English teacher Andrea Obranovich takes on new role

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Music fills the days of band teacher Markus Hahn

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ALSO INSIDE

STUDENTS ACCLIMATE TO SCHEDULE CHANGES

The day now ends 10 minutes earlier than it during the 2024-2025 school year

Photo by TYLER GOODMAN

The decision to alter the school end time and class schedule was driven by issues related to transportation costs.

By JOHANNA GONZALEZ
Quill staff writer

Cooper changed the end time to its school day from 3:25 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. this school year. According to Robbinsdale School District officials, this change, along with similar adjustments to start and end times at every school in the district, was "part of a broader plan to improve transportation efficiency and ensure more reliable service across the district."

In order to shorten the end time by 10 minutes, each of Cooper's class periods was reduced from 45 minutes to 43 minutes with the exception of fifth period. While it would seem that a two-minute reduction to each class period is not a lot of time, this change has been a big thing for everyone involved. When it comes to changing what time each class period ends, staff and students who have become accustomed to the normal schedule over the past few years are still getting used to the adjustment.

According to English teacher Annika Peterson, the shorter classes have been challenging.

"I was surprised when I heard about the schedule change, because compared to other schools, I felt like we already had shorter class periods," Peterson said. "Forty-three minutes goes by fast and it has impacted the material we are able to cover."

While the shortened schedule has an impact on classes, some students have noticed a positive benefit of the change in the afternoon. According to Rafael Vazquez (12), the time change has given him more flexibility after school.

"Because we get to leave 10 minutes early, I get to go home way earlier than I did last year, which then helps me get to work early as well, which helps me a lot," he said.

Head Principal Shaunece Smith said that staff and students have largely gotten used to the change, but there is still some adjusting going on. One piece of advice she had for students is to stay on top of the new start and end times for each period.

"Take a picture of the schedule so you can remind yourself and get to class on time," Smith said.

A related challenge is that some buses are still not arriving at Cooper early enough in the morning for students to have an adequate chance to get breakfast before first period.

"What I have noticed is that, instead of going straight into breakfast, students go straight to their friends, so as soon as you get in the building, get breakfast then go with your friends so no one gets late to class," Smith said.

Mike Bury embraces role as new assistant principal

The building's newest administrator comes to Cooper with a long history in the classroom, front office of area schools

By JA'LAYIAH MCCLINTON
Quill staff writer

Mike Bury is a new assistant principal at Cooper. He brings years of education experience and a welcoming personality to the role.

In his current position, Bury oversees the ninth grade students. He is also responsible for the Math, Business, Physical Education, Health, Music and Art departments.

"I am excited to be back in a high school environment," Bury said. "I enjoy helping students succeed in whatever path they choose—college, military, trade school or work."

Bury started his career as a classroom teacher in 1996. He worked in several schools in the Robbinsdale district before becoming an assistant principal at Cooper this year.

Bury said he is grateful for how welcoming students and staff have been during his first few months as an assistant principal.

"I am here to support students and staff both academically and personally," Bury said. "Feel free to say hello because I am always willing to help."

Enjoying the chance to work with Bury is fellow assistant principal Ned Nelson, who said Bury has become a key member of the Cooper administrative team.

"Mr. Bury has lots of experience and is great at building relationships with staff and students," Nelson said. "He is a great addition to the Cooper family."

Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

Bury said he enjoys interacting with the students attending Cooper.

In his free time, Bury said he enjoys riding his motorcycle, gaming, woodworking, reading and spending time with his kids. In fact, he said he has twin ninth graders who are active in sports.

A fun fact about Bury connects to a famous historic event in the 1990s.

"I was in Germany when the Berlin Wall came down," Bury said.

Ninth grade transition brings challenges, opportunities

Freshmen have many resources at their disposal to make their first year of high school as successful as possible

By CAMILA RODRIGUEZ LAZCANO
Quill staff writer

The start of high school is one of the biggest steps in a student's education. For ninth graders, this transition often feels like stepping into an entirely new world with new opportunities, challenges and responsibilities.

Unlike middle school, high school brings more independence. Students face a bigger campus with a lot of new faces, along with tougher classes. For many freshmen, it can be both exciting and overwhelming.

"It's different, but in a good way," Dashay Williams (9) said.

There are many ways ninth graders can better connect themselves to Cooper. For example, HLL is an opportunity to get extra help in a class, build connections with other students, join a student group or just relax.

"I really want to encourage students to take advantage of HLL," Social Studies and AVID teacher Mr. DiSalvi said. "I know it is really easy to just sign up for the hallway and meander the halls for 30 minutes. Once in a while, that probably is a good thing. However, if you are really falling behind in classes, HLL is an easy way to gain an extra two hours of work time that can be beneficial."

Cooper also offers a variety of extracurricular activities such as sports, marching band, theater and debate for interested ninth graders. While freshmen are sometimes reluctant to join an extracurricular at the beginning of high school because they want to focus on making a solid academic start, staff members agree that students in extracurriculars do as well or better academically than their less involved peers.

"Being involved in extracurriculars can help a student prioritize their time, and the social benefits of belonging to a group or team can help students feel supported at school, which may foster academic success," Kristen Prillwitz, a freshman English teacher, said.

Teachers and staff play an important role in helping freshmen adjust. Orientation days, peer mentoring and freshman events are meant to help those nerves and create a welcoming environment. Guidance counselors also encourage students to start thinking about long-term goals, like careers and college, while still enjoying the day-to-day high school experience.

"I do a lot to make sure I connect with every one of my students," ninth grade counselor Sam Meyers said. "Counselors are here to help ninth graders get a strong start to their journey through high school."

Still the transition to high school has its challenges for freshmen. Many students feel nervous about fitting in, managing school work and balancing clubs and sports.

"I was so worried about the expectations that were going to be put on me and how I was going to be viewed," Omar Rodriguez-Ramirez (10) said.

The challenges students face in ninth grade help build independence and help them grow as people. By the end of the year, most ninth graders find themselves more confident and ready for the next step.

"I don't know why I was so worried. Everybody is just worried about themselves so just have fun and do what you want to do," Audrey Thompson (10) said.

High school may seem intimidating at first, but it is also a place to grow and meet new friends. The transition from middle school to high school is more than a change in buildings, it is the beginning of the next step to your fu-

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Highview, RVA provide students with alternatives

Both district offerings help learners who may be struggling with traditional schools

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES
Quill staff writer

Highview and Robbinsdale Virtual Academy (RVA) are the alternative schools to attend for Robbinsdale students who want to catch up or need a different setting.

Highview is an Alternative Learning Center (ALC) that can help students catch up with their credits at a faster pace than at a traditional school. Patrick Burrage, the assistant principal, said that Highview is a "school designed to fill the gap of learning for students that have experienced roadblocks in a traditional setting."

Instead of having eight class periods like Cooper, Highview has a four-block schedule that repeats over five cycles. That system is what allows students to earn their credits at a faster rate than they could at Cooper.

"There are only so many credits you can make up here in Cooper in a semester," Shaunece Smith the head principal at Cooper, said.

The classrooms at Highview are smaller than those in a traditional high school. This gives students the opportunity to have more one-on-one time with the teacher instead of having to wait several minutes to get the help they need in that class time.

According to Burrage, Highview will "develop individual learning plans for all students to assist in grade tracking and understand the needs for support." Not only will the student get more help in this system, the help is specific to them.

An important thing to know is that students at Highview can still walk the stage at graduation with their Cooper classmates. That is something students and their families should take into account when applying for Highview.

"Highview's ultimate goal is that all students will get back on track by enjoying education, know the power that education can produce and prepare all students for graduation," Burrage said.

A second alternative learning environment is RVA, an online school for students who may need more flexibility in their education. It is offered to students in grades 6-12.

"Our goal at RVA is to help students be successful in a supportive, non-judgmental environment," Laura Ritter, a school counselor at RVA, said.

Students who may have something going on in their lives that makes it so they cannot attend school in person can attend RVA as an alternative. RVA makes it so the student's education plan works for them and not against them.

"Homework is assigned weekly and if students complete their coursework early for the week, this frees up their schedule for other activities, jobs or learning opportunities," Ritter said.

Each student's education is in their own hands and they can do what is best for them. However, there is a flip side to this self-directed system. Since students do not stick to a schedule, Ritter said they can fall behind, which can be a challenge because when it comes to virtual schools, it is extremely important to stay on pace. As a result, students and parents should keep this in mind when thinking about attending RVA.

When trying to choose between Cooper and these two alternative schools, students and families should keep one question in mind: What environment do I need to succeed? Both alternative schools offer schedule flexibility for their students, with Highview being somewhat closer to a traditional school structure in a school building than RVA. Oftentimes, it is the environment the student desires that can lead them to choose an alternative school instead of Cooper.

"Sometimes, students need something different," Smith said. "It's not a one-size-fits-all as far as what our students need to succeed."

Another approach that RVA offers is a part-time option for students who are unsure if they want to fully commit to an online school.

"The part-time option allows students to take one-to-three classes with RVA and still attend their home high school in-person for their other classes," Ritter said.

Exchange students settle into America

Cooper is playing host this year to a half dozen students from a wide array of countries throughout the world

Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

One item that all of the exchange students agree on is the friendliness of their Cooper classmates.

By TESSA LENOCH
Quill staff writer

Cooper has six exchange students joining the student body for the 2025-2026 school year. Andrea Ronchi (12), Mathilde Klausen (12), Marcos Jimenez Marigomez (12), Cristian Montero Vigo (12), Elena Sastre Sobrecueva (12) and Ella Van Massenhove (12). Now that they are several weeks into the school year, they have shared their thoughts on Cooper and America as a whole.

Andrea Ronchi

Ronchi is a student from Italy studying in Minnesota. He said that, so far, getting used to the food in America has "not been very easy."

