show off their shoe purchases after the September 15 trip to TC Running.

By MILO ATHIAS FINN  
Quill staff writer

The Cooper cross country team had a chance to go to TC Running in Maple Grove on September 15 to purchase new running shoes as part of a program through the Twin Cities in Motion organization.

This event was connected to a growing issue in high school sports: students are unable to participate in activities due to economic circumstances. With equipment expenses, travel expenses and a variety of different fees, it is extremely expensive to play certain sports, even through a high school. With the help of Twin Cities in Motion, the Hawks runners were able to get \$80 vouchers to purchase new shoes for use in the sport.

“It was a huge deal for the runners on our team to have access to these certificates,” Head Coach Mr. Zuccola said. “Running shoes are not cheap and having the ability to buy the appropriate shoes is key to success in cross country.”

Twin Cities in Motion is a nonprofit organization geared toward helping athletes of all ages receive proper financial support to participate in running. In addition to their charitable activities, this group is behind area road races like the Twin Cities Marathon.

Although cross country doesn’t require a lot of equipment, due to the sheer distance involved, it can be incredibly grueling without the right footwear. Cross country involves hills, gravel and other difficult terrain. In a sport where athletes are trying to run the lowest possible time, any sort of performance-enhancing instrument is paramount.

Twin Cities in Motion gave certificates to cover 115 Cooper athletes. This will not only cover the cross country runners, but the majority of the track and field participants this spring.

Ms. Thurston, the Activities Office administrative assistant at Cooper, played a key role in securing the certificates to cover the shoes.

“We received 30 certificates for the cross country teams. Each certificate is good for a free pair of running shoes, up to \$80 value from select running shoe stores in the area,” Thurston said.

According to Thurston, the trip to TC Running to acquire the shoes was a valuable experience for the runners. Thurston arranged a bus to pick the athletes up and transport them from the school to TC Running.

“It was a great thing to schedule a bus for a practice day and

take the team to the store to get their shoes. Also, it was a team-bonding experience, just like they do in college,” Thurston said.

Thurston connected with Zuccola about the shoe certificates right before the start of the school year.

“Ms. Thurston found out right before the start of the fall athletic season that we received 30 certificates as part of the program. She contacted me, the boys cross country head coach, and Ms. Domenichetti, the girls cross country head coach, to let us know we could use the certificates with our runners. We then arranged with Ms. Thurston a day on which we could take the entire cross country team as a

and Caribou Coffee and got some food. We arrived back at Cooper, took a photo and then went our separate ways for the evening. Overall, it was a very pleasant experience,” Brooks said.

Brooks added that an event like this is helpful when creating a sense of community on the team. On a sports team, it is ideal for athletes to look similar, which is why uniforms are required. The connection uniforms give helps competitors connect with their team and perform as one, as opposed to competing individually. Cross country can be a self-focused sport, but support from peers can allow runners to take their mind off of the task, and compete without restrictions. Athletes usually find that when they are having fun, they tend to fare better than usual.

“Knowing that your brothers and friends running with you are experiencing the same thing can be a truly euphoric feeling of relief and comradery,” Brooks said.

Brooks said he believes the shoes have provided performance benefits to his teammates.

“All in all, their times have continued to drop and individually have been improving within the team practices. However, this also comes naturally to the runners, as they begin to improve in many aspects of running when they run. I would have to say that their performance has at least made it more comfortable for them to run in a racing setting and possibly contributing to the time goals that they have set for themselves this year,” Brooks said.

Another runner who agreed with this idea is Cole Athias (10).

“Before, I was running in rusty, raggedy shoes, and wasn’t running at my full potential. After I got the shoes, just two meets later, I ran 19:02,” he said.

Athias’ previous personal record (PR) was a 19:13, meaning he shattered his record by more than 10 seconds. This is not an easy feat in cross country, as every second counts, and events can be decided by a hair.

Athias credits the shoes for the improvement.

“I think with actually good running shoes, I have the possibility to break 19,” Athias said.

Athias wasn’t the only runner to PR after the new shoe acquisition. In fact, during the next two meets “every runner experienced either a season best or a career best,” according to Zuccola.

“The runners benefited from their new shoes right away with fantastic performances in all of their subsequent meets,” Zuccola said.

with their running style and foot mechanics. Depending on the price of the shoes they selected, the runners either got their pair for free or, if the amount was more than \$80, they had a small amount to pay to cover the difference. We ended up spending about 90 minutes at the store,” Zuccola said.

