



Lunch and Learn system gives students options during fifth period

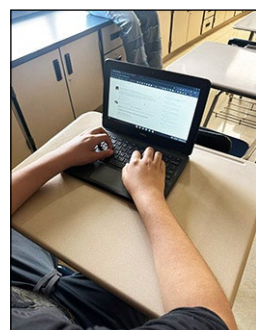
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The Quill

Tues., Sept. 3, 2024 Ninth Grade Orientation

Chromebooks are key part of classroom experience at Cooper

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Robbinsdale Cooper High School

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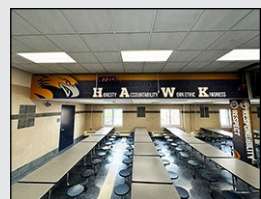


IB classes provide rigorous learning

The college-preparatory program, which starts in grade 11, gives students a chance to take specific IB courses or strive to earn the full IB diploma

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HAWK values guide behavior

The traits of honesty, accountability, work ethic, kindness are expected to be displayed by all students who attend Cooper High School

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Media Center is an information hub

The center gives Hawks a place to meet, an area to work and ways to access a wide array of physical and digital resources

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Variety



Music department has many options

In addition to Freshmen Band, Freshmen Choir and Freshmen Orchestra, there are additional groups and ensembles Hawks can join

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New Hawks can join sports teams

Cooper offers dozens of Minnesota State High School League-sanctioned sports spread over three competition seasons

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HEAD PRINCIPAL SMITH WELCOMES CLASS OF '28



Photo by NOAH PLAHN

Mr. Smith urges incoming freshmen to get engaged in their classes and the many other opportunities Cooper provides.

By NOAH PLAHN
Quill staff writer

Head Principal Ms. Smith is excited to welcome the Class of 2028 to Cooper's halls.

Smith is now entering her second school year as Cooper's head principal after transitioning into the interim position during the 2022-2023

school year following former Head Principal Mr. Herman's decision to step down.

With some experience now under her belt, Smith said there are many things she has enjoyed about her position.

"Getting to connect with students on a different level has been great. As an assistant principal, you deal with a lot of behaviors and things of that

nature. In this role, I deal with that too, but I'm able to touch base with a lot of other students as well, which is what I always missed as an assistant principal. Every year, I would say, 'I want to connect with my other students,' but then things get rolling and you don't have time. Now, I meet with my student leadership team and do all of these different things and

hear different voices from students that I probably wouldn't have had time to speak to," she said.

On the first day of the 2024-2025 school year, freshmen will have to complete their orientation day, which Smith said is an important part of welcoming them to the school.

"That first day of school,

Cooper's incoming ninth graders are taking the first step in a four-year journey

ninth graders come in, and we give them an orientation with tours around the building, some activities and things of that nature. We give them some tools and things that can help them along the way," she said.

According to Smith, there are many ways she prepares and supports incoming freshmen.

"Connecting with Robbinsdale Middle School (RMS) and the other middle schools that are sending their kids over this way and finding out how they did in middle school is important. We always look at the things students need help with and start right away with providing them the support they need coming from middle school," she said.

As students navigate the transition to high school, they may worry about what to expect. Smith said there are some mistakes that freshmen sometimes make.

"Some students do not really grasp what high school actually means. I'm not saying they don't understand what high school is; they do, but they may not understand how important it is to focus on your academics right away as a ninth grader. Another issue is students getting into the wrong

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Ninth graders beginning to learn school layout

Mastering the three floors, two circles and multiple hallways and staircases are an important part of getting comfortable at school

By BETHZY ARIAS-PLIEGO
Quill staff writer

Navigating around the school can be a challenge for incoming freshmen. With all the routes that can be taken at Cooper, it is not surprising that trying to find a destination is hard. However, navigating around the school will be easier for new students once they learn the basic design of the school.

The buses stop at the east side of Cooper when they drop off students in the morning. As you enter the school from this side of the building, you will either take the stairs up to the second floor or take the stairs down to the first floor. All three floors have a hallway and at least one circle, which is where most classes are located.

On the first floor, there is only one circle. When entering from the east side of the building, the circle is located on the right. The global language, business and art classrooms are located in this circle.

As you travel down the main hallway on the first floor, to the right, or north side of the building, you will find the main gym, weight room, community gym, locker rooms, the health classroom, the FACS classroom and the AVID classroom. At the end of the main, first-floor hallway, you will find several special education rooms and one art classroom.

Meanwhile, on the second floor, the B and C circles are located on the east side of the building. B circle is where English and ELL classes are located, while in C circle, you will find the Media Center, the ABC Lab, the Coaches' Corner room and two social studies rooms.

Down the second-floor hallway to the left, you will find the main office and the Student Services office. Across the hallway from the Student Services office is the College and Career Center. At the end of the hallway to the right is the cafeteria and to the left are the auditorium and music classrooms.

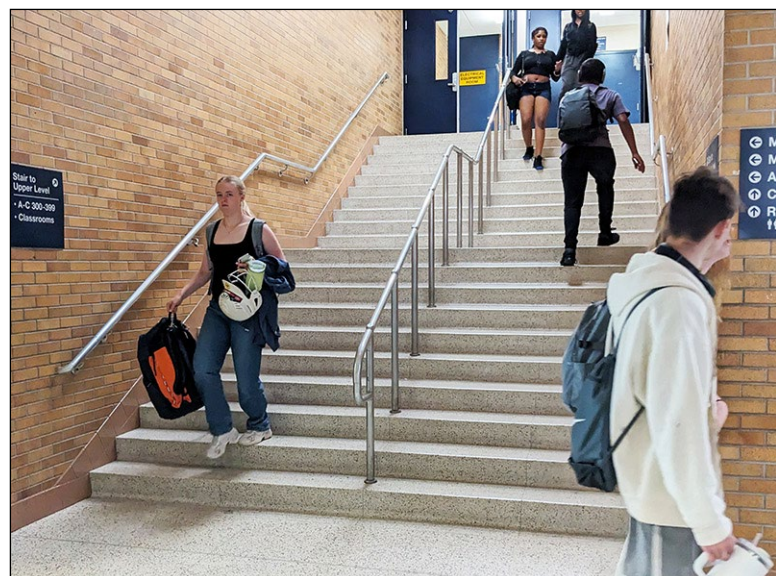


Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

The school's staircases can be a shortcut or a traffic jam depending on the period.

The third floor also has B and C circles. Science classrooms are located in the B circle to the left if you are coming in from the east side of the building, while math and social studies classrooms are located to the right in the C circle. At the end of the third-floor hallway, you will find the TRIO room and a staircase that leads down to the second floor.

One simple way to find the exact classroom you are looking for is by looking at the room number. For example, rooms that start with "1" are on the first floor and will have numbers like 120. Likewise, second-floor rooms will have numbers like 241 and third-floor rooms will have numbers like 389.

Advisory class follows students throughout high school

Students will attend this weekly, fifth-period class with the same advisor and peers every Wednesday for four years

By BETHZY ARIAS-PLIEGO
Quill staff writer

Going to the same class every day at the same time is what most people think of when it comes to their schedules at school. However, at Cooper, there is one class students attend only one time each week: advisory.

Advisory is a 30-minute class students attend every Wednesday during fifth period.

"The advisory period is a time for students to get more information about what's going on at Cooper, learn about our school's HAWK values and focus on academic success," social studies teacher Mr. DiSalvi said.

Despite it being the shortest and least frequently held class, advisory is still one

of the most informational and important classes students will have during their four years at Cooper.

"In advisory, freshmen plan for college, learn about the IBMY program, register for courses and learn how to be a good student," student counselor Ms. Hough said.

Each freshman is assigned to an advisory teacher during orientation on the first day of school. Students will then see that teacher every Wednesday during fifth period for the next four years. The purpose of the advisory structure is to connect students with an adult and other students with whom they can build friendships.