"School food and food in the places you go [is so different]. It's strange," he said.

According to Ronchi, the students at Cooper are friendly and welcoming. He also has noticed a lot of nice people in Minnesota.

After the first day at Cooper, which is hard to navigate for most students, Ronchi said he has found many friends.

"I started talking to more people, other exchange students and people from here," he said.

Mathilde Klausen

Klausen is a student from Norway, which she described as "quite similar" climate-wise to Minnesota. So far, Klausen said the highlights of America have been the food and the people.

"You get gigantic food portions here in comparison to what you get in Norway, and as someone who loves food, that is amazing. I also love how outgoing people are here. In Norway, we like to keep more to ourselves and that's just how the standards are; however, we are all fine with that. But as an outgoing person, I love how friendly everyone is," she said.

Klausen's biggest hurdle in adjusting to America was getting used to speaking English every day, but despite this difficulty, she adapted quickly.

"I've made a lot of new friends since I attended Cooper High School and I'm still meeting amazing new people every day," she said.

When Klausen returns to Norway, she has more school ahead of her.

"I plan on finishing high school when I get back as we have a 13th year in Norway. I'll be graduating twice," she said.

Marcos Jimenez Marigomez

Jimenez Marigomez is an exchange student from Spain. He said he has met many great people in his first few weeks at Cooper.

"I met a friend from Minnesota, another from Italy and the people of my soccer team," he said.

So far, Jimenez Marigomez has been having a good time in the states, trying to enjoy the visit as much as he possibly can.

"I've been trying to adapt in the best way to be able to make the most of the time and enjoy as much as possible," he said.

According to Jimenez Marigomez, there was one stand-out difficulty in his exchange experience thus far.

"The more difficult part [about being in America] was understanding people since they speak faster and adapting to speaking English daily," he said.

When Jimenez Marigomez returns home, he hopes to get a C1 Level of proficiency in English, indicating that he is extremely fluent in the language, speaking at a level similar to a native speaker.

Cristian Montero Vigo

Montero Vigo is studying in America from Spain. He said that, so far, adjusting to Cooper and America have been easy thanks to the support of the people around him.

"As soon as I arrived, the teachers were really nice and kind to me, willing to help me with everything," he said. "Right when I arrived [Chad Hill (12) and Griffin Gilmore (12)] showed me the whole school and told me that if I needed anything, I could count on them."

Montero Vigo added that the highlight of America has been the friends and people he has met.

"The energy of the people here is so friendly and nice," he said.

After his exchange year at Cooper, Montero Vigo is planning to go to college and get a job.

Elena Sastre Sobrecueva

Sastre Sobrecueva is from Leon, a small city in the north of Spain. Although Spain and America are different to her, she has been adjusting well to the new environment.

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Say Something continues to show its usefulness

Several potential threats at Cooper during first quarter were addressed ahead of time thanks to the system

By BEN KENYON
Quill staff writer

Americans live in a reality where many students fear the daily possibility of being exposed to an act of gun violence while at school. The severity of the trend of increased gun-related incidents in American schools has become so piercing that since one of the first major events to shock the public, the Columbine shooting in 1999, the *Washington Post* estimates that 390,000 students have in some way been exposed to a situation involving guns in a school setting.

The prevalence of this issue has been steadily growing for the past few years, and as a result of a repeated outcry to take action, the Say Something anonymous reporting system was started.

Launched back in 2018 by the non-profit organization Sandy Hook Promise, the Say Something anonymous reporting system was designed to give students a way to safely flag and report issues that they have seen in school. Since its launch, key figures behind its operation report on their website that it has already prevented and saved more than 1,000 students from being exposed to a possible outbreak of gun violence. Moreover, the system helped a further 5,300 individuals get assistance in cases where mental health crises were reported.

As of late 2024, Sandy Hook's Say Something system has been placed in more than 350 different school districts and regional agencies across the nation, providing students with educational lessons on how to recognize and address warning signs along with the opportunity to make confidential reports. Cooper, along with the larger Robbinsdale Area School District, locally adopted the system starting back in the 2023-2024 school year. According to Assistant Principal Ned Nelson, the system has already proved itself helpful by having been used "on more than one occasion to address or resolve a situation."

"Say Something gives students the power to help keep the building safe without putting their own safety on the line," Nelson said. "As students and staff, we all have a responsibility for the safety of the building and the people in it. Reporting students that plan on harming themselves or others is important and one way for students to prevent harm from coming to the Cooper community."

Nelson added that Cooper administrators have worked to make sure students are aware of the service's presence and accessibility. For instance, the system is bookmarked on every student's Chromebook, there are informational posters displayed around the school and there is a day every year when Sandy Hook's "Warning Signs Recognition" presentations are showcased.

The motivation that inspired Sandy Hook Promise to begin developing this service was grounded in findings from a study by the Secret Service and the Department of Education that revealed approximately 93 percent of school shooters had shown warning signs before they inevitably carried out an act. This pointed to a need to put a system in place that could warn authorities before a tragedy happens. The service's creation, along with who it would eventually be catered toward, was also helped by the Sandy Hook organization's observation that students are sometimes afraid to speak up.

"The report goes directly to the principals, district leadership and, in the case of a report that a weapon may be in the building, it goes to local law enforcement. The person reporting may be asked some questions from the Say Something staff, but their name will remain anonymous if they want," Nelson said.

The Say Something reporting system being directly available to students in grades four through 12 has proved itself to be vital over its run time, showing that students are often the first to become aware of possible safety threats, cases of escalated bullying and occurrences where their classmates have become susceptible to deteriorating mental health, leading to the possibility of self-harm or suicide.

School offers mental health resources to Hawks

From therapy to counselor support, there are many options available to students struggling with school, life issues

By ANGEL JARQUIN RAMIREZ
Quill staff writer

Cooper offers many resources to students who are facing mental health challenges while also dealing with class work, involvement in activities and responsibilities outside of the school setting.

One type of resource available at school is the various social workers who can support students. One of Cooper's social workers is Rhea Robinson, who is "more involved with mental health" issues that students might face. In addition to her role at Cooper, Robinson is connected to People Incorporated.

"I work with students who have anxiety around school and friendship problems," Robinson said.

As part of her work with students, Robinson can provide various types of support, including therapy.

"We'll talk about coping strategies," Robinson said.

When working with students, Robinson said her role as a social worker is to provide support.

"I listen when people are venting," she said. "I also need to be mindful when saying words."

According to Robinson, mental health is something all students need to be aware of and maintain on a long-term basis.

"The fact is that there is no fast solution to fix mental health," Robinson said.

Another mental health resource for students at Cooper is their grade-level counselor. One counselor who has experience in working with students facing mental health challenges is Salinee Hough, the counselor for this year's juniors.

"A lot of students might think all school counselors do is work on schedules. That's not true. While we do that, and it is a big part of those first days of school, we are here to support in other ways too," Hough said.

According to Hough, there are several warning signs she often sees that let her know that a student's mental health may be at risk.

"Students often will start withdrawing from interests or friends. Sometimes their behavior will change and become concerning. As staff, we often hear from their friends who are concerned about them, or sometimes teachers let us know because they see a change in behavior," Hough said.

In order to address mental health concerns, Hough said that good communication between families, teachers and school support staff is important.

"Supporting the student is more effective when everyone is on the same page," Hough said.

Hough noted that the demand for mental support has increased over the years since she started as a school counselor.

"I do think it's a positive thing that more students are talking about mental health and learning about it. I think there is less of a stigma around getting support, which is a positive as well," Hough said.

According to Hough, there are no coming changes when it comes to supporting the mental health of students at Cooper.

"We do have strong support here already in place," Hough said. "I want students to know that what they're going through can and will improve. It's important to utilize your resources and know that they're not alone."

English teacher takes on IB position

Andrea Obranovich stepped into the IBMYP coordinator role after the 2025 retirement of Kari Christensen

Photo by TYLER GOODMAN

Obranovich's office is located in the Student Services Center across the hall from the counselors.

By CARLIE JONES
Quill staff writer

Many students know Andrea Obranovich as the driving force behind Cooper's yearbook and classes like Honors English 9. Now, this familiar face is taking on a new role: Cooper's IBMYP Coordinator.

"I hope that I can help students to take advantage of all of the opportunities that we have for them at Cooper. IB is a program that can not just prepare you for college or to get college credits, but help you with skills beyond the Cooper hallways like time management, critical thinking and writing skills, and a global awareness. I want to help more students gain all of those things," she said.

Obranovich's official start date in the new position was the week of August 18. However, she said she started preparing before students and teachers returned for the new school year, marking the beginning of a new chapter for both her and the IBMYP program.

Obranovich's history in the building made her a natural choice for the coordinator position. She shared that her journey leading to this new role was rooted in her prior work and relationships at Cooper.

"I have been teaching English at Cooper since 2006. I didn't know anything about the IB program before I started teaching here, but as I learned about it, I came to really appreciate and love it. When Ms. Christensen retired at the end of last year, I took the opportunity to apply for the position," she said.

With the new title comes a completely different set of responsibilities and a much-changed daily routine. Obranovich noted that her days are now packed with office work like gathering data, getting forms together, sending messages and spending time in classrooms helping students create AP Classroom logins. Additionally, she has conversations with different MYP students to talk about their Personal Project and to help older students with IB test registration. Through it all, she said she tries to maintain a focused approach to her work.

"I love to have a to-do list or a checklist," she said. "I'm learning a lot about my own time-management abilities. I tend to have a strong focus on a task and then need a quick break to regroup and rethink before I dive back in."

Stepping into a leadership role focused on one of the school's most demanding academic tracks, Obranovich said she has clear objectives for the coming year. She is driven to ensure the IB program not only meets international standards but also best serves Cooper's unique student body.