Team captain Andrew Brooks (11) said the trip to TC Running was enjoyable.

“We went to TC Running by bus. We got properly measured and used our vouchers to get a discount on the shoes we decided to buy. A couple of teammates got spikes for their races and maybe the upcoming track season. Afterwards, we went to McDonald’s

# Cooper Competitors

The story of the athletes who strive for success in Cooper sports

## Sariya Browning

By SAMARIA'H SHABAZZ  
Quill staff writer

Sariya Browning (12) is a fall and spring athlete.

“My fall sport is volleyball and my spring sport is softball,” she said.

Browning has played volleyball for many years.

“I started volleyball in the seventh grade. I saw the flier and became interested so I started playing the sport. The more I played volleyball, the more I gained a love for it,” she said.

Browning said she enjoys playing with teammates. In fact, her favorite memories about volleyball involve bonding with her teammates.

“One of my favorite memories was the beginning of this season when we had a team-bonding event and we played Just Dance,” she said.

Although Browning doesn’t participate in winter sports, she said sports pick up for her again in the spring season.

“I play softball in the spring. Last year was my first year playing at Cooper, but I do play softball out of school.

The girls welcomed me with open arms and so did the coaches,” she said.

During the school day, Browning’s favorite class is English.

“I just love the subject and the teachers,” she said.

Meanwhile, Browning’s outside hobbies and interests include “watching Netflix and painting.”

Next fall, Browning plans on going to a four-year university.

“I plan to go to a four-year university to study social work,” she said. “I definitely want to play softball or volleyball in college because I really enjoy it.”



Photo by N. PLAHN

## Emakay Dyson

By SAMARIA'H SHABAZZ  
Quill staff writer

Emakay Dyson (12) is a Cooper fall and winter athlete.

“I play soccer for Armstrong-Cooper Girls Soccer for the varsity team and I have been captain for two years. I do basketball cheer in the winter and I do not play a spring sport,” she said.

Dyson has played soccer at Cooper for four years.

“I picked it because I’ve been playing soccer for traveling soccer for about eight years before that, and I loved the atmosphere of the Cooper team,” she said.

Dyson said she enjoys playing with her teammates.

“This team has definitely been my favorite over the years I have to say just because of how close we all are with each other and the bond we share not

only over the sport, but just in general,” she said.

Dyson’s commitment to the team led to her becoming a varsity captain.

“As varsity captain, we have many responsibilities such as recruiting new players, running warm-ups for games and practices, [and] getting media coverage for the team,” she said.

Once her fall sport is done, Dyson is a winter season cheerleader.

“Basketball cheer last season was fun,” she said.

When it comes to school, Dyson said she enjoys her classes.

“My favorite classes are AVID and U.S. Government because of the teachers and the other students in those classes,” she said.

Dyson said she plans to go to college next fall to study sonography or echocardiography.



Photo by C. VANG

## Fili Gebriel

By AKEYA EASLEY  
Quill staff writer

Fili Gebriel (12) is a member of the Hawks volleyball team.

“The thing I enjoy most about volleyball is playing with my teammates,” Gebriel said. “My teammates are always very supportive as people and players.”

Gebriel has dedicated the last three years to playing volleyball at Cooper. The fondest memories that Gebriel cherishes from her volleyball journey revolve around her standout performances in games. She said she thrives in high-pressure situations and has had some remarkable serves and impressive plays this year.

“I have had some good serves and had good ups during the current season,” she said.

Beyond the confines of the gym,

Gebriel excels at statistics and clay during the school day. She said there are “different reasons for liking both classes.” On the one hand, statistics gives Gebriel real-life situations to solve. On the other hand, she loves putting her hard work into something that will turn out beautiful in her clay class.

“It’s also just a really fun class overall,” she said.

In terms of her future aspirations, Gebriel is setting her sights high. She plans to attend a four-year college, where she intends to major in business and minor in marketing and finance. This future journey connects to her drive to kickstart a thriving career and leave her footprint in the business realm.

While Gebriel’s heart beats for volleyball, she said she has decided to step off the court in college so she can focus on her academics.



Photo by N. PLAHN

## Marin Scherber

By AKEYA EASLEY  
Quill staff writer

“Since I started so young, it was just something I was used to,” Marin Scherber (12) said about playing soccer, her fall sport. “I have played 10 years. I started when I was four but quit for gymnastics. I came back for school in seventh grade.”