Over the four years of advisory, students move through different activities, lessons and topics that are connected to their grade level in

school. The payoff for this process comes in a student's senior year, during which the advisory class plays a central role in preparing for graduation.

"The advisor gets to read the names of their graduating students during the commencement ceremony," science teacher Ms. Domenichetti said. "This is a great conclusion to the four years we get to spend together in advisory."

Ultimately, a key purpose of advisory is making sure all students understand the Cooper culture.

"Advisors work with the freshman students in the first days of school, as well as throughout the year, to continue to reinforce school expectations and show them the Cooper way and the HAWK expectations," Hough said.

Ninth graders need to focus on credits, GPA

Getting behind during freshman year can cause problems that last through senior year

By NOAH PLAHN
Quill staff writer

To ensure freshmen make the best of their four years at Cooper, they must prioritize and comprehend the importance of earning their credits and maintaining a high grade point average (GPA).

An English teacher who works with many freshmen is Ms. Prillwitz, who emphasized the importance of credits and GPA from the start of high school.

"Freshmen may not realize that credits and GPA start counting on day one of freshman year. Many say that in middle school, they were told that they needed to pass their classes to get to high school. However, some did not pass their classes and still ended up in high school, so I think it takes freshmen a while to believe us that they really do need to pass their classes in high school in order to graduate," she said.

Student Counselor Ms. Hough, who works with this year's sophomores, said many freshmen lack long-term thinking.

"I don't think a lot of ninth graders are thinking long-term and they don't yet realize ninth grade is when everything really starts counting. A lot of them still have a middle-school mentality and don't realize what credits are and that grades from ninth grade go on transcripts and are permanent," she said.

According to Hough, a focus on the short-term leads to freshmen having issues when they eventually reach their senior year.

"After ninth grade, if students are missing credits, they're behind and not on track to graduate. It's important to take advantage of summer school and other credit recovery opportunities. I always recommend getting missing credits made up as soon as possible. Students won't want to be playing catch up in 12th grade," she said.

If students end up in a scenario where they need to catch up, Hough stressed the importance of not letting the situation get worse.

"The main thing for 10th, 11th and 12th graders is to not fall further behind. If ninth grade doesn't go well, recovering those credits is manageable, but missing more credits in the older years makes it more challenging to earn them back and get back on track," she said.

One student who just wrapped up his first year of high school is Armani Easley (10). He said he came to understand how important freshman year is.

"I think earning credits and getting good grades is important as a high school student because they can open up a lot of doors for you in the future. Good grades can help you get into the college or university of your choice, and they can also lead to scholarships and other opportunities. Learning how to work hard and achieve your goals now will set you up for success later on," he said.

Hough said it is important for freshmen to recognize the importance of year one just like Easley.

"It would be great if freshmen who don't do well in the first semester reflect on what went well and what didn't go well, then adjust based on that for improvements," Hough said.

When students struggle right away during first semester, Hough said there is a safety net built into the system.

"We have something called credit completion for students who were very close to passing. It's a great way to fix an NC from first semester right away. It's a short window of opportunity but really helpful long term. There were plenty of students who were able to fix a NC. Unfortunately, there were also students who were reminded multiple times about this opportunity and didn't do it, and now they are behind in cred-

CREDITS, GPA
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Hawks who like rigor have IB options

The college-preparatory program gives students a chance to take specific classes or go for the full IB diploma



Photo by NOAH PLAHN

One component of the IB diploma is the completion of the Extended Essay, which is celebrated in an annual ceremony.

By HEATHER HOLZERSMITH
Quill staff writer

Freshmen looking for advanced academics should be aware of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program along with the IB Diploma program (DP) offered at Cooper. IB classes provide juniors and seniors with an academically challenging and balanced program of education that prepares them for success at college and in life after school.

IB Coordinator Ms. Christensen and IB Secretary Ms. Meyer are the two staff members who guide students through their experience with the IB program at Cooper. They can help students with any questions they may have about the criteria, the coursework and the expectations of IB.

According to Christensen, students have two options for the IB program. First, they can take in-

dividual IB courses based on their academic goals and interests. If a student goes this route and chooses to take the associated IB exams for the selected courses, they have an opportunity to earn potential college credits.

Second, students can complete the full IB Diploma program. Doing so gives students the opportunity for the maximum amount of potential college credits. The full IB Diploma program includes testing in six subject areas and completing CAS hours, the Theory of Knowledge class and the Extended Essay.

While these IB pathways are for juniors and seniors, most ninth and tenth graders are already involved in the IB system because Cooper features school-wide IB Middle Years Program (MYP) classes. The MYP program is part of a partnership with Robbinsdale Middle School that starts in sixth

grade.

According to Meyer, the IB and MYP programs prepare students for college, improve their academic skills and readies them for life in general. Public speaking skills, professionalism and college-readiness are some of the many things the IB program offers students.

Students who pursue the full diploma are encouraged to think independently, develop their own learning and take part in pathways of education that can lead them to some of the highest-ranking universities around the world.

Similarly, during their years in the MYP program, students are exposed to conceptual teaching and learning, as well as globally contextualized teaching and learning.

Meyer recommends that all students consider taking IB courses.

"I advise them to really appreciate the IB program a lot more than they do. Everyone spends all year grumbling and complaining about the workload and the classes but then realize that they got more out of their IB classes than any of their other classes," Meyer said.

Freshmen who are considering going this route are already off to a good start by attending Cooper.

"Almost all freshmen are involved in our IB Middle Years Program (MYP). The IB MYP is a rigorous curriculum framework, rather than a college-preparatory program. Students are exposed to many facets of IB philosophies and practices: inquiry-based instruction, concept-based teaching and learning, international-mindedness, learner profile attributes, etc. Sophomores are introduced to the IB Diploma program in January," Meyer said.

Meyer emphasized that students should focus on their personal academic success and the IB program offers that as its main focus.

"In the IB office, we believe in all aspects of the IB. We feel that students in our school receive a stellar education. They are given the opportunity to develop many skills: thinking, communication, research, social and self-management. We see students grow from year to year and it's a thrill," Meyer said.

According to Christensen, students who are thinking about the full DP should make that decision during their sophomore year.

"Students who are interested in pursuing the full IB diploma must meet with me or Ms. Meyer in order to formulate a two-year plan, where we map out courses and exams," Christensen said.

Christensen and Meyer meet regularly with the IB students for the two years they are in the diploma program to "support them in the various components of the program," Christensen said.

Center aids students in college, career search

From getting prepared for the ACT to looking at trade apprenticeships in the area, the College and Career Center can help

By DRIANA SANMARTIN
Quill staff writer

The College and Career Center is a resource room that provides students with services related to the post-high school search for colleges and careers.

Coordinating the center is Mr. Rosenblum. As part of his work in the center, Rosenblum helps arrange visits from outside entities, such as colleges and the military; guides students through the process of figuring out how to plan for and navigate post-high school opportunities; assists with standardized test administration, including the ACT; and supports any other events or opportunities for students considering what comes next after high school, such as FAFSA applications, college applications and scholarship administration.