"My main goals for students are to help more students earn elective credits in 10th grade with the Personal Project, to help more students enroll in college-prep courses, and to help the teachers in the building feel prepared, confident and happy in teaching their IB courses," she said.

Support is at the center of Obranovich's strategy. She said she understands that the demanding nature of the program requires strong backing for everyone involved.

"I would like to be in classrooms helping out as much as possible, both with students who might have questions about courses or paths that are right for them, as well as helping my colleagues with organizing or understanding their IB courses," she said.

Obranovich's commitment to education, she said, was shaped long before she ever taught a class at Cooper. The decision to enter the teaching profession stemmed from deep personal inspiration.

"My mom was a teacher, so that was always something that I was familiar with," she said.

Like many educators, she also was influenced by her own mentors.

"My favorite teacher in high school was Mr. Heling, who was my AP Composition teacher. He always made us feel really capable and smart, like we were really getting things in his class. Those feelings are what I've always wanted to share with my own students," Obranovich said. "And I've always loved reading and talking about books."

As she settles into her new role, Obranovich remains focused on continuous development, both for the program she leads and for herself. Her current focus underscores her dedication to growth and learning. Additionally, she said she has a personal goal in the coming months.

"I would like to run another half-marathon this year," she said.

Revised study habits can help Hawks with school

From changing one's environment to retooling one's approach to goal setting, students can take charge of their own learning

By DIANA SANCHEZ MORALES
Quill staff writer

Students can get stressed through the school year. Therefore, cultivating smarter, more intentional study habits is the key to reducing stress and improving academic performance.

Tip One: Minimize Distractions

Minimizing distractions can help students through the school year by improving their focus and concentration, which can lead to better information retention, deeper comprehension and enhanced learning effectiveness. Breana Beenken (12) said she has several ways to minimize distractions in order to help her studies.

"Put on some type of headphones of quiet music to drown out surroundings. Also, place your phone on the other side of the room where you can't get it unless you get up, or give it to someone who won't give it back until you're done. Turn off notifications. Also, it helps just to place your phone face down if you can't place it elsewhere," she said.

Tip Two: Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can refer to your physical health, mental health and study environment. Prioritizing a routine that includes sufficient sleep, balanced diet and regular physical activity can help you boost concentration and reduce stress. According to science teacher Sandy Hawkinson, finding balance in life can be a big help to student health.

Photo by TYLER GOODMAN

Careful note taking while reading is one way to aid information retention.

"I think the key to a healthy lifestyle for students is finding balance: balance between school, friends, family, work and activities. When life gets out of balance, stress and anxiety can build up really fast. It's also about taking care of your body: getting enough sleep, eating real meals, drinking less caffeine or energy drinks and ditching unhealthy habits like vaping. A healthy lifestyle isn't about perfection, it's about making good choices that help you feel your best," Hawkinson said.

Tip Three: Enhance Your Learning

Enhancing your learning techniques is a good way to shift them from passive to active learning, resulting in deeper understanding and better information retention. This can help you in the future by taking an approach that lets you manage time and overcome obstacles like procrastination. Advocating this approach is IBMYP Coordinator Andrea Obranovich.

"A few ways that students can enhance their learning is by reviewing notes regularly; asking questions in class, both of their teachers and classmates; using a planner or calendar to keep track of due dates and to plan longer projects; creating a comfortable place to work at home; locking in on work and taking brain breaks; and making sure to eat well, sleep well and stay hydrated," Obranovich said.

Tip Four: Set Clear Goals

Setting clear goals helps students with future exams or studying. Students should consider following the SMART method, which includes making goals specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. Especially helpful is writing down detailed goals and action steps, breaking down large objectives into smaller tasks, setting realistic deadlines and scheduling regular reviews to track progress and make necessary adjustments. According to Alia Renteria (12), this is a good way to set clear goals.

"A student can set clear goals by prioritizing classes they might find more challenging and taking time out of their day to work out what about the class is challenging, as well as figuring out a new way of learning that fits their needs to help study," she said.

Tip Five: Ask for Help

Students always need help when they have trouble learning. The best way to get help is to be specific, prepared and proactive when approaching teachers or classmates. You should identify your specific issues, which can include bringing materials like a draft paper or incorrect problems that you need help with.

Shiloh Hartman (12) said that she has several methods for getting help when she is struggling in a class.

"Students can ask for help by emailing teachers or staff who have knowledge in the problem. They can also go to a teacher's HLL and get more one-on-one time with the teacher," she said.

Privilege of open lunch brings rules

Students may have their open lunch access revoked due to sixth period tardiness

By ELLA VAN MASSENHOVE
Quill staff writer

At 11:47 a.m., when the bell rings to announce the start of fifth period, many Cooper junior and senior students rush to the main door to go to open lunch. These students can then go get some food or simply chill with their friends outside of school.

According to Salinee Hough, a school counselor who also oversees the checkout process, there are 413 juniors and seniors approved to go to open lunch. However, she adds that there are not as many students who actually go to open lunch on a daily basis.

According to Hough, more seniors than juniors go to open lunch because they have "more access to different transportation opportunities during their lunch time."

The reason open lunch is limited to juniors and seniors relates to age and maturity.

"We keep it available to juniors and seniors to promote student autonomy and teach responsibility," Ned Nelson, assistant principal, explained.

The students who choose to leave for lunch must scan their student card or enter their ID to be able to leave the building. All students going to open lunch must return to school by 12:52 p.m., before the sixth period of the day begins. After that time, the open lunch doors are closed so students have to scan in the main office and are marked tardy. After too many warnings, these students can then lose their open lunch privileges, Nelson added.

One student who uses open lunch is Amelia Gibbons (12). She said that sometimes she arrives late to her sixth period class because there are wi-fi problems, which creates a long line in front of the door at the attendance checkpoint. As a result, students take more time to get back into the school.

As for the open lunch food options, most students opt for fast food, like the McDonald's at the corner of Winnetka Ave. and 42nd Ave. N. Students who have one typically go by car, but some of them just walk to the nearest fast-food restaurants.

"You can have more free will, kind of, in a way, but it's definitely like a privilege to have," Gibbons said.

Nevertheless, some students prefer just staying at school during fifth period. This is the case for Maddie Halupnick (10).

"I'm never late to my sixth period class because I stay in the building. I also save a lot of money because I don't have to pay for school lunch," she said.

Similarly, Althea Romualdo (11) said that she likes to stay at school during lunch time because she can hang out with her friends who do not have open lunch.

TRANSITION

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ture. According to DiSalvi, the best way for freshmen to excel during this transition is to remember Cooper's HAWK values.

"I would encourage them to be the best version of themselves by following HAWK expectations: being honest to others, being accountable to expectations, being hard workers and being kind to others," he said.

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Editorial Policy

The Quill is an open and public forum for the thoughts and opinions of all students at Robbinsdale Cooper High School. Editorials contained in the Opinion section of the newspaper are the views of their respective authors alone. They do not necessarily represent the views of Cooper High School or Robbinsdale School District 281.

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NSPA

To the Editors

Budget issues cause concern in community

Cooper graduate questions how, when district budget woes first started

By RYAN SAINIO
Cooper Class of 2006

Hello *Quill* staff of 2025-2026.

In light of recent events with the Robbinsdale District's budgeting and the possible end of Cooper as a school, I found myself back at Cooper's website and eventually, the freshman orientation issue of your publication. And as one of likely few people who ever lettered in journalism at Robbinsdale Cooper, it honestly felt like home.

I had a chuckle reading through the articles on navigating Cooper and the importance of earning credits in the freshman year. They feel as true today as they did in 2003 when I started at Cooper.

But after some reflection about what my high school meant to me, through all its ups and downs, my mind drifted back to those budget issues and I wanted to present an idea that one of your aspiring writers might want to latch onto. I want to know: was the 2008 referendum in the district the canary in the coal mine for where we now see ourselves in 2025? Or is this issue rooted in something even further back or just a recent development?

I think writing and journalism are two extremely important things in our society. The process of going out, asking questions and finding answers is so important. And I hope that over the course of this school year as you are putting together the future editions of *The Quill*, you are able to go out and find answers. And I hope that you carry that into your lives after high school.

I look forward to future editions, and hopefully my question can be addressed in November or December.

Skipping class is tough problem for school to solve

Even students are beginning to recognize the need for consequences

By JA'LAYIAH MCCLINTON
Quill staff writer

Students skipping class is not a new problem. We all know what it looks like: bathrooms packed with people hanging out, students crowding stalls and long lines. Passing periods are short, and when the bathrooms are used as hangout spots, it causes bathroom traffic and unnecessary delays for students who actually need to use them.

The bigger issue is what skipping class leads to. When you skip, assignments start to pile up and it is easy to fall behind. You are missing out on important lessons and cheating yourself out of a good education when you choose to skip class. In the end, you are only hurting yourself.

There are some steps the school could take to help with the problem of skipping class. Limiting hall passes for students who are caught skipping might help. Also, Coach's Corner could be used as a consequence for this problem.

In fact, some students feel that privileges like open lunch and free time in the hallways during HLL should be taken away because of the problem of skipping class. Moreover, some argue that it is good when bathrooms are closed because it can help curtail skipping.

Ultimately, skipping class might seem harmless in the moment, but the repercussions on yourself and on other people add up fast. We need to start taking it seriously not just for the school, but for ourselves.

Free school food should be universal right

Minnesota is one of only nine states in the U.S. where student meals are free in all K-12 public school settings

Photo by ROSE VANG-LOHNES

Cooper's shift to free school meals took effect after students returned to the building following the pandemic and distance learning.