Scherber expressed that she enjoys having teammates that turn into family, along with having a community in something that she loves to play. She added that “spending time with teammates, whether off or on the pitch” is her favorite memory of the sport, along with bus rides, training and getting food together.

Scherber has been captain of the team since her junior year of high school.

“I like being able to be someone younger girls look up to as well as be-

ing able to be more involved behind the scenes,” she said.

Scherber added that her leadership role isn’t just about how she plays on the field, it’s also about the way she influences the team’s future.

Once the Cooper soccer season comes to an end, Scherber plays club soccer. During the club season, she works on new skills while also perfecting her old ones.

In school, Scherber enjoys her English and history classes the most. She said English lets her learn many skills that she can apply to her future. As for history, she likes to learn about different cultures, religions and traditions.

Scherber plans on going to Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, with the intent to study international business and marketing. Additionally, she will continue playing soccer.



Photo by N. PLAHN



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this sequence make it feel like we are watching a video game turned into a movie because we see little bonus points popping up on screen when Lee is going down the rail. This scene helps the audience get a feel for how the movie is influenced by video games. If the movie was more realistic, then this scene would have been shot in a different way.

A second scene I found interesting is just after Scott breaks up with Knives. Knives shows up at Scott's apartment unannounced and Wallace, Scott's roommate, answers the door. Wallace tells Knives that Scott has just left. When he says that, you can see Scott jump through a window to avoid Knives; then, just a second later, we see him reach back into the window to grab his coat. The cinematography is essential to this scene because it allows us to see Scott's actions in the background while Knives and Wallace are in the foreground. The camera work makes the viewer feel like they are there in person, standing behind Knives. It also makes the audience feel like Scott is trying to avoid us at all costs, which makes the moment much funnier.

While the movie is humorous, it still has important lessons to teach the audience. One lesson of the film can be seen when Wallace explains to Scott that he has to break up with Knives if he wants to date Ramona. When Wallace tells him this, Scott slowly sinks into his seat and starts acting like a child because he doesn't want to. I think that the message that Edgar Wright is trying to send is that people don't really want to grow up and deal with their problems. This message fits with the video game tone of the film because it shows that Scott hasn't fully matured. This message resonates with me because it is hard for people to grow up and mature when they don't want to.

The Edgar Wright film *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* uses editing and cinematography to teach the viewer about the importance of growing up and taking responsibility. I love every single part of this film because of its excellent direction and amazing cast. Perhaps the thing I love most about the movie is that it feels like a video game, which lets me relive my childhood. *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* is a five-star movie.

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son who takes the time to look around, you will be amazed with some of the areas depicted in the game. The game also rewards you for looking around. Whether it's finding an item that can help you later on or locating a new save point closer to your destination, you will be incentivized to search the area top to bottom.

Also impressive are the boss arenas. The arenas are nothing short of amazing as they can change with the boss phase, especially with the very last boss, Isshin Ashina, the sword saint. Ashina's arena can change with him, from a field of grass and flowers to lightning in the skies and buildings on fire.

A final positive feature of the game are the characters themselves. Across the board, the characters in *Sekiro* hold up the story and make it truly legendary. First, the main character, *Sekiro*, is a mostly quiet character, emotionless and always focused. He could be the perfect bodyguard if you want him to be, or he could be the most evil, heinous, power-hungry person in the game.

Second, there are some characters that help you along the way, whether it be the woman who can upgrade the item that heals you, Emma, or the old man who gives you a scroll of new moves, Isshin Ashina. These characters are there to boost your abilities and attack power while also providing a sort of companionship.

Equally important are the enemies. The bad guys in this game are brutal. If you make a single mistake, you will die or be close to death. The bosses will personally hand you your own bottom if you do not get their patterns down.

All in all, *Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice* is something truly special. This is the game to play if you want a challenge, if you want true storytelling and if you want amazing scenes. The various aspects are what makes *Sekiro* the game of the year. All gamers should play *Sekiro* and master it. There is only one piece of advice I have to give to you: hesitate and you will lose. As Isshin Ashina says, "Hesitation is death." *Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice* earns five out of five stars.

# School mascot brings cheer to Cooper

A staple at Cooper sporting events, the mascot is designed to instill a sense of community among students



Photo by SARA THURSTON

The mascot, also known as Cornelius (left), strikes a pose with Cooper Head Principal Ms. Smith.