Students can access the room and its resources throughout the

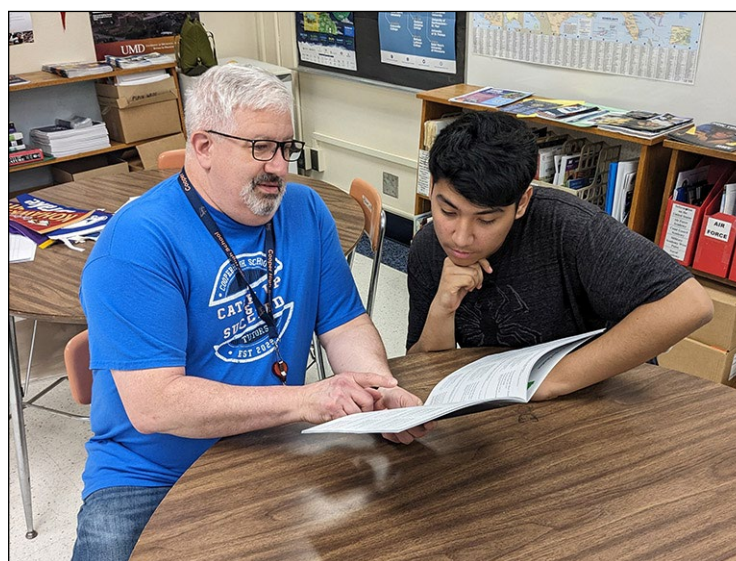


Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

Mr. Rosenblum tries to make the office and his help accessible to students.

school day. Once at the center, students can review materials about colleges and universities, especially those in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Rosenblum assists visiting students with finding the contacts for various

colleges.

In addition to the college search, Rosenblum can also connect students with trades and trade schools. If students need help looking for information related to things

like flight school, internships and the district's Pathways Program, Rosenblum can be of assistance.

"My office is almost always quiet and available and I'm happy to help students research programs or schools," he said.

The times to visit the office are flexible and students have the opportunity to stop by or schedule a visit, usually during a Hawk Lunch and Learn session or a study hall. In addition, Rosenblum can meet with students before or after school if needed. With the room being such an accessible resource, Rosenblum is hopeful it can give students a place to find assistance in their process of making decisions about the future.

"I'm here to help when they need support or help. I call myself a liaison and that's truly what I am. I connect students with people and organizations they want to connect with," he said.

Being to class on time is an expectation at Cooper

Transitioning into a new academic environment makes it important for incoming freshmen to work on their punctuality

By AKEYA EASLEY
Quill staff writer

One of the key habits that will pay off for new high school students in the long run is being on time for class. It might seem like a small detail, but punctuality plays a big role in one's academic journey and growth as a person.

According to Assistant Principal Mr. Nelson, the importance of being on time to class cannot be overstated. Consistently arriving on time demonstrates to teachers and peers that education is valued and there is a readiness to engage fully in learning. This habit ensures the understanding of lessons right from the start, participation in discussions and

keeping up with assignments.

One issue Nelson pointed out is that a lot of class content can be missed in just the first 10 minutes of the period.

"When they are late, students miss the assignments that are going to be due, all the agenda stuff and even the actual instruction time that will be at the beginning of class," Nelson said.

Nelson added that missing these important elements of the class can leave students stuck and not knowing what to do on an assignment.

Also emphasizing the importance of being punctual is Hallway Security Educational Assistant Mr. O'Toole. According to O'Toole, being late is simply disrespectful.

"It's a disruption to your classmates if you arrive late," he said.

The consequences that come with being late extend beyond just missing information. Repeated tardiness can lead to disciplinary actions such as detention, reduced participation grades and truancy proceedings.

"If they're marked tardy enough, then they can get reported to the county," Nelson said.

Being tardy can also negatively impact relationships with teachers and peers, who may view consistent lateness as a lack of commitment or respect. Additionally, falling behind in class due to tardiness can create a cycle in which students find it harder to keep up with new ma-

terial and experience an increase in their overall stress.

"Some people are fine with that and it has no impact," Nelson said. "Meanwhile, others struggle, and when it's time to catch up, they just give up on the class."

Being punctual fosters a positive learning environment. According to Nelson, it allows students to start their day focused and ready to engage in class activities. Additionally, it shows responsibility and respect, paving the way for academic success and personal growth.

"By being on time, freshmen can make the most of their high school experience and build a solid foundation for the future," Nelson said.

Cooper students guided by HAWK values

The traits of honesty, accountability, work ethic, kindness are expected of all students who attend the high school

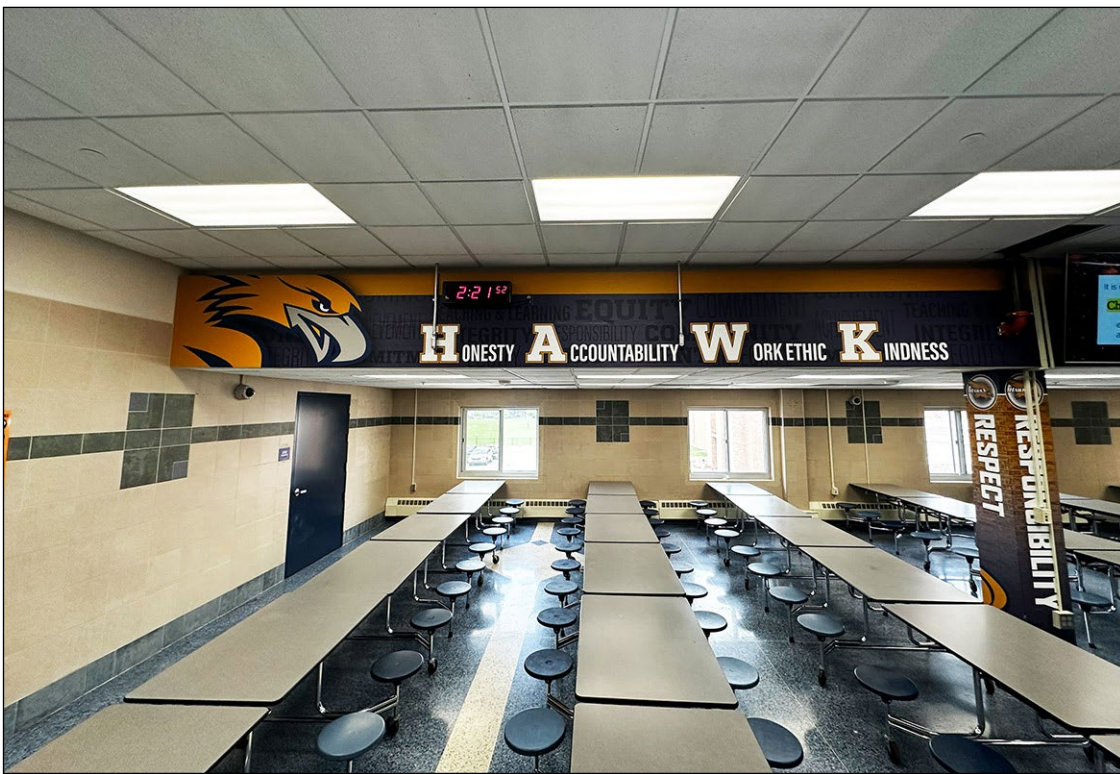


Photo by NOAH PLAHN

Wall decals and posters reminding students about the HAWK values are located throughout the building.

By SAMARIA'H VAUGHN
Quill staff writer

There are four characteristics that Cooper values for incoming freshmen transitioning to high school: honesty, accountability, work ethic and kindness. These traits make up the acronym HAWK, which is based on Cooper's hawk mascot. Cooper Head Principal Ms. Smith said these traits are significant because they amplify and display what it means to be a Cooper student.

"If you follow those HAWK values and you really live the values

of honesty, accountability, work ethic and kindness, it has a positive impact on your behavior," Smith said.

The HAWK characteristics can be demonstrated by students through various actions. Honesty, according to Smith, is being honest with your teachers and classmates. It is also being honest about how you are doing in your day-to-day life.

Next is accountability. Smith said this is owning up to your mistakes and learning from those mistakes because "no one is perfect."

As for work ethic, this trait means one does not give up and they

try their best and hardest in class, even when they do not receive the score they want. According to Smith, going to a Hawk Lunch and Learn academic session to get additional support from your teachers and simply going to class and doing your assignments are examples of hard work.

Finally, there is kindness, which Smith said consists of actions as simple as holding the door for others or giving compliments to your classmates.

"You can show kindness in every aspect of your life," Smith said.