By ROSE VANG-LOHNES
Quill staff writer

Sometimes I would not eat school lunch as a kid. I would sit there for the entirety of lunch time, feeling hungry. My lunch account was in the negative numbers, and I knew if I went up to get lunch, I would be given another pink slip saying that I needed to pay. Yes, I should have given those slips to my parents, but I was scared. They made it seem like I was doing something bad and that bright pink slip did not make it any better. Looking back on that memory, a question pops up in my mind: when did food for kids become a privilege and not a right?

One in five children face food insecurity. While almost everyone on some level is aware of this issue, only nine states in the U.S. give free food to their students, one of which is Minnesota. Students cannot concentrate if they are hungry or are constantly anxious due to them not knowing when they will get their next meal. School is a place where students should feel safe and secure, so why are some states not providing a sense of security for the students through food?

I am not trying to imply that people in the other 41 states do not care about their kids, but I am saying that I do not see a sense of urgency to provide free food for students. If states want students to succeed, then they need to give them the environment in which they can succeed. As the No Kid Hungry organization states, "There is no possible excuse for children to go hungry in this country. Yet it happens, every day, in every community." There is absolutely no reason for a child to go hungry in this day in age, but yet there are many who do.

Students are legally obligated to be in school for about seven hours each day over the course of 180 days. It seems that these students should be provided with all their basic needs during those seven hours for free. It especially does not make sense to me why elementary school lunches were not automatically free for the hungry children stuck in those buildings all day long. I understand that it is the parents who are expected to pay for student lunches, but what if those parents are on a tight budget? Do they not deserve some grace? Food is something all humans need to live, so why in a place of safety and intellectual nourishment like a school is a basic human need not being fulfilled?

Obviously, school lunches cost money, and the states that charge for food are doing so to recoup the costs of that food. However, there are other ways to get that money for states that cannot afford to cover the full cost of meals. One possibility would be fundraisers. In my old elementary school, we did a lot of them, and many were so fun that the students did not even know they were fundraisers. One fundraiser we did every year was a "walkathon" during which we walked around our school area for half the day to raise money. Of course, free water and snacks were given to us during this event, and if a student got tired of walking, there was a rest area that had games to win T-shirts or glow sticks. This event raised money but it was so fun that students wanted to be involved.

All in all, school food should have always been free. It should not be necessary to charge for a child's food while they are in a school setting. There are too many kids who do not have consistent access to meals at home. There are other ways to make money for whatever the school may need. Students, especially elementary school-aged students, should not have to bear the cost of food.

Allure of vaping offset by its dire health consequences

Although there is a perception that vaping is less harmful than smoking, it is at least equally addictive, dangerous to the body

By JURIA VANG
Quill staff writer

Vapes, also known as electronic cigarettes, are battery-powered and rechargeable devices that come in a wide variety of flavors. They work by heating a liquid solution into vapor, which the user inhales. Some people vape for fun or to keep up with trends, while others believe that vaping is safer than smoking traditional cigarettes. But is it really?

Personally, I have seen many people use vapes as a way to cope with mental health issues such as depression or stress. For some, vaping becomes a coping mechanism or even an addiction. Whether it turns out for better or worse often depends entirely on the individual.

Although vaping can release large amounts of dopamine while in use, it can also lead to intense withdrawal symptoms. These withdrawals may cause individuals to engage in negative behaviors when they are unable to vape. I have witnessed people change negatively because they could not smoke or did not have access to a vape. They often shut down emotionally or become less sociable compared to when they are able to vape regularly. This shift in behavior can harm relationships and sometimes lead to anger issues that are difficult to resolve.

While vaping may not cause many noticeable short-term effects when first used, over time the consequences become more apparent. Users may begin to experience shortness of breath, increased heart rate and blood pressure, damage to blood vessels, lung infections, general lung damage and even an increased risk of blood clots. Even if someone begins vaping without any mental health concerns, the chemicals in vapes can alter brain chemistry and potentially lead to mood disorders, anxiety and depression.

> Vaping might offer temporary relief, but it does not solve underlying problems. Everything begins and ends in the mind, and no one can hold everything in forever. One day, you may run out of money, or vapes may no longer be available. What will you do then?

Some may argue that vaping is not terrible and that it helps relieve stress. This is only partially true. Vaping might offer temporary relief, but it does not solve underlying problems. Everything begins and ends in the mind, and no one can hold everything in forever. One day, you may run out of money, or vapes may no longer be available. What will you do then? Everyone processes emotions differently and some people take longer to heal. However, avoiding problems instead of addressing them will not make anything better.

Vaping is neither entirely good nor entirely bad. It all depends on your perspective and how you choose to use it. After all, it is your body and your life. While vaping might provide short-term neurological relief, it also has the potential to damage your well-being in the long run. It can lead to lifelong health issues and even shorten your lifespan.

In the end, coping through vaping is a mental habit. It is a temporary escape, not a permanent solution. What you choose to do with this information is up to you. It is never too late to make a change, whether that means starting something new or deciding to quit. The choice is yours, and it begins with your willingness to take that first step.

Full editorial policy of the Cooper High School *Quill*

From the Editors

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 unneeded 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 issue will address it in a correctional section.

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.

Hate brings Shakespeare to high school

The 1999 reimagining of the play *The Taming of the Shrew* has become a classic of the romantic comedy genre

Photo by TOUCHSTONE PICTURES

The memorable performances of Julia Stiles and Heath Ledger in the film helped launch their careers.

By AMRAN MUHUMED
Quill staff writer

10 Things I Hate About You is directed by Gil Junger and was released on March 31, 1999. I chose to review *10 Things I Hate About You* because it brings back that classic high school romance vibe. It is my ultimate comfort movie; in fact, I have lost count of how many times I have watched it. Every time I see it, the movie puts me in the best mood. The soundtrack, the outfits and the witty banter always make me feel happy. There is something about Kat and Patrick's story that never gets old, and no matter how many times I have seen it, it always makes me smile. *10 Things I Hate About You* effectively uses vibrant cinematography and a nostalgic, upbeat soundtrack to capture the emotional highs and lows of teenage life.

Adapted from William Shakespeare's play *The Taming of the Shrew*, *10 Things I Hate About You* starts off with Cameron, a new student at Padua High, sitting in the office of the quirky guidance counselor, Ms. Perky. He is then shown around the school by Michael, who becomes his best friend. It is during his tour that Cameron first sees Bianca Stratford, a beautiful sophomore with one problem: she is not allowed to date. Also unable to date is her "shrew" sister, Katarina, a senior who loves indie rock and feminist prose and hates conformity. As fate would have it, Kat and Bianca's father alters his house rule: now, Bianca can date as long as Kat has a date too. In order for Cameron to date Bianca, he has to find someone to date Kat, so Michael helps him enlist the help of pretty-boy Joey Donner by tricking him into thinking he will get to take Bianca out if he pays someone to take Kat out. His choice is Patrick Verona, a bad boy with a mysterious reputation.

One scene where cinematography plays a critical role is when Patrick sings "Can't Take My Eyes Off You" to Kat on the school bleachers. The wide shots of the empty stadium emphasize his grand, public gesture, while the camera movements follow his playful chase, highlighting the humor, charm and vulnerability of the moment. I chose this element because cinematography fits right in with a lot of the scenes from the film. In this scene, Patrick tries to win Kat over by serenading her with "Can't Take My Eyes Off You" over the school's loudspeakers while dancing across the bleachers. With the help of the school band, he pulls off a bold, funny and romantic gesture that catches Kat off guard and makes her smile, breaking through her tough exterior. The cinematography in this scene uses wide shots and smooth camera movements to highlight the scale and boldness of Patrick's gesture, making it feel larger-than-life and cinematic. By capturing his movements across the empty bleachers and cutting to Kat's surprised reactions, the audience is drawn into the emotional shift, feeling the charm of the moment just as she does.

One scene where costume design really stands out is at Bogey Lowenstein's house party, where all the main characters show up dressed totally out of their usual style. In this scene, the usually reserved and edgy Kat lets loose and dances on a table after having a few drinks, surprising everyone, especially Patrick. At the same time, Bianca is trying to impress Joey, and Cameron is trying to win her attention. Kat, who normally wears dark, laid-back clothes, shows up in a more fitted and slightly more playful outfit, hinting at the fact that she is starting to open up emotionally. Meanwhile, Bianca wears a trendy, stylish look that shows she is confident and trying to get noticed. The costume choices in this scene highlight the characters stepping out of their comfort zones and trying to navigate the confusing world of high school relationships. Each outfit reflects where they are at emotionally and how they want to be seen by others. The costume design helps the audience instantly recognize shifts in the characters' personalities and social dynamics. It makes the scene more relatable and visually engaging, showing how even small changes in appearance can reflect big changes inside.

One central message in *10 Things I Hate About You* is that people are more than the image they show to the world and you should not judge someone based on first impressions. A scene that shows this is when Kat reads her poem in class at the end of the movie, revealing how deeply she cares about Patrick even after everything that happens. She breaks down crying and it is the first time we see her being vulnerable and honest with her feelings. This scene connects to the message because it shows that Kat, who everyone thought was just angry and closed off, actually has a soft side and can be hurt like anyone else. It also shows that Patrick was not just a bad boy doing things for money; he actually fell for her too, proving people are not always what they seem like on the surface. I agree with this message because I think everyone has more going on than what they show and it is important to take the time to really get to know people before making assumptions.

10 Things I Hate About You effectively uses vibrant cinematography and a nostalgic, upbeat soundtrack to capture the emotional highs and lows of teenage life. Overall, I think this film is a fun, heartfelt take on high school romance that remains relatable today. The mix of humor, emotions and strong character development makes it a movie I never get tired of watching. I think the director, Gil Junger, does a great job bringing the story to life in a way that feels both real and entertaining. He balances serious moments with comedy really well, and the way he uses music, visuals and performances helps create a film that still connects with audiences years later. *10 Things I Hate About You* is a five-star film.