By EMILY CARRILLO ACEVEDO  
*Quill* staff writer

Many students wonder who is behind the mask of the school mascot. Their performances at games and events show that this mystery person is a chipper and energetic student who goes to Cooper during the 2023-2024 school year. *The Quill* has investigated who they are and gathered people's opinions of them.

The person who plays the hawk each year is expected to be an upbeat and fun person, according to Activities Secretary Ms. Thurston. Thurston was able to identify the person behind the costume but asked that the person's identity remain a secret in order to make the mascot seem more real.

"I've been Cooper's mascot since I was born," the person behind the mascot said. "That was when Cooper opened as a high school in 1964."

Clearly, the hawk has been around for a while now, but the mascot's age will not stop them from having fun.

The question of who is behind the mask leads many students to think it is a senior, but Thurston said the answer to that question is complicated.

"I see that person or those people every week," she said.

Even though the mascot wanted to keep their anonymity, they said they still loved interacting with students and seeing everyone have fun and show their school spirit.

Eventually, the mascot shared that they wanted to be known as Cornelius. One challenge they cited about being a mascot is they cannot see to the side or behind. Cornelius added that they were born to be the Cooper

mascot.

Cornelius also spoke about their own family, which includes another mascot. Specifically, their distant relative is a mascot for the Atlanta Hawks NBA team. It seems that hawks just run in the family.

"I have a lot of family who are mascots as well," Cornelius said. "It is my destiny."

Cornelius said they have had many favorite moments as a mascot. One favorite moment was when Cooper went to state for football back in 2021. Another favorite moment was "the girls basketball team winning state in 2018," Cornelius said.

According to Cornelius, school mascots are important for a number of reasons.

"I go to games to help promote school spirit and fun. I think going to games and activities is fun and makes high school fun, so I want to encourage everyone to participate," Cornelius said.

According to Thurston, there are many places the hawk goes in order to raise school spirit.

"Sometimes, the Hawk's out for pep rallies, sometimes just football games. [In the] last few years, the Hawk's been out more," she said.

Thurston explained that she thinks the mascot helps give the school a sense of community and family, almost like a pet.

"It smiles and helps us enjoy the event and our school," she said. "It makes people happy."

The long history of the mascot means veteran Cooper staff members have been seeing it for many years. One Cooper teacher who has seen the hawk for a while now is social studies teacher Ms. Kilsdonk. She said she

first met the mascot when she arrived at Cooper. She said she has mainly seen them at pep fests and at games.

According to Kilsdonk, the mascot helps give meaning to the school. "[It helps] encourage and boost school spirit," Kilsdonk explained.

Given her many years at Cooper, Kilsdonk said she knows the identity of students and other teachers who have been the mascot.

"I was the mascot a few times during my career," she added.

Kilsdonk said she would recommend being the mascot if given the chance.

"Others should try to experience that thrill," she said.

While the school's teachers and staff members have their perspectives on the hawk, so do the school's students. One distinct opinion came from Kiana deWeever (12).

"It looks weird," she said.

In contrast, Madelyn Vang (9) said she finds the design of the mascot "cool." Meanwhile, Dylan Vang (9) said he finds the hawk engaging in its own way.

"It's fierce and interesting," he said.

Also thinking the hawk is interesting is Jasiah Amaanii-Sterrett (12).

"It's interesting," he said. "I was intimidated seeing it for the first time. I think it represents Cooper in more ways than one."

Meanwhile, another student, Kindric Yang (12), said that he "likes the mascot."

Of course, liking the mascot is not the same as becoming the mascot, and students had mixed feelings about playing that role.

"If I needed to be the mascot, I

would not be opposed to it," deWeever explained.

Similarly, Madelyn Vang and Yang said they would not want to be the mascot, while Dylan Vang said he would not want to at the current moment, but he possibly would in the future.

In contrast, one person who would enjoy being the mascot is Amaanii-Sterrett.

"If my schedule allows it, then yes I would," Amaanii-Sterrett said.

Depending on how long they have been at Cooper, some students are likelier to have met the mascot than others.

"I haven't met it personally, but I saw it jumping around when the marching band was playing in the circles," deWeever said.

For her part, Madelyn Vang said she recalls seeing it cheering from the stands at a game, Amaanii-Sterrett said he has seen it during "the morning rounds for [the] marching band," and Yang said he saw it during the pepfest his sophomore year. In contrast, Dylan Vang said that he has not seen it yet.