"Personally, I try to live by those HAWK values, because we can all be kind and we all can have those characteristics that make us a better person, whether it is academically, at work, at home or at school."

Furthermore, there are benefits for those students who follow the HAWK expectations. Tangible rewards such as certificates and HAWK Tickets are given to students who meet the HAWK expectations, which can provide students the opportunity to receive prizes and rewards. HAWK Tickets are usually given to students by teachers electronically with the student's name on them. Every Friday, HAWK Ticket winners are called down to the main office to pick out a prize.

Smith said an additional benefit may be feeling good about how you treat someone else. This is not a tangible benefit, but it makes you feel better as a person.

On the other hand, consequences for those who do not meet the HAWK expectations can range from being in Coaches' Corner to missing class time to losing the ability to go to school events.

"We understand that accountability is important," Smith said. "However, we do not expect you to be perfect. No one is perfect and our teenagers are not perfect. As ninth graders, you are not coming in perfect, or what is the point coming here? We are here to help you grow and learn from mistakes and things of that nature. We want to teach you to be productive citizens in society, not just here at Cooper."

Graduates give survival tips to Class of 2028

The advice of Cooper graduates can help newly arriving students enjoy high school

By AKEYA EASLEY
Quill staff writer

Cooper's Class of 2024 graduated at the Minneapolis Convention Center on June 3. Before walking across the stage at commencement, many seniors decided to give some advice to the incoming freshmen. Speaking from their own experiences, they offered guidance to help new students navigate high school with ease.

Kevin Lee: "Take school seriously but have fun. It's okay to be alone and try to get as much work done as you can because it's going to be a lot of work to do if you wait."

Precious Garwoloquo: "Take advantage of your new experiences and do your work. Don't slack off or skip class. Also, join clubs or sports."

Charlie Rush-Reese: "What seems like laziness and bad stuff right now is going to be a distant memory as you grow."

Kate Dossou: "Do your work."

Blake Everhardt: "Be willing to be teachable. Just don't be a jerk."

Ricardo Castillo: "Try to do activities to make connections and friends."

Rosaline Lee: "Take it slow. Don't rush or worry too much."

Uriel Canedo Valencia: "Don't stress yourself out. Don't overwork yourself."

Brenda Nyabicha: "Don't live in regret. Live in the present, not in the past."

Ilhan Abukar: "Make friends and join clubs."

Ferdowsa Yusuf: "Don't procrastinate."

Oswaldo Morales Liborio: "Don't smoke, choose your friends well and always be respectful."

Jeromie Fofana: "Don't skip economics class and don't get too cocky once you have your license."

Max Wallace: "Don't procrastinate. You have enough time to have fun."

Anastasia Xiong: "Maintain good grades your freshman year. It will be hard to grow your grades if you fail your first year."

Jonesia Bass-Borward: "Do an activity or sport and get involved. It is good for resumes and getting friends. Also, join AVID, do your homework, be cool, keep future goals in mind, start saving for college if you are not a trust-fund baby and use the resources available to you because they are valuable."

Aicha Souare: "It's okay to lose friends. Honestly, don't engage yourself in the dumb high school dramas; it's stupid. When you think someone is really your friend, well, think again, and if you lose them, that's fine. As they say, 'It's okay to start high school with friends and finish without them.' Remember to surround yourself with good people. It's your choice to choose who you want to have an influence on you. Have fun."

Edinam Womoakor: "Don't give up, try your best academically, have healthy relationships with everyone and make the most of these four years."

Jacqueline McGrew: "Have fun, stay on top of your schoolwork and don't get into fights: it is not worth it. Enjoy your time and do things you enjoy like sports and clubs because you can make great connections with people and make great memories. Do not slack off."

Aily Arellano Salomon: "Use time wisely and do your work in class."

Fifth period features Lunch and Learn system

HLL gives Hawks the ability to seek help with their classes, enjoy leisure activities during the lunch period

By CHIMUAL VANG
Quill staff writer

Hawk Lunch and Learn (HLL) is a daily system that occurs during fifth period that provides students with 30 minutes for lunch and 30 minutes for an academic or leisure activity.

"Students sign up for sessions using a program called EdEfficiency. It allows students to choose their sessions for the upcoming week based on need or desired leisure session," Ms. Hoffman, the HLL coordinator, said.

Outside of the 30 minutes for lunch, the "learn" part of HLL has two different functions. The first function, which takes place on Tuesdays and Fridays, allows students to participate in fun activities to get to know teachers outside of their teaching roles. Meanwhile, the second function, which takes place on Mondays and Thursdays, gives students an opportunity to talk with their classroom teachers personally and catch up on missing work that they need help with.

For freshmen, HLL is a good chance to sign up for leisure sessions with their friends on Tuesdays and Fridays. Leisure days are great opportunities for ninth graders at Cooper to connect with their peers in a more relaxed environment.

"I have gotten to know some students during HLL who I would never have met otherwise, because they don't have an opportunity to visit the Media Center any other time during the day," Mr. King, Cooper



Photo by NOAH PLAHN

Leisure sessions like English teacher Ms. Kope's Craftastic are popular among Cooper students.

media specialist, said.

Agreeing with King is English teacher Ms. Kope, who said that many teachers have HLL sessions that are specifically connected to their own personal hobbies. Kope's leisure session is called Craftastic.

"For Craftastic, I try to have a new craft activity every month for students to do and while many partake in the activity, others just chat with their friends and enjoy the music in the background and the good vibes," Kope said.

According to Kope, HLL sessions can give students a place to be-

long and feel welcomed. It is also one of the few times during the school day when students do not have to worry about school work and can just enjoy leisure.

"I love organizing all of the crafts and teaching students how to do crafty things that are new to them. I also like learning from students how to do crafts that are new to me," Kope said.

Another teacher with an art-focused leisure session is English teacher M. Fettig, who said they like the chance to work with students in a creative context in the Felting HLL

class.

"My favorite part of Lunch and Learn is seeing the students work on coming together each week, and their happiness and ease with each other as they craft their projects in my class. Students are so creative, and it's a joy to watch them do their thing," Fettig said.

The academic part of HLL is another important resource. On Mondays and Thursdays, students can make up assignments and tests,

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Health Office offers tips for avoiding illness at start of school year

Whether it is getting enough sleep or washing your hands, there are many ways to make sure you do not get sick at school

By LEO PEREZ
Quill staff writer

Cooper's Health Office is typically a student's first stop for cuts, bruises, bumps and scratches. Hawks also visit the Health Office when they need to take their doctor-prescribed medications at school. Additionally, the office is the place to go when a student starts experiencing a fever or an illness during the school day.

While we are many years removed from the COVID pandemic, colds, flus and other respiratory illnesses are still an issue in a school building the size of Cooper. That is where school nurse Ms. Schneider, who

works in the Health Office, comes in. She said there are many ways incoming ninth graders can take steps to make sure they stay healthy during their first year of high school.

"The best advice I can give you for staying healthy during the school year is to get enough sleep during the night," Schneider said. "I know that's extremely difficult for any teenager with everything going on, but it's so important and keeps your immune system strong."

Once students are at school, Schneider said there are some simple ways they can reduce the possibility of getting sick around so many other people.

"Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before you eat breakfast or lunch in school. I can't stress this enough. Also, keep your water bottle to yourself. Don't share it with others," Schneider said.

Should students get sick during the school day despite these precautions, Schneider said the Health Office can be of some help.

"When a student comes to our office with a pass, we do a brief assessment, check their temperature and allow them to use our bathroom before they rest for 20 or 30 minutes. If no better, or if their temperature is 100 degrees or higher, we call the parent or guardian for the student to go home,"

Schneider said.

In addition, Schneider said the office can be accessed by female students who are experiencing cramp-related discomfort.

"We often have female students complaining of cramps and we will let them rest for 20 minutes with a heating pad. Our goal is to keep non-contagious students in class as much as possible," Schneider said.