2006's *Eragon* is underrated fantasy film

Disney+ is currently considering a streaming series continuing the events of the movie

By ELIANA CHILSON
Quill staff writer

The movie I am reviewing is *Eragon*, a 2006 release directed by Stefen Fangmeier. I watched the movie for the first time years ago because I had read the books and wanted to see what the crow-like hunters would look like outside of my imagination. This time, I decided to rewatch it both because I had been wanting to for a while and because I enjoyed it the last time I saw it. I will be honest: I mostly just wanted to see Saphira again. I believe the film *Eragon* uses special effects and background sounds to help convey the magic of a world that seems determined to fight against you, even as you push forward with the help of those by your side.

The story takes place in the Kingdom of Alagaësia, which is ruled by the evil King Galbatorix, a former Dragon Rider who betrayed his companions in his quest for power. When an orphaned farm boy named Eragon finds a mysterious blue stone sent by Princess Arya, he soon discovers that it is actually a dragon egg. After the dragon Saphira hatches, Eragon meets his mentor, Brom, and becomes the Dragon Rider foretold in an ancient prophecy whose fate is to free the people from Galbatorix's tyranny. Along the way, Eragon allies with the rebel group known as the Varden and together they fight against the dark sorcerer Durza and the king's forces in a desperate quest for freedom.

One scene where the film's use of sound stands out is during the introduction of the Ra'zac. Around 26 minutes into the movie, Eragon leaves Brom's home in the village and hears suspicious noises. Curious, he goes to investigate and witnesses the murder of the butcher he had spoken to earlier that day. During this scene, the audience hears an eerie swarm of sounds similar to the noises that buzzing flies and clicking locusts make as the Ra'zac threaten and eventually kill the butcher. These asynchronous sounds, without the visuals of the violence taking place, allow the audience to imagine the pain and terror the creatures inflict. The strange, insect-like noises build suspense and dread, preparing us for how terrifying the Ra'zac are. Even before fully seeing them, we feel the fear Eragon is experiencing in that moment.

Another memorable scene that relies heavily on special effects occurs during the final battle, when Eragon and Saphira face Durza and the Shade. Since magic does not exist in real life, the filmmakers had to take creative liberties in portraying these supernatural moments. In the battle, Durza uses Saphira's own fire to summon a massive shadowy creature resembling a demonic bat. The visual effects make the creature appear threatening and unreal, perfectly matching the tone of the fantasy world. When Saphira is injured, Eragon quickly comes up with a plan to kill the Shade in one strike. Upon executing his plan, we see Durza dramatically wither away and turn to ash, another impactful special effect. Saphira's injury adds emotional weight to the battle and her acknowledgment of her weakening condition only deepens the viewer's concern. If that were not heartbreaking enough, the scene also delivers a sense of closure, as Brom's earlier lessons help Eragon succeed. The satisfaction of seeing the villain disintegrate adds balance to the emotional toll.

A major theme in *Eragon* is the idea that even in a dangerous and unfamiliar world, people will

ERAGON continues on page 7

Friday still produces laughs three decades later

The 1995 movie sparked a successful comedy franchise that is still going strong up to the present day

By AMARI DAVISON
Quill staff writer

When people think of the movie *Friday*, the first thing that probably comes to mind is the famous line, "You got knocked the **** out," or the equally infamous line, "Damnnnn!" It is one of the most well-known Black comedies of all time and it came out all the way back in 1995. *Friday* is my personal favorite movie and it holds that title for many others as well. The film has made more than $28 million worldwide. It took a lot of work to make a movie that has become one of the most iconic comedies ever and the director incorporated many filmmaking elements to bring this masterpiece together. The two main ones I will be focusing on in this review are costume design and music.

Friday is a film about Craig Jones (Ice Cube) and Smokey (Chris Tucker), two guys in Los Angeles, California, hanging out on their porch on a Friday afternoon. Before they know it, a series of events unfolds that make it necessary for Craig to get his friend out of trouble, find a new job so his parents do not evict him, escape his clingy girlfriend long enough to win over a new love interest and survive a climactic confrontation with the neighborhood menace.

Given that the setting of *Friday* is South Central Los Angeles in 1995, the threat of gang violence hangs in the air. The characters do not live in a safe or wealthy neighborhood. One way this is demonstrated in the film is through the use of costume design. A lot of characters wear oversized T-shirts and chains in the film, including Smokey, Ezal and the members of Big Worm's gang. In contrast, Craig's parents are a little stricter about his lifestyle and we can tell that Craig is somewhat more sophisticated because he used to have a job. As a result, he wears a button-down shirt with jeans. Meanwhile, the woman across the street, Mrs. Parker, wears provocative, revealing clothes to attract other men, even though she is married. Next up is Stanley, who dresses in clean, ironed clothes, which matches the fact the he has a nice house and car. Overall, the characters' outfits reflect their personalities and roles in the story.

Photo by NEW LINE CINEMA

The chemistry between Ice Cube and Chris Tucker is central to the film.

While costume design plays a big role in the movie, another major factor that brings the film together is its use of music and sound effects. These elements complement many scenes and enhance the audience's experience. While there is not much intense music because the film is a comedy, there are moments when the soundtrack shifts in tone due to the events happening on screen. For example, during the shootout scene between Big Worm's gang members and Craig and Smokey, the music becomes dramatic, even though the scene still has comedic elements. Another moment of strong music use is when Craig and Smokey are hiding in the trunk of a random truck to avoid being seen by the gang members. As the gang gets closer, the music intensifies, building suspense. Once the danger passes, the music fades, giving the audience a sense of relief. Another great example of the music setting the tone occurs in the opening scene. The music is peaceful and has a gospel-like vibe, which matches the calm energy of the neighborhood at that moment. Nothing bad has happened yet: Friday is just another day.

Beyond the effective use of costume design and music, another thing that brings the whole movie together are its deeper messages. One of the most important ones is that you should be careful about who you get involved with. This applies to both Smokey and Craig. Smokey gets involved in dealing drugs for a gang leader but did not follow through on his responsibilities. Likewise, Craig gets involved in smoking weed with Smokey, but that weed turns out to belong to Big Worm. These decisions ultimately put both of our main characters in danger and lead to an eventual shootout. Craig and Smokey are not cautious about

FRIDAY continues on page 6

Premier Performers

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

Owen Lagos Rogers

By DIANA VANG
Quill staff writer

For Owen Lagos Rogers (12), music has been more than a school activity, it has been a large part of his life since fifth grade. A dedicated trumpet player, Lagos Rogers is currently involved in Concert Band, Wind Ensemble and Marching Band at Cooper.

Photo by T. GOODMAN

"There's so much energy and joy that occurs during the events and practices," Lagos Rogers said. "It's hard not to fall in love with it."

Music runs in the family for Lagos Rogers, who said his early interest in band was sparked by both curiosity and his family's love for music. Now, years later, that passion continues to grow. One of his most meaningful memories is performing "Battle Hymn of the Republic" with the full band program.

"There's a great sense of camaraderie and power when you have 100-ish people all playing the same song," he said.

While Lagos Rogers has not officially held a leadership title, he has often stepped up when needed.

"One time, I filled in for the teacher last year," he said, "and there have been a few times where I've helped others in the trumpet section and the band in general."

When it comes to his classes, music and math are highlights of Lagos Rogers' day. Outside of school, Lagos Rogers enjoys gaming, listening to music and reading.

After high school, Lagos Rogers plans to pursue an apprenticeship to become an electrician. At the same time, he is still considering attending college with a focus on teaching music or math.

Joy Flores Hernandez

By DIANA VANG
Quill staff writer

For Joy Flores Hernandez (12), the arts are more than just extracurriculars: they are a way to connect, celebrate and lead. Flores Hernandez has been part of Cooper's band program for all four years of high school and joined Marching Band during her sophomore year.

Photo by T. GOODMAN

"I started playing in fifth grade," she said. "I joined because it allows me to be involved in the school community and it's something I genuinely enjoy doing."

Performing at football games is one of Flores Hernandez's favorite parts of being in band.

"Even when it's raining or super cold, the energy of performing our halftime show makes all the hard work worth it," she said.

Flores Hernandez said she enjoys winter and spring concerts where the group can showcase their progress. Another event she enjoyed was the group's trip to Washington, D.C.

"That experience allowed me to see our nation's capital and represent Minnesota," she said.

Outside of music, Flores Hernandez is involved in Latinos Unidos, a student group she has been part of for four years. Now serving as president, Flores Hernandez takes pride in helping others connect with her culture.

"I love sharing my culture with Cooper. It's so fun and exciting to see people enjoying and celebrating it," she said.

Flores Hernandez's favorite class is AVID, which she said is helping her prepare for college. She plans to major in psychology and minor in neuroscience, aiming for a career in neuropsychology.

Mandy Wu

By DIANA VANG
Quill staff writer

Mandy Wu (12) has spent the last eight years immersed in the world of band. From her early days learning an instrument to her current role as section leader in Marching Band, Wu's dedication to the arts has shaped her high school experience.

Photo by R. VANG-LOHNES

"I've been in band for eight years and I joined because I was interested in learning how to play an instrument," she said.

Wu first joined Marching Band in sophomore year after some convincing by other classmates.

"It turned out to be something I really enjoy," she said.

We said she finds joy in the camaraderie and performance aspects of band.

"I enjoy making music with others and being at football games to perform our halftime show," she said.

However, Wu added that the memories that truly stand out have been related to band trips, especially the group's performance in Washington, D.C. last summer.

"I got to explore a new city with others in the band and march in the July 4 parade. That will forever be a highlight of high school that I will look back on," she said.

