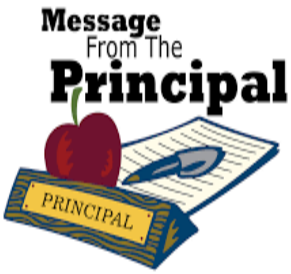
COLOMA HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

COLOMA COMMENTS

December Issue 2024



FRESH START

By the time of this newsletter's publication, your child will have finished their first semester classes and will be looking forward to next semester's schedule. One of the great things about starting the second semester is the idea of a fresh start. Being able to begin classes fresh helps us all concentrate and learn from behaviors and choices that we may have made.

TESTING

When students get back from break, Coloma High School will be gearing up for standardized testing such as the MSTEP, PSAT, and SAT. Students will also complete the second round of NWEA testing which helps the district progress monitor our school wide goals. Our underclassmen will be getting information about classes offered at Coloma to help them make decisions for the 2025-2026 school year. Our Seniors will be looking forward to graduation. Not to mention sports and other extracurricular activities like prom. The second semester is jam packed for students.

With all of that being on the schedule for the next five months, it is also important for all stakeholders to take into account that we cannot lose sight of what is most important. Our students need to make sure that they are able to keep up with their daily work. The list of items from above feeds off of how the students progress on a daily basis. Teachers and students will work together to make sure tasks are accomplished and goals are met. Teachers and parents also need to have an open line of communication so parents can help guide students through these priorities.

SETTING PRYORITIES

It is important to have conversations with your child about priorities. All adults feel overwhelmed at times. Your child is no different. Talk to your child about accomplishing one task at a time. Writing down what needs to be accomplished and checking off tasks completed can give students a sense of accomplishment. Also, tell your child it is ok to ask for help. It is a skill to become a self-advocate. It is not a sign of strength to keep struggles inside. Let them know they can reach out to you. Our teachers and staff are here to help and support your child as well. If your child needs other resources, we can reach out to outside resources to help as well. We are in this together. Sometimes a reminder that our school community wants all students to achieve success helps when we feel we are in a rut.

I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

I am excited for the beginning of next semester and seeing what our students accomplish!

SELF-CARE FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS

How often do you hear the term self-care in reference to adults? Well it applies to high school students as well, maybe even more. The teenage years can be challenging, and good self-care is important to keeping every high schooler grounded and thriving in school, with friends, and at home with family.

Here are some tips to make sure you are taking the right care of yourself.

- **MOVE YOUR BODY**
  The body-mind connection is real in high school. As you launch into college and adulthood, start a lifelong commitment to physical health by finding the types of exercise you love. Join a sports team, make the most of your PE class, use free online videos for dance or yoga, take walks with your friends. Whatever you enjoy, make a habit of moving your body a bit every day. It will benefit your mood, focus, and overall wellness.

- **NOURISH YOURSELF**
  You know how teachers are always telling you to eat well and get enough sleep the night before a test? Well that advice applies to daily life, not just the night before the ACT or SAT. Your body needs to move, and it also needs the right fuel to keep you on your game: studying, doing homework, working on projects with a group. Try to eat the rainbow in fruits and vegetables every day, get enough protein, and eat junk food in moderation (let's be honest, a high schooler avoiding all junk food is....not happening). High school students need 8-9 hours of sleep each night. That's right 8-9 hours! If you're not getting that, reconsider your bedtime. It's hard with homework, activities, and family commitments, but try as hard as you can to get at least 8. Your focus, happiness, and grades will thank you!

- **FOLLOW YOUR INTERESTS**
  The good news is that colleges are looking for students who go for depth, not breadth, in their clubs and activities. Don't try to do it all but follow your interests and explore them in more ways than one. Love basketball? Join the team, volunteer to teach the sport to local middle schoolers, and see if you can intern in the summer for a local team. Drama's your thing? Write a play, act in a play, and intern at a local theater. You will be happier now and, in the future, if you follow your heart and follow your interests to go deep and really find out if this interest can turn into a future profession or lifelong passion. Following your interests will also keep you engaged in something outside of school and help you meet new friends.

- **KEEP STUDYING LIVELY**
  You're going to have to study and do a substantial amount of homework to get great grades in high school. Don't view studying as a horrible burden, rather treat it as an activity to prepare you for college, and study like a college student. Find a favorite coffee shop or library to change the scenery of your study space. Create study groups and study with friends. Study outside if the weather is nice. Stay on campus and take advantage of teacher office hours to get the help you need. Use an online tool like Learn to Be, Khan Academy or Study Geek to get help with your homework if you get stuck. Whatever you do, don't study at the kitchen table with your head in your hands for all four years of high school.

  Hopefully these tips and other self-care you discover on your journey will help you stay healthy and successful through the four years of high school and beyond.

Sophomores

Interested in possibly earning a college degree while in high school…for FREE? You may want to consider applying for the Early/Middle College (EMC) program. Students are ONLY able to apply for the EMC program in their sophomore year and there is an application process. Don't pass up this amazing opportunity!

!!! EMC Applications OPEN on DECEMBER 13th !!!

Seniors

Please use the time during Christmas