When it comes to students getting ill outside of the school day, Schneider emphasized the importance of following the district guidelines about staying

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crowd, not going to class or falling too far behind on your academics. Those things are probably some of the biggest mistakes I see our ninth graders make. They'll change, they'll grow up, they'll mature, but sometimes it just takes a while," she said.

While navigating the transition to Cooper, Smith said students should take advice from the adults around them.

"Students need to utilize your supports and figure out what your supports are. Meet with your assistant principal, schedule a meeting with your counselor and figure out who are people in this building that you can see to ask for support," Smith said.

Added to this is the importance of getting academic support when necessary.

"Ninth graders need to utilize those academic supports, stay after school, meet with your teachers, ask questions or send emails. One of the things I teach our ninth graders to do is talk to their teachers. They'll come to me to ask for help, and I'll ask them, 'Did you ask your teacher first?' They just need to learn some of those strategies to be confident and self-aware of where they are with their academics and behaviors," she said.

According to Smith, there are many ways in which middle school is different from high school.

"You can get in a lot more trouble in high school. Now, I'm not saying middle school is easy peasy because I worked at RMS for years as an assistant principal. It's not like they don't have behaviors over there or the ability to find trouble because you can. But the high school, I think, is a place where trouble can be more abundant. You have more students, more areas to hide and there's just a lot more things that get you into trouble, like sneaking out of the building and things like that," she said.

Outside of behaviors that might get new students in trouble, Smith emphasized that high school also provides many new opportunities.

"There's a lot of good things that happen at the high school level. Our student voice is strong. They know what they want. This year, with many additional things like cultural representation, kids tell us that's what they want to see, so they're coming up with their own Somalian groups and Asian American groups," she said.

Smith also praised the fact that high school students are better at articulating their needs.

"Students are more mature now and they can tell you, 'Hey, Ms. Smith, this isn't right. Can we have a meeting and talk about it?'" she said.

On top of the school culture, Smith said it is important that new students find ways to connect with the school.

"Find your niche. There's something for everyone, whether it's speech, debate, the boys volleyball team we have now, a sport or an academic group," Smith said. "There are so many opportunities, so I would advise ninth graders to find something you can attach yourself to that's positive. I think it would be beneficial."

HEALTH OFFICE

continued from page 3

home when sick.

"A student's fever must be 100 degrees or lower for 24 hours without using Tylenol, Advil or Aleve, and you must feel like you are getting better, not worse. Our district protocol is that a student must stay home if they wake up with a fever of 100 degrees or higher and have repeated vomiting and/or diarrhea," Schneider explained.

When students return to school in September, Schneider said the Health Office normally sees a "huge uptick in cold symptoms." To help offset that, she shared some advice for getting the school year off to a healthy start.

"We can't stress enough the need to cover your cough with your sleeve and wash those hands," she said.

Another issue Schneider encounters at the start of the school year relates to students bringing medication to school.

"Students in grades 9-12 are able to carry over-the-counter medications like Tylenol, Advil and Aleve, but only with our district form signed by a parent or guardian. We have that form online under Robbinsdale District Health Services or in our Health Office," she said.

Media Center a hub for reading, learning

The center gives Hawks a place to meet, an area to work and ways to access a wide array of physical and digital resources



Photo by NOAH PLAHN

Students using the Media Center are required to follow a series of behavior expectations while in the facility.

By HEATHER HOLZERSMITH
Quill staff writer

Cooper has a Media Center that provides students with plenty of resources. Media Specialist Mr. King welcomes this year's incoming freshmen to the Media Center and reviews the behavior expectations for students making use of this facility.

The type of content the Media Center offers is fiction and non-fiction books, manga and graphic novels. King said the manga collection

is one of the best in the area when it comes to high schools.

The center also has a small collection of books in Spanish. Additionally, they also provide daily newspapers and periodical magazines like *People*, *Sports Illustrated* and *Game Informer*.

For non-print materials, the Media Center provides online subscriptions to the *Washington Post* and the *Star Tribune* along with a large collection of eBooks and audiobooks through the MackinVia system. What is more, the Media

Center provides a number of databases students can use to do research on topics that they find interesting.

King said that more information about the contents of the Media Center can be found on their website, rdale.libguides.com/chs. It is here that students can find links to all of their digital resources and databases. Additionally, the center's book catalog is also on the site, as is a link to the reservation system so students can come to the Media Center from study hall.

Students are not the only people

who utilize the Media Center space. Teachers can also reserve spots in the Media Center.

"Occasionally, teachers reach out to us and reserve the Media Center for their classes, so the students get a change of scenery. Students who have PSEO courses and hybrid classes can spend time in the center too. Teachers can also send students to the center to work together or silently if they need to," King said.

If a student has a study hall, they can always come to the Media Center with a reservation. King said that making the reservation on the Media Center website gives the student a better chance of staying in the room as those who do not sign up will be escorted out.

"Students can make reservations to visit the center instead of going to study halls. We have a large group of kids who eat their breakfast here too. It's fun to see kids getting together with friends here, and students can stop by during passing time to check books out. We'll write passes if we need to. Finally, we will have a mystery book club again [this] year, and a spoken word poetry group after school for about 8-10 sessions," he said.

There is a set of rules and expectations students are expected to follow when they are using the Media Center. Students are asked to remain seated at a desk or table the entire hour with a maximum of four students at a table. Once at the center, students should sign in using the QR

MEDIA CENTER
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Chromebooks are key to classroom experience

All students are expected to use a Chromebook to work on assignments, check grades, communicate with teachers

By CHIMUAL VANG
Quill staff writer

Chromebooks are essential at Cooper. Every student is expected to have a Chromebook for completing work, taking tests and keeping track of Schoology assignments.

Freshmen were able to pick up their Chromebooks during Cooper's Great Community Get-Together on August 27. Students who did not pick up their Chromebooks during that open house will receive their Chromebooks during class time. The Media Center staff will go around from classroom to classroom to deliver the devices during the first week of school.

"In today's world of schooling, access to these digital tools is critical. We can never assume that students have access to computers or smartphones at home, so having a school-assigned Chromebook ensures everyone has equal access to these learning tools," English teacher M. Fettig said.

Chromebooks can come in handy in many ways during class time. When it comes to com-

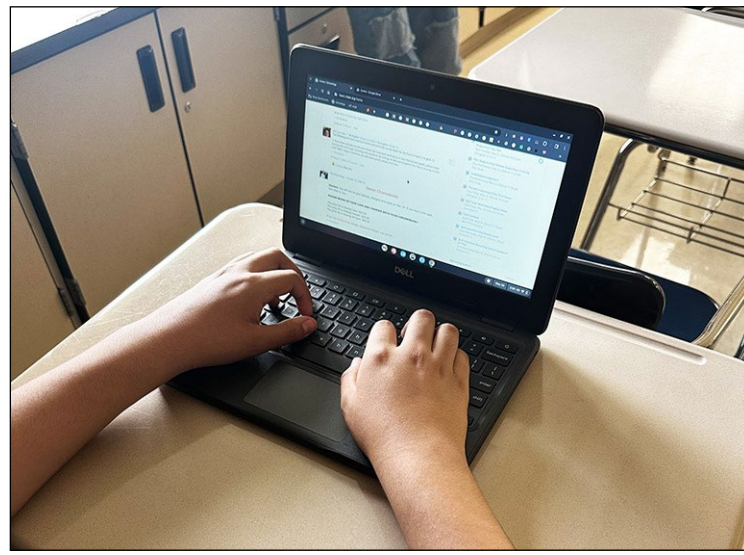


Photo by NOAH PLAHN

Most incoming ninth graders received their devices during the open house.

pleting assignments, typing on a Chromebook can be much quicker than writing by hand. Additionally, having an electronic file makes it easier to make edits and incorporate teacher feedback. Chromebooks also allow freshmen easy access to Schoology, their school Gmail account, EdEfficiency and the internet.