As the clarinet section leader in Marching Band, Wu appreciates the chance to be a leader.

"It's always been easy because everyone in my section is on top of it," she said.

After graduating, Wu said she will major in political science at the University of Minnesota with the goal of becoming a lawyer.

Kendall Carscadden

By DIANA VANG
Quill staff writer

By the time most students are winding down their day, Kendall Carscadden (12) is just hitting her stride. As a second-year drum major for Marching Band, Carscadden said she leads with a deep love for the arts.

Photo by T. GOODMAN

"I've been part of band since I was in fifth grade starting on clarinet," Carscadden said.

Since then, her musical resume has grown to include Wind Ensemble, Jazz 1 and 2, Marching Band and Pit Orchestra.

"Marching Band has been so fun," she said. "I have made some of my closest friends in Marching Band and made the best memories with them as well."

Her favorite moments in the band have been traveling to perform in iconic parades.

"We went to Chicago to march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade, and last summer we went to D.C. to march in the Independence Day Parade," she said.

Carscadden said her role as drum major has helped her develop leadership skills.

"It has been fun leading the band alongside the other drum major this year, and the previous senior one from last year as well," she said.

Beyond music classes, Carscadden said she enjoys English class for its discussions and writing. Outside of school, she loves thrifting, traveling and spending time with friends.

Looking ahead, Carscadden plans on attending the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities or Duluth to major in criminal justice, political science or criminology.

A day in the life of a music teacher

Cooper band instructor Markus Hahn tackles many tasks on an average day of school

Photo by TYLER GOODMAN

Hahn starts his school day working with the musicians in his first period Freshman Band course.

By TYLER GOODMAN
Quill staff writer

Markus Hahn has taught music for more than a decade while being a band director at the same time. As of 2025, Hahn has also been named as Robbinsdale's Teacher of the Year, which shows how dedicated he is to his job and students.

"I think music is a lot of fun, and I love sharing that joy with my students who have signed up and work at making music," Hahn said.

Every day, Hahn comes into work at 7:55 a.m. to open up the band room. He then prepares for the day by making any copies if needed and creating the agenda for his Freshman Band and Concert Band classes.

Hahn has band classes to teach during first and second period. During those classes, he teaches music and prepares the students for concerts. He begins by doing warmups along with skill development, after which he spends seven minutes on each of the group's music pieces.

During third and fourth period, Hahn has Music Cafe. These students have started learning how to play guitar. In class, they tune guitars, practice note reading and learn songs and chords.

"I believe that you can work hard at something and still have fun," Hahn said.

During fifth period, Hahn has a music help HLL where students can practice their music skills. Additionally, he has a jazz HLL twice a week. On the days that he has the jazz HLL, he has to "eat as fast as [he] can then transition to Jazz Band." Currently, they are spending time on improvisation and their three music pieces.

At the end of the school day, Hahn still has a band to lead: the Marching Band.

While Hahn is responsible for all of these band groups, he does not leave any one of them unnoticed. Instead, he tries to have fun with his band members by joking around with them.

"You know how funny Hahn is when he starts talking about how his trumpets are hearing people in the floor," Raiden Southwell (11) said.

During sixth period, Hahn has a study hall or team meetings to provide support for seniors. During eighth period, Hahn spends time planning for Marching Band, Jazz Band, Freshman Band, Concert Band, Wind Ensemble and Pep Band.

After the school day ends, Hahn returns to the school at 5:15 p.m. to plan the evening Marching Band rehearsal, which goes from 6-8 p.m. Additionally, he creates copies as needed and has to come up with a rehearsal schedule. Finally, after Marching Band rehearsal ends, Hahn heads home at 8:15 p.m. to see his own family.

"Young people are fun and making music is fun, so put those two together and it makes one of the best jobs I could want," Hahn said.

Marching Band enjoys State Fair success

Feedback surveys from fair judges rated Cooper's band as that day's best performers

By TYLER GOODMAN
Quill staff writer

The Cooper Marching Band competed against five other bands and won while performing at the Minnesota State Fair on August 28. The band managed to score the most out of the five bands that performed on the day that the band was there according to judge feedback surveys.

The positive results came despite what some of the marchers thought was a flawed start to the performance.

"At the beginning, it was rough, but as the parade continued, it only got better," Marching Band member Raiden Southwell (11) said.

Both the marchers and viewers of the parade were ultimately pleased with the band's performance. According to the Marching Band director Markus Hahn, some of the viewers of the parade "sought some of our band members out to tell us how much they liked what we played and how we played it."

While band members enjoyed their victory, Hahn said that winning is not always what should be chased after when making music.

"It's more about making people happy and making good music," Hahn said.

Photo by MARKUS HAHN

The Marching Band's State Fair visit took place on August 28.

Hahn added that it was flattering that the viewers of the parade wanted to tell the marchers how good they sounded.

"That's really cool and speaks a lot to how the band looked and played," Hahn said.

However, the marchers did not only have fun with the parade, they also found places to have fun at the state fair.

"We won buckets at Home Depot," drum major Zane Halstead (12) said.

Along with the marchers' highlights, there also came experiences that have value. All of the marchers worked hard to look professional. Additionally, with respect to actually performing for a group of people, it gives the players an experience that comes with what Hahn called the "value in making music."

There is also value in just being able to be able to parade with the band. The entire band has to work together to make it look good and sound good, which they did, according to Southwell.

"For the entire band, it was amazing. Everyone was in step and we had straight lines," Southwell said.

FRIDAY STILL PRODUCES LAUGHS continued from page 5

the choices they make or the people they associate with, which results in them experiencing a near-death situation.

The comedy *Friday* is truly exceptional. It is one of the most popular and influential Black comedies of the last few decades and it is my personal favorite film. Several things help make this film a classic. First, the costume design gives the audience insight into each character's personality, like Mrs. Parker, whose revealing clothes reflect her behavior. Second, the music helps place the audience in the moment with the characters, as is the case in the trunk scene when the rising intensity of the music makes you hold your breath, while its eventual fade out provides a sigh of relief. Finally, the message about being careful with the people and choices you involve yourself with is powerful. In the case of Craig and Smokey, they almost lost their lives because of poor decisions and bad influences. *Friday* earns five out of five stars.

Anderson wows viewers with brilliant *Battle*

Award-winning director Paul Thomas Anderson makes the most of his star-studded cast, biggest budget to date

Photo by WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Leonardo DiCaprio hits a career high mark with his endearing performance as the lovably inept revolutionary named Bob.

By TESSA LENOCH
Quill staff writer

Paul Thomas Anderson's *One Battle After Another* was released on September 25, 2025 to rave reviews and rambling think-pieces alike. After one viewing, it is quite understandable why this movie has racked up the reputation it has. Much like any other Paul Thomas Anderson movie, such as There Will Be Blood or Punch-Drunk Love, there is no doubt that this release will solidify itself in the mind of any movie watcher, be it a casual viewer or hardcore cinephile. Reminiscent of Robert Altman's 1975 film *Nashville* combined with Ari Aster's more recent *Eddington*, *One Battle After Another* is both a love letter to, and a cutting criticism of, contemporary America.

Washed-up revolutionaries, not-so-secret secret government operations, ultra-white-supremacist groups and a karate instructor all play massive parts in the always moving, hyper-active plot of *One Battle After Another*. Much like Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*, political satire and exaggerated characters are the central focus. While they are fun to laugh at, they are also depressing to think about once you realize the characters are not so extremely out there after all.

Leonardo DiCaprio plays our central character, Bob, an ex-revolutionary who has now devoted his life to helicopter parenting and vaping. Though he is not always my favorite actor, DiCaprio pulls out his best Jack Nicholson impression and becomes likable enough as the leading man. Arguably one of his best roles, DiCaprio is able to pull some emotional weight into an action-packed political satire that otherwise might have lost itself in the moving pieces.

However, this emotional factor would not have been complete without Chase Infiniti, the breakout star playing DiCaprio's teenage daughter, Willa. Cast on the spot after a karate-class audition in front of Anderson, Chase's talent is palpable in each and every scene she is in. Had it been anyone else in the role, I can say with confidence that *One Battle After Another* would not be as good.

Surprisingly, the star-studded cast of *One Battle After Another* is actually not its most outstanding trait. That title goes to its use of cinematography. Many times during the film, I found myself cursing the money-hungry powers that be which have caused IMAX tickets (or movie tickets in general) to skyrocket in price. *One Battle After Another* feels large in scale, like it should be projected on the largest screen ever made. It feels monumental and the shots in the film echo that trait.

At the end of the day, *One Battle After Another* is a movie I know will eventually be considered a classic. Its poignant and relevant subject matter stretches from political commentary to family dynamics, and it has a lot to say. At the same time, the movie is packed with action and fueled by adrenaline. If you are not interested in an overly contemplative film, there is not a moment that feels like a boring slog through social commentary. I rate *One Battle After Another* five out of five stars.

Jhene Aiko's "Calm & Patient" a stunning song

The single is being framed as the start of a new era in the famous singer's music

Photo by WARNER MUSIC GROUP

The standalone track was first released to listeners in 2023.

By ANGEL JARQUIN RAMIREZ
Quill staff writer

"Calm & Patient" is a 2023 single released by famous R&B artist Jhene Aiko. This song was Aiko's first release since her 2017 album *Trip*, so fans had waited a long time to hear new music from her. According to her manager, "Calm & Patient" was intended to mark a new era for Aiko's music. Although *The Quill* typically does reviews of entire albums, I find "Calm & Patient" interesting enough to review it as an individual song.

The lyrics of "Calm & Patient" focus on how it is important to trust time. Aiko also encourages listeners to trust their gut feelings and to know that the universe has everything they desire waiting for them. This can be heard when she sings, "And I know whatever happens, I'll be happy because I happen to be good in any situation."