One thing that makes mascots unique is the design of the costume. Cooper students said they liked different aspects of the hawk's design.

"It has a nice design. I think the bright and dark colors work well together," deWeever said.

Agreeing is Madelyn Vang, who said she is "okay with the mascot design," while Dylan Vang shared that he finds the hawk "cool." Amaanii-Sterrett added that he thinks the color choice is interesting, which echoes Yang's opinion.

"I like the colors of the design, I'm not gonna lie. The colors are bright and nice. That's what I like about the costume," Yang said.

Much like the staff and teachers, the students had different takes on what the mascot makes them feel.

"I'm neutral towards it," deWeever explained. "I think it would be cool if it would engage with others more."

There are a few more students who share this sentiment of wishing the hawk would engage more or even appear more often. They said it would be interesting to see how that would play out, especially with our freshmen.

Meanwhile, Madelyn Vang stated that she is neutral about the mascot itself. Interestingly, Amaanii-Sterrett shared that, when he saw the hawk, he felt a small wave of anxiety.

"It gives me anxiety. I think I saw its hands at one point," Amaanii-Sterrett said.

For his part, Yang said that it makes him feel happy.

"It makes me feel happy, basically," he said. "It does show Cooper pride."

# Hawks football squad enjoys winning season

With its victories far outnumbering its defeats, the team is now setting its sights on success in the postseason

By MILO ATHIAS FINN  
*Quill* staff writer

The Robbinsdale Cooper Hawks got off to a hot start during the 2023 football season, eventually boasting a regular season record of 6-2. The Hawks rolled past Park Center with relative ease, posting a 20-7 score. They then went on to score over 80 combined points in blowout wins over Minneapolis Southwest 41-6 and St. Louis Park 41-3. Their only losses in the regular season came against the Armstrong team, which was part of an extremely competitive game that was decided in double overtime by a score of 20-14, and Jefferson, which ended with a score of 34-20.

Head Coach Mr. Patterson attributes the success to the team's mentality.

"Our players know that we preach going 1-0 every week. I will not give you any predictions on the rest of the season, but I can say confidently that our guys will be ready to play whoever the opponent is," Patterson said.

According to Patterson, this mindset of "winning the week" is incredibly prevalent for the Hawks football culture. He said truly believing you can beat an opponent, no matter their personnel, leads to a lot of upsets for unsuspecting candidates.

One aspect of this year's squad that Patterson said has made its success



Photo by TALONS

The team features a lot of young talent, according to Head Coach Mr. Patterson.

impressive is the age of the team's key players.

"This year, we have a young but talented group. We do not have the depth as in previous years, but the talent level is still consistent. We have been improving weekly, and I'm excited to watch this team grow," Patterson said.

While the Hawks might not necessarily have the same caliber recruits as prior years, their commitment and comradery allows them to play at a level surpassing the competition. Kameron Fox (12), the team's quarterback, said the squad's enthusiasm leads to success.

"[I think that] everybody on the team takes it seriously. Some guys are really talented and maybe not as serious about the sport, but when it comes to the game, and stuff like that, they all take it seriously," Fox said.

Helping the team achieve early success is the willingness of players to use the offseason to prepare. Select individuals from the team participate in seven-on-seven tournaments in the offseason to perfect their craft. These games are highly competitive, with some of the best players in the state attending these events, which allows the Cooper players to face tough opponents.

With all of this offseason preparation, Patterson believes it's no surprise the Hawks are a step ahead of the competition. In fact, several Hawks are holding their own when it comes to attention at the state level. For example, Emmanuel Karmo (11) is currently ranked as the number one player in the state for his class, according to 247 Sports. He also has received offers from Michigan State and Purdue universities.

The success of this year's Hawks team has inspired quite a few students to become avid fans of the squad, including Malik Williams (11), who runs the flag during football games. He said he has noticed a decline in the atmosphere of the crowd, compared to the years before COVID.

"[It has been] a tad bit lackluster in terms of energy [and] enthusiasm. Home games are much better than away games, but I still think we can turn it up a notch for most games," Williams said.

In 2021, the Hawks reached a large threshold by making it to the state playoffs. With the continued dedication and hard work from the players, as well as added support from the fans, Patterson and Fox think it is possible the school will see the Robbinsdale Cooper Hawks football players have a similarly strong end to the current season, which will include a section championship game this week against Armstrong.