Given the amount of use Chromebooks get during class, it can be a challenge for learn-

ing when students forget their Chromebooks at home, damage their Chromebooks or do not properly charge their devices. For this reason, teachers believe that it is a student's responsibility to take care of their Chromebooks.

"These are access issues that make it difficult for students to complete schoolwork. In my opinion, the district should prioritize funding more loaner Chrome-

books and chargers so that students experiencing Chromebook issues have the option to borrow one," Fettig said.

In terms of Chromebook maintenance and cleaning, students can stop by the Media Center and get a screen cleaner at any time. For any student who is having hardware or software issues, they can see the staff in the Media Center for repairs. Additionally, the Media Center staff can help students who misplace their device.

"If you've lost your Chromebook, the staff in the Media Center can help try to lock it from access and log-ins and ask staff to look around for it," Media Specialist Mr. King said.

Interested students can purchase a Device Protection Plan each year. The plan will cover devices owned by Robbinsdale over the summer, but will expire at the beginning of the following year.

According to King, students should keep their Chromebooks in their cases when they are not using them and they should also avoid letting other students log onto their devices.

Doing well in high school requires careful planning

Being intentional about classroom work habits will help new students succeed in ninth grade and beyond

By DRIANA SANMARTIN
Quill staff writer

With the start of ninth grade comes the rush of a new school, a new schedule and new classes. While going through all of these new things, it is good to know what to do in order to start the school year off in a successful way. The following academic tips will help you secure a good first year and set you up for success in the future.

1. Stay organized

One tip for students is to have a weekly plan. By scheduling your work and tasks, you can achieve maximum efficiency. Learning how to maintain a structured and well-thought-out week can make it possible for a nicer flow and help you get your work turned in on time and at its highest quality. This can be done by using a planner, writing down the dates

of upcoming tests or large assignments and setting up some time to work on those tasks. In addition, you will want to schedule outside-of-school events or plans ahead of time to keep your school and home life from clashing.

"Organization is very important. Have some sort of folder or binder system to keep track of your papers and be sure to bring it to school each day. If you like to do your assignments online, have a digital folder system in Google to keep track of your work," science teacher Ms. Sutliff said.

2. Manage your time

Another tip is to work on time management. Managing your time is important when it comes to school. Having a grasp on your time-management skills will not only help you grow them, but also help you get better at them while you are in high school. This also will prevent you from procrastin-

ating and putting off work. You want to make sure you are putting in your best work without too much stress or having a lot on your plate all at once.

3. Ask for help

When you need help or more time for a project, reach out to your teachers and talk to them before the deadline. Teachers can help you if you need extra time, and if you need assistance, do not hesitate to ask for help. It can make a big difference.

"Ask for help when you don't understand, sign up for HLL to get extra assistance and reach out beforehand if you can't finish an assignment on time. Communication goes a long way and your teachers want to help you succeed," English teacher Ms. Peterson said.

4. Take care of your devices

Charge your Chromebook at

home so it is ready first thing in the morning for school. It is important to make sure you are set for the day, so avoiding having to look for a spare charger from a teacher first thing in the morning can make your day easier. It is always better to charge your devices and have your materials ready the night before.

5. Take care of yourself

The final tip for academic success is to concentrate on yourself and your future. Set goals for your success, especially since ninth grade marks the beginning of your high school years. Enjoy yourself and surround yourself with people who can support you in achieving your goals and becoming a better version of yourself.

"You worry about you. You do you. Don't worry about what everyone else is doing. Now is the time to start focusing on your future," Sutliff said.

Ninth grade musicians have many options

In addition to freshman band, choir and orchestra, there are additional groups and ensembles Hawks can join



Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

Freshmen Choir students begin class with a series of warm-up exercises under the guidance of Ms. Rowan.

By EMILY CARRILLO ACEVEDO
Quill staff writer

Ninth graders have the opportunity to take part in Cooper's band, choir and orchestra classes. Whatever the skill level the student has, they are still welcomed into these classes. Many musicians and music directors have fun in their respective classes. Students who got involved with music as freshmen said that doing so helped them make friends and become more confident.

Band

Freshmen who are interested in band are eligible to take Freshmen Band with band director Mr. Hahn.

"The biggest changes from middle school band to high school is that we rehearse every day, have three concerts during the school year and participate in Pep Band," Hahn said.

At the start of the school year, a typical day for freshmen in band will involve reviewing skills for the first three to four weeks.

"Once the review is completed, the class will start with lip slurs and long tones to build muscles and endurance, scales for range development and an exercise for skill development. Then, we spend the next 20-25 minutes working on concert music," Hahn said.

As the band director at Cooper, Hahn said he enjoys working with freshmen in band because he sees them every day. Freshmen Band is the band in which he sees the most growth over the course of a year. He said he enjoys watching students learn, get better and enjoy their instruments.

Freshmen can benefit from being involved in band in ways beyond their musical skills. Hahn said that band and music classes in general are the few subjects where students do not isolate themselves by putting their headphones in or staring at a computer. Instead, students work together as a team.

"[It] builds accountability, patience and many other important group skills," Hahn said.

Due to the fact that Freshmen Band is different than middle school music classes, Hahn's advice to freshmen is to sign up and give band a chance.

One of the many Cooper band students who enjoyed his time in Freshmen Band is 2024 graduate

Zach Allen, who also eventually took part in Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band.

"[Ninth graders] will be able to meet a lot of people. Most of my friends come from band and they'll get to experience a lot of after-school activities like going out to other schools and marching through the halls. We also go out on trips, like to Chicago," Allen said.

Allen benefited from Freshmen Band because he "met a lot of people" and "got to know a lot of teachers and staff." It also helped Allen learn more about music.

"I learned a lot about music as a ninth grader and it's something you don't learn about in middle school band," he said. "You learn about what music comes from and where music comes from. In eighth grade, you just play the music, but in high school, you learn a lot more about the music."

Choir

Ninth graders who like choir or the process of singing can take Freshmen Choir. The class is taught by choir teachers and directors, Mr. Vidal and Ms. Rowan.

cal, physical and mental warm-up. Students will also do some type of music literacy or ear-training activities.

"The bulk of our class time is spent honing our musical skills via repertoire, as we refine our vocal technique and maximize our musical growth," Vidal said.

Vidal and Rowan are excited to meet the new freshmen who join choir as they enjoy the students' energy and watching them grow as singers.

"There is the type of energy that only ninth graders can bring; the atmosphere becomes electric. For students who have less experience with singing, it's also great to see how much they can grow as singers in a relatively short time," Vidal said.

Freshmen who join choir can experience many benefits. Vidal said that singing with other people is one of the best ways to connect with peers and be a part of an instant community.

"When we celebrate and when we mourn, we turn to singing. When we calm a baby or congratulate a friend, we turn to sing-



Photo by CHIMUAL VANG

Mr. Hahn leads the Freshmen Band through a rehearsal for their spring concert.

"This class rehearses daily with a focus on developing and strengthening individual and group singing and related musical skills. This class has a capstone concert each semester," Vidal said.

In addition, Vidal said there are extra singing opportunities for new ninth-grade choir students.

"Any ninth graders who are in Freshmen Choir who want additional singing opportunities are invited to audition for Treble Ensemble or Drop the Octave, our extra-curricular ensembles," Vidal said.

A typical day for Freshmen Choir students begins with a vo-

ing. Joining choir now will help you develop the skills and confidence to enjoy, rather than avoid, these opportunities as they arise throughout the rest of your life," Vidal said.

Vidal's advice to students is that it is never too late to start singing. If any freshmen would like to join choir, they can contact either of the two choir teachers or their grade-level counselor.

A Cooper student who has had a lot of experience with choir is 2024 graduate Kindric Yang, who took part in Drop The Octave, Concert Choir and Chamber Sing-

ers. He said ninth graders who join choir can benefit in many ways.

"Freshmen can benefit by interacting and bonding with others. It helps create friendships. It also helps with gaining self-confidence with yourself," Yang said.

Yang said he personally benefited from joining Freshmen Choir.

"It helped create courage for me. I was more self-conscious, but then I learned that people in choir aren't judgmental. We are all just singing. We're all one family," Yang said.

Orchestra

Any ninth graders who would like to join orchestra will be in Freshmen Orchestra, which is directed by Ms. Verdoljak.

"There are three concerts throughout the year, the Halloween Concert, Winter Concert and Spring Concert, where the class performs with their large class ensemble. Midway through the year, there is a Solo and Ensemble unit, where students can learn something in smaller groups and hone their confidence and independence," Verdoljak said.

A typical day in orchestra begins with tuning one's instrument. Afterward, students will start with warm-ups and skills practice. Students will then rehearse concert music during the class period.

"There are announcements and updates on what's happening weekly in class. Those include scheduling lessons and sectionals, signing up for volunteer opportunities and reminders about events and concerts," Verdoljak said.

One of the many aspects Verdoljak enjoys when working with freshmen is being able to play music with them because Freshmen Orchestra is the first class of the day.

Of the many ways freshmen can benefit from being involved in orchestra, Verdoljak said developing a sense of community is an important one.

"You get to know the students in your section with seating and sectionals, and see familiar faces from previous middle and elementary schools who have been in orchestra for several years," Verdoljak said.

Orchestra can be a fun class and activity for new high school students. That is why Verdoljak advises students who want to participate to sign up and try it out.

"You'll make friends and memories from the concerts to having fun party nights to having volunteer opportunities with younger music students in the district," Verdoljak said.

One of Cooper's many orchestra students is 2024 graduate Carissa Chilson, who was a part of Symphony Orchestra. She said there are many ways ninth graders can benefit from being involved in orchestra.

"They can benefit from getting involved in orchestra by gaining musical skills, making friends in a positive community and gaining a stronger sense of responsibility," Chilson said.

Chilson explained that her own music career benefited from joining Freshmen Orchestra because it helped make her first year at Cooper fun.

"It made distance learning more bearable and was a lot of fun in a not-so-fun situation," she said.

Roundelay seeks writers, artists for annual magazine

The publication, which comes out in May, showcases the creativity of Cooper students

By LEO PEREZ
Quill staff writer

Cooper offers many ways for students to express themselves, from painting murals on the wall to marching around the school and filling the halls with music. One of the many ways students are artistically involved in their community is the *Roundelay*.

The *Roundelay* is issued every year at the end of May. It contains student creative writing and artwork. Students from all four grades can submit poems, short stories, drawings and pictures to the annual publication.

The advisor of the *Roundelay* is Ms. Major, an English teacher who helps students nurture their interest in writing. Major has been the magazine's advisor for two years. Major said she decided to become the *Roundelay* advisor because of her passion for creative writing. In fact, she teaches the Creative Writing class offered at Cooper.

"I am lucky enough to teach Creative Writing, so the two go hand-in-hand. I love working with students and seeing how creative they can be," she said.

Commonly, students are curious about how to submit their work to the *Roundelay*. Major said that students who are interested in sharing their work this year can stop by her classroom, 244, or send an email to olivia_major@rdale.org. Submissions each year are due at the end of April.

Major said she enjoys the connection between writing and artwork.

"I know we have a lot of talented and hardworking writers and artists in our school. This is a space for them to celebrate their work. I also know that writing is very personal and sometimes uncomfortable to share. If anyone would like to submit to the *Roundelay* but remain anonymous, that's an option too," she said.

One contributor last year was 2024 graduate Ryan Guillen Barrera. Guillen Barrera was an International Baccalaureate (IB) Art student who submitted a few of his pieces to the 2024 *Roundelay*. He said this was the first year he has participated in the magazine.

"I had not participated in the *Roundelay* until 2024. What prompted me to participate in the *Roundelay* my senior year was a very successful art exhibition project for my IB Art class," he said.

For Guillen Barrera, the *Roundelay* offered a creative outlet to engage in self-expression. He said he enjoyed sharing his artwork in the magazine.

"The *Roundelay* helped me express myself by allowing the opportunity to showcase my art to more and more people that might possibly find interest in it," Guillen Barrera said.

The types of pieces that can be submitted to the *Roundelay* have no strict rules. Therefore, Guillen Barrera said he submitted pieces that had a personal meaning to him.

"The type of artwork I submitted to the *Roundelay* primarily consisted of video game-themed depictions. A few categories of art I submitted to the *Roundelay* included drawings, paintings and cardboard crafts that I thought people would like," he said.

While Guillen Barrera enjoyed making contributions to last year's magazine, he wishes he had learned about the publication earlier in high school.

"I encourage freshmen to get involved," he said. "I wish I had started working with the *Roundelay* earlier in my high school career."

The Quill

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Editorial Policy

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Robbinsdale Cooper High School's *The Quill* is a member of the National Scholastic Press Association.



CREDITS, GPA

continued from page 2

its and have to do summer school," Hough said.

Additional support for struggling ninth graders comes from the teaching staff. Prillwitz said there are many ways she tries to support her students as their teacher.

"If students are struggling academically, I may contact their families, assign them to my HLL, recommend after-school tutoring, work with them in small groups during class time to offer extra help, and/or give opportunities for retakes and revisions on summatives," she said.

The support Prillwitz offers her students is designed to give them a solid foundation during their first year of high school.

"Students who earn all of their credits and As and Bs in their classes freshman year are setting the foundation for success in high school. It's much easier to build on such a solid foundation than spend the next three years of high school trying to climb out of an academic hole dug freshman year with low grades and missing credits," she said.

According to Easley, one method he has learned so far that helps him earn his credits and maintain a good GPA relates to being engaged in school.

"I find that staying organized and managing my time well really helps. It's also important to actively engage with the material by taking notes, asking questions, and seeking help when needed," he said.

Ultimately, Hough said freshmen are now at an age when they need to take ownership of their own learning.

"For freshmen, the goal is to have as many opportunities after high school as possible. Some ninth graders know what they want to do as an adult and some have no idea. In either case, the sky is the limit, so once ninth grade starts, set goals for yourself, take responsibility for your learning and do your best," Hough said.

MEDIA CENTER

continued from page 4

code at their seat or on the computers located at the entry to the room.

Students are asked to remain inside the center's doors until the bell rings and get a pass to leave the room for any reason. However, the Media Center staff cannot write passes for the first 10 minutes or last 10 minutes of the period, or the last 20 minutes of eighth period.

Once the period begins, students are asked to keep their volume level down in the Group Study area to avoid disrupting others. Likewise, students are not allowed to talk in Silent Study and each student must sit at their own desk.

Eating is not permitted in the Media Center. The one exception to this is during first hour.

While using the Media Center, students are asked to use headphones for all audio, including phone calls or FaceTime. Students are also asked to avoid singing and dancing in the center.

When it comes to the furniture, students are not permitted to roll from place to place on the rolling chairs. Additionally, they are not allowed to lie down on the furniture or on the floor.

Students who have late start or early release may not be in the school building during those times, which includes the Media Center.

In light of the room's behavior expectations, King said he hopes that freshmen will enjoy the Media Center space in a respectful manner.

"Freshmen will find a relaxing, academic atmosphere in our Media Center, where they can look for good books, work together with friends or work quietly in our Silent Study area," he said.

LUNCH AND LEARN

continued from page 3

get extra support from their classroom teachers or have a quiet place to complete work. According to Hoffman, these HLL sessions are a valuable way to "build in time for extra student support," which is important to ninth graders as they start to get accustomed to the high school.

Starting off strong in high school is essential, as is feeling connected to one's peers. It is Hoffman's hope that the overall HLL system builds this level of comfort for freshmen.

Hawks teams seeking freshman athletes

Cooper offers dozens of Minnesota State High School League-sanctioned sports spread over three competition seasons



Photo by TALONS

The Cooper football team, which competes in the fall, has been a perennial favorite in their conference and section.

By MILO ATHIAS FINN
Quill staff writer

Participating in sports is a fantastic way to learn life skills and build meaningful relationships that can sustain you through high school. Luckily for incoming Cooper freshmen, there is a wide variety of sports to choose from.

Fall

The fall sports offered at Cooper include adapted soccer, girls cross country, boys cross country, dance, football, boys soccer, girls soccer, girls swimming, girls tennis, girls volleyball and cheerleading.

The head coach of the boys cross country team, Mr. Zuccola, said ninth graders can contribute to the success of all fall sports programs.

"Incoming ninth graders often form the largest batch of new runners when it comes to the fall cross country team. One thing that is great about the ninth graders who join is that everyone who comes out will make the team and everyone gets to train and compete. Additionally, the new ninth graders are the future leaders of the team and the people who will carry on the team's traditions," Zuccola said.

According to Zuccola, ninth graders will experience many benefits from partaking in fall sports.

"Taking part in fall sports gives ninth graders a chance to make a new friend group right at the start of the new school year. This is helpful to students who are coming to a brand new building and making the transition into high school. Also important is the fact that the new friend group will consist of students from all four grades, which will help a ninth grader's transition into Cooper," Zuccola said.

Agreeing with Zuccola is Mr. Connors, who is an assistant coach with the football team. He said it is important for freshmen to participate in sports at the beginning of their high school experience.

"Freshmen are our future. Without freshman, our program doesn't grow. It is important that freshmen are involved so when they become juniors and seniors, they know how events are run. They know the accountability and work ethic that needs to be given, and they have the ability to lead by example. They're basically the keys to our program," Connors said.

Connors cited the health improvements, both physical and mental, that freshmen will experience while participating in a fall sport as a key reason to join a team.

"They'll become stronger and healthier and their level of accountability will go up as well. Sports develop them mentally, emotionally and physically, so sports can make them more well rounded overall," Connors said.

One student who got involved with fall sports early is Andrew Brooks (12), a member of the boys cross country program. He said he received many benefits from participating in sports as a ninth grader.

"When I started my initial

sport of cross country, I did it because I thought I was fairly fat, to be completely honest. I wanted to change that. I became more in shape and developed a new system of friends and comradery. As a result, my experience at Cooper has been enhanced. In addition to all of that, it helps with time management. You will have to be able to manage your time and build those skills through stress, and in a way, it will make you more committed to your sport and your school," Brooks said.

Cooper graduate Lowell Grosslein was another student who started sports in ninth grade. He said he learned many life lessons by participating in high school sports.

"It's a great way to meet different people who share interests with you. Obviously, we all want one thing: we all want to play football. But it gives you a sense of time management. You can't be late, you have to be punctual and pay attention to the details. All of the stuff our coaches teach us directly carries over to the classroom," Grosslein said.

Winter

As the weather gets colder, the collection of sports options for ninth graders heats up. The winter season features an assortment of teams looking for freshmen, including adapted floor hockey, boys and girls alpine skiing, boys basketball, girls basketball, cheerleading, dance



Photo by TALONS

The basketball program has multiple levels, which gives incoming freshmen a chance to get involved no matter what background they may have in the sport.

team, boys hockey, girls hockey, boys and girls Nordic skiing, boys swimming and boys and girls wrestling.

Mr. Allen, an assistant coach for the wrestling team, emphasized the importance of freshmen to his and other winter teams, especially as it pertains to the long-term success of the programs.

"Freshmen are so important to a program because, without having the youth come in, it's hard to withstand the test of time. It is imperative that we have younger athletes to meet the older athletes and take their place when they leave," Allen said.

Allen said the new ninth graders add to the familial aspect of the wrestling team.

"One of the biggest benefits that freshmen receive from sports is definitely a sense of community. No matter what goes on in your

household, when you're at practice, for those two-to-three hours, you can really let go. When you're with your brothers and sisters fighting for a common goal, it helps build accountability, it helps build work ethic and it helps build life lessons that will help you overcome challenges in life," Allen said.

Also witnessing the impact ninth graders can have on a winter team is Ms. Rich, the head coach of the girls basketball squad. She said that capable underclassmen are a critical part of winter programs.

"I think ninth graders bring youth to the program, depending on what the sport is and what their actual role is. They kind of shape what the program turns out to be. For those that do choose to stick with it after freshman year, your experience will definitely give you an advantage over people who are just trying sports out for the first time. You'll be able to carry that with you as you get older," Rich said.

Much like Allen, Rich said new players help form a family with the older veterans.

"As a ninth grader, sports give you the opportunity to get involved with something. It's a good opportunity for them to get their feet wet and find something that they're interested in. I think here at Cooper, we do a really good job of creating a sense of family, so some kids that are looking for a little bit more, and want to be a part of a community,

according to Anderson, there is a clear correlation between sports and the quality of one's character.

"Freshmen get a lot of benefits from playing sports. They get to be a part of a community and make friends. You also learn competitiveness and drive because you want to win. I think this mindset carries on in life as well. Sports just make you a better person," Anderson said.

Spring

The final sports season for the school year falls in spring. The sports Cooper features during spring are adapted softball, baseball, boys golf, girls golf, boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, softball, boys tennis, boys and girls track, boys volleyball and trap and skeet.

Mr. DiSalvi, an assistant track coach, highlighted the benefits freshmen can experience through participation in a competitive spring sport.

"You need to have freshmen come in and be able to teach them for many years. Ideally, they'd be in our program for four years, so freshmen definitely play a big part. Obviously, from a competitive standpoint, it's useful for them to be able to mold their skills. We hope to keep them around because it's a sign of a strong relationship. We want students to feel comfortable enough to come up to us as coaches and teachers so we can be an ally when they face challenges," DiSalvi said.

DiSalvi said that taking part in spring sports can help one develop a variety of life skills.

"I think ninth graders really benefit from time management, in and outside of the classroom. Setting goals is certainly a big part of it too. It is helpful to have someone else inspire you to achieve your goals. Sports play a big piece in the ability to depend on others. It also builds a connection to the school," DiSalvi said.

Another spring coach who works with ninth graders is Mr. Eberle of the boys baseball team. He encouraged freshmen who are passionate about sports to get involved, regardless of their talent or experience at the time they join.

"While ability is great, the interest and desire to play is number one. If we can get that and start to build the culture we know we can establish, it will create a family environment. Ultimately, that's what we're working towards with those young players," Eberle said.

Another benefit of spring sports is the friendships it helps young players create.

"As a freshman, finding your niche, your group, is pretty important. There's a chance you'll be friends with those people for the rest of your life. You just have to get out there and be part of the anthill so to speak," Eberle said.

One member of the track team who enjoyed her four years in spring sports is 2024 graduate Aatoria McDonald. She said there are many physical benefits that come from sports, as well as the chance to meet a diverse group of people.

"Spring sports will keep them in shape, especially if they do any other sports. When you come into high school, your friend group is kind of split up and you're still figuring out who you are. I think it builds a sense of friendship because you spend so much time with your teammates," McDonald said.

Another positive part of joining a spring team is being able to work on the skills associated with that specific sport. Baseball player and 2024 graduate Kameron Fox said this is one reason why he is glad he got involved with baseball starting in ninth grade.

"A ninth grader will benefit by making sure they start early and making sure they're playing during the summer. If you're going into the ninth grade, make sure you're throwing over the summer as well, so by the time spring comes round, you're prepared and ready to go. It's also good to connect with the coaches, as they can help you with technique if you're new to the game," Fox said.