Also appealing in the song is the music itself. Aiko's music heals and creates a vibe that makes it wonderful to listen to. I often find myself listening to it while cleaning the house or washing dishes. This trait is especially the case thanks to the soothing musicianship and production featured on "Calm & Patient."

Overall, Jhene Aiko's music, especially on "Calm & Patient," focuses on keeping you, well, calm, and why would anyone not want to feel calm? Her lyrics on the song are relatable and listening to her music has helped me so much. This song has a healing quality that makes it an important one to me. In fact, I was able to hear it live when I saw her in person last year in August, a concert that healed me so much. I give "Calm & Patient" five out of five stars.

Human shows that video games can be profound

The game *Detroit: Being Human* features compelling, well-designed characters whose journeys are worth following

By MANAL BARE
Quill staff writer

Have you ever questioned your morality? Have you ever found it in the PlayStation Store? These are the thoughts I had while playing *Detroit: Become Human*. The game was developed in 2018 by Quantic Dream and published by Sony Interactive Entertainment. The plot itself is quite different from your typical storytelling game. The story is written uniquely with each decision you make while playing the game affecting what happens next. I believe everyone should play *Detroit: Become Human* once in their lifetime, because, even in a fictional sci-fi world, it explores themes of morality and pushes us to ask questions about our own world.

Set in a futuristic world, the game takes place in the city of Detroit, now known as the Android City of America. There are more than 40 possible endings in this game, each carrying its own uniqueness. Our main characters are three androids from CyberLife: Conner, a detective working for the police; Markus, a caretaker of a wealthy old painter; and Kara, a housekeeper android. Throughout the game, these androids are questioned about their morality even though they are not living beings. That is the beauty of the game. Despite having amazing elements of a video game like futuristic art, complex physical abilities, unconventional fight scenes and interactive storytelling, the game still feels incredibly relatable.

Photo by SONY INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

There are 40 possible endings to the game depending on a player's decisions.

Conner is a detective android who works with the police on a recent surge of deviant android murder cases. A "deviant" in this game is what they call an android that starts to feel and think on its own, essentially breaking free from humans. Some of Conner's abilities are reconstruction and instant processing, which allow him to visually see what has happened at a crime scene based on the evidence there. Using these abilities, Conner notices a theme among the deviant androids: they were being harmed by their owners.

Although he continues to solve cases for the police, Conner develops questions as time goes on. He is faced with the choice of having the right to be free in the first place. He begins asking himself questions about whether he should be loyal to his kind or do what he was created to do. I really love that the game pulls us into his character because of his compelling detective ability and the gameplay complexity. What is more, the game gives us our own "homework" on how Conner should feel and how we should make decisions for him.

Meanwhile, Markus, who is arguably the main protagonist of the game, is a caretaker to a wealthy local painter named Carl Manfred. One of the first symbolic moments of Markus becoming a deviant happens when he catches Carl's son stealing paintings to sell. This starts a fight between the son and Markus, forcing Markus to make a decision that changes his entire existence.

After that, Markus begins to question his own freedom and purpose. He eventually becomes a leader for other androids who seek equality. His storyline strongly reflects real-world struggles with injustice and freedom, which is what makes his character so memorable and emotional to play.

Kara's story is another major part of what makes *Detroit: Become Human* so amazing. She starts as a housekeeper android working for an abusive man and his daughter, Alice. After witnessing the abuse done to Alice, Kara breaks through her programming and escapes to protect Alice. Throughout her journey, Kara faces survival challenges and the constant fear of being caught.

Kara's storyline shows the emotional side of androids and that they do have the ability to care, protect and love, even when they are told they cannot feel. Her story explores themes of motherhood, showing us that even artificial beings can develop human emotions. Out of all three characters, Kara's journey feels the most human, making players root for her.

In conclusion, *Detroit: Become Human* is an extraordinary game that blends powerful storytelling, graphics and emotions to create an intentional, meaningful game. The different perspectives of Conner, Markus and Kara come together to form a story about freedom, morality and humanity itself. Each character challenges us to think about what it truly means to be alive and to make choices that define who we are. I believe everyone should play *Detroit: Become Human* at least once, not only for its creativity but also for its message about morality and understanding. I give the game five out of five stars for its incredible storytelling and an emotional impact that stayed with me long after the game ended.

ERAGON

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come into your life to guide you whether they realize it or not. From the beginning of the film, Brom becomes Eragon's first true mentor and human companion. His teachings shape much of Eragon's journey. When Brom dies, the loss has a deep emotional effect on Eragon. Brom's influence continues long after his death, echoed in every use of the word "brisingr" and in every battle where Eragon wields his sword. Although Brom is no longer physically present, he remains a key figure, his memory interwoven throughout the rest of the story.

In conclusion, *Eragon* takes us on a journey across an imaginative, magical landscape, one that Eragon could never have survived without help from others. The film emphasizes this idea through creative use of sound and special effects, bringing its world to life in a visually and emotionally engaging way. I enjoyed the movie just as much this time as I did the first and second times I watched it. Of course, seeing my favorite character, the majestic Saphira, was once again a highlight. I also appreciated the film more this time because I noticed many small details I had previously missed. Rewatching it with a more attentive eye made the experience even more enjoyable. *Eragon* earns five out of five stars.

Athletes balance school, sports

Commitments to classes, teams can lead to many Hawks being short on time, sleep

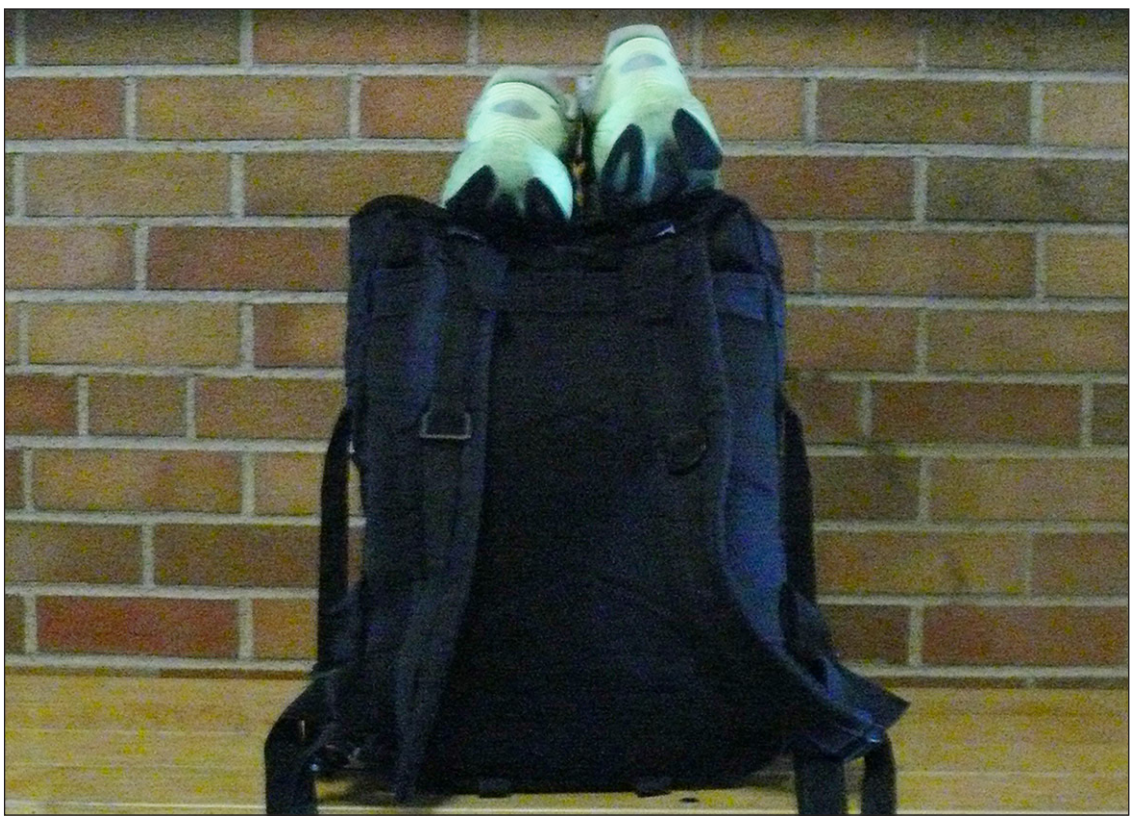

Photo Illustration by TYLER GOODMAN

Grades remain important to student-athletes given the sports eligibility requirements of all teams.

By DIANA SANCHEZ MORALES
Quill staff writer

Student athletes use many methods to balance sports and studies while in high school. In fact, students' grades are an important aspect of being eligible for sports.

According to Chris DiSalvi, who coaches girls cross country and track along with being an AVID and Social Studies teacher, student athletes can perform at a high level in the classroom and in sports when they learn to be organized.

"They are required to achieve a good academic record while doing sports at the same time," he said.

One problem for students is when they miss a class or two for early release on game days. Leaving early can make students miss important details of class or even exams. However, there are ways students handle situations like this.

"In earlier years, I handled my missing classes by being ahead and making sure I knew what I'm supposed to do in class before I left school that day. Now that I'm a senior, I just scheduled it so that I have unimportant classes for seventh and eighth period," Robert Nichols (12) said.

One issue student athletes might face is overload, which can cause them to fall behind on studies and not get caught up. Becoming overloaded can hinder the development of crucial skills for future success or create significant knowledge gaps. According to Nichols, he takes advantage of free time to take care of his studies.

"I make sure to not completely overload myself by taking advantage of HLL time and making sure to do homework after practice or before work. I also like to set out my schedule for the month and make sure I know what's happening and when, which gives me a good sense of when I will have time and when I won't," he said.

Missing school for sports can result in missed lessons and activities, making it increasingly difficult to catch up with peers and maintain the overall learning process. As a result, stress can be worse for student athletes than students who do not participate in sports. This makes them face a unique combination of the time pressures of school and the physical demands of sports that non-athletes do not face.

"To manage my stress when my activities conflict, I sit down and have a talk with myself and decide which one is more important because there is no point in stressing about something I can't change," Nichols said.

Another issue for student-athletes is maintaining healthy habits. For example, failing to get enough sleep is detrimental to both academic and athletic performance because it impairs memory, decision-making, physical recovery and stress regulation. This can trigger a negative cycle of fatigue, poor performance and heightened stress.

"I usually don't get the best sleep during the season, but one way I do is, if I'm tired enough, I'll take a nap during HLL or typically after school for about an hour or two, then I do my homework and go back to sleep," Nichols said.

Beyond it being a chance to nap, HLL needs to be taken advantage of when athletes have homework.

"I think that students, not just student-athletes, don't always take advantage of HLL. This is a great opportunity to get work done outside of class," DiSalvi said.

Agreeing with DiSalvi about the importance of HLL is athlete Tracy Nguyen (12).

"I have gotten extra help from teachers in and out of school in order to try to keep up and maintain," she said.

According to Nguyen, her coaches have been helpful in maintaining good grades.

"My coaches play a big role in my academics, making sure that I'm on top of it. There are always consequences for your actions and being an athlete is a privilege," she said.

Coaches try to support student-athletes by having one-on-one sessions to review school progress, provide feedback and adjust goals as needed for both academic and sports.

"My student-athletes in cross country routinely earn high grades despite the demands from our team. Additionally, many of my AVID 11 and AVID 12 students are also very busy with other activities, such as track, football and student council, but they usually are very successful," DiSalvi said.

DiSalvi added that successfully balancing school and sports is a transferable life skill that helps students learn time management, discipline and perseverance.

Cooper offers $50 game admission pass

The pass, which can be bought online, provides savings compared to getting single-game tickets

By JOHANNA GONZALES
Quill staff writer

Attending games can be a big thing in the Cooper community. In order to help students see more games at an affordable cost, Cooper now has a $50 pass that gives you a chance to see 25 Cooper home games at one set price. You can buy the new passes online through the Activities page on Cooper's website.

Given the recent introduction of the new pass, not a lot of staff and students know about its availability.

"I think the pass would be amazing for students who are super involved in the Cooper community and attend a lot of home events. I believe the cost to get into home events is $5 for each student. The pass would pay for itself quickly if the kids that purchase them use them frequently," AVID and Physical Education teacher Brooke Schaffer said.

Also finding the pass concept appealing is Vashite Budhu (12).

"It seems like it would make it more efficient to get into games. I think it would help students have more school spirit as the pass motivates students to go to more games rather than wasting their money," Budhu said.

According to Jazmin Tlaseca (12), the pass will be helpful to students who attend many games.

"I think it would benefit Cooper students who go to a lot of the home games throughout different seasons, such as a friend of a player who take photos outside of school," Tlaseca said.

In addition to purchasing the pass on the Cooper website, you can buy it through the HomeTown Fan app. Both the website and the HomeTown Fan app can also be used to purchase tickets to any regular season home games.

EXCHANGE STUDENTS SETTLE INTO AMERICA continued from page 2

"My favorite thing so far is all the activities I can do here. There is a lot of entertainment, shopping, parks and lakes. I've been to a couple of lakes and I absolutely love them," she said.

Cooper's schedule and crowded halls are the most difficult thing for Sastre Sobrecueva to get used to.

"From my point of view, changing classes every period is by far the most difficult thing. Cooper is a huge school and there are a lot of people here and the hallways get very crowded," she said.

Sastre Sobrecueva plans to go home to finish high school and begin her path to becoming a doctor.

Ella Van Massenhove

Van Massenhove is a student from Belgium. She said that in her two weeks in America so far, she has tried her best to adapt to the new country.

"I think it will just be a matter of time and finding a routine before I adapt. But to adapt quickly, I try to ask questions when there is something I don't understand because it's just different from my home country. I also try to speak as much as possible to American people to learn more about their way of living," she said.

She added that, so far, the school routine has been hard to get down.

"It was also quite difficult to understand how the school works [with] lunch time, advisory, open lunch, and to find my way around the school because it's a very big one," she said.

According to Van Massenhove, school spirit at Cooper is high, especially when it comes to sports.

"The whole school supports all the sports teams and especially the football team. All students show a lot of devotion and enthusiasm about it, especially during Friday night games," she said.

When Van Massenhove returns home, she hopes to go to university to study in journalism or communications.

Cooper Competitors

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

AJ Wiley-Hunt

By DIANA VANG
Quill staff writer

AJ Wiley-Hunt (12) has been a fixture in the athletic area of school since his freshman year, but his journey started long before that.

"I've been playing football since I was four, from flag to tackle," Wiley-Hunt said.

According to Wiley-Hunt, he was inspired by watching his favorite teams win and lose, which made him think, "I would do better."

Photo by R. VANG-LOHNES

Now a captain for the football team, Wiley-Hunt takes pride in helping his teammates grow.

"I feel I help my teammates understand and I give everyone a deeper understanding of the game," he said.

Wiley-Hunt's leadership is rooted in an effort to make connections.

"I enjoy the team bonding and the competition and competitive mindsets," he said. "I think our team makes us grow as people and I feel I've grown from freshman year a lot."

Wily-Hunt's favorite memories include time in the weight room and college visits, but it is the relationships that stand out most.

"I enjoy just meeting new people," he said.

Wiley-Hunt does not slow down after football season. In winter, he hits the court for basketball.

"Last season went okay," he said, "but I have really high hopes for this season."

Outside of sports, Wiley-Hunt enjoys playing video games. Looking ahead, he plans to attend college and major in biology and marketing while still keeping his athletic options open.

Eva Casillas

By DIANA VANG
Quill staff writer

For Eva Casillas (12), soccer is more than just a sport, it is a community, a source of growth and a place where lifelong friendships are born.

Casillas, who has played girls soccer since freshman year, credits her mom for encouraging her to join.

"My mom really encouraged me to play soccer to have something to do and to stay physically fit," she said.

Photo by R. VANG-LOHNES

That push sparked a four-year journey filled with skill-building and leadership. Now captain of the JV team for the second year, Casillas takes pride in her leadership role.

"It's been so amazing," she said. "I love being able to bring a positive energy to practices and game days and being an example of what the program really is."

Casillas said her favorite memories include meeting her best friend through soccer and bonding with teammates.

"I have enjoyed just meeting so many new people and getting closer to all of them," she said.

Outside of fall soccer, Casillas keeps active. In winter, she plays futsal, a fast-paced version of soccer that sharpens technique, and serves as a choreographer for the Latino dance group, which performs at school events. In spring, she takes part in dance and club soccer.

Academically, Casillas said she enjoys IB Art and Anatomy and Physiology. After graduating, Casillas plans to pursue a career as a neonatal nurse and hopes to continue athletics in college if the opportunity arises.

"I love my sport so much," Casillas said.

Paolo De Souza

By DIANA VANG
Quill staff writer

Paolo De Souza (12) has spent the last four years building a legacy of leadership and resilience. A dual-sport athlete, De Souza plays football in the fall and runs track in the spring, with winter workouts keeping him sharp year-round.

"I've been playing football for four years now," he said. "I started freshman year after seeing my family members play."

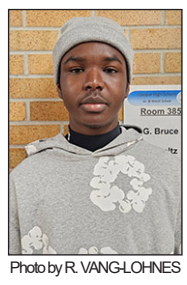

Photo by R. VANG-LOHNES

For De Souza, the heart of football lies in the camaraderie.

"I've enjoyed the friendships and times spent with my teammates," he said.

In fact, De Souza's favorite memories are not about wins or stats, they are about growth.

"I like when, as a team, we get through a challenge together and improve one step at a time," he said.

That team-first mindset extends to his role as a mentor.

"Leading the younger guys and answering any questions they might have is how I try to contribute on the field," De Souza said.

In the spring, De Souza shifts gears to track, a sport he calls "very tough and competitive." He said that last season went well, and he is looking forward to pushing himself again.

Off the field, he enjoys his AVID and English classes because he likes "the learning and the teachers prepare me for the future." In his free time, he works and hangs out with friends.

Looking ahead, De Souza plans to study aerospace engineering in college.

Ryanne Dutton

By DIANA VANG
Quill staff writer

Ryanne Dutton (12) has spent the past five years making waves as a dedicated member of the girls swim and dive team. What started as a misunderstanding in seventh grade turned into a passion.

"To be completely honest, I didn't know competitive swimming was a thing," she said. "I thought it was a swim club where you just swam around."

Photo by T. GOODMAN

Now a team captain and role model, Dutton said she tries to lead with heart and humility.

"I have to be a role model, as there are so many middle-schoolers on the team, which is great," she said.

Dutton said that her favorite part of the sport is the community.

"In meets, both teams are cheering for each other because it's just that type of community," she said.

Dutton said her fondest memories of her time on the team include their legendary pasta parties.

"We always had a pasta party at someone's house the night before a meet to help carb-load, which helped us swim faster," she said. "It was a fun team-bonding activity and there was never a dull moment."

Outside the pool, Dutton takes part in softball and Pit Orchestra. Academically, she said AVID and math are her favorite classes.

"AVID is not only college prep, but also a community to build friendships and leadership," she said.

Dutton has been accepted to the University of Minnesota, where she will major in chemistry before pursuing a master's in forensic chemistry at Texas A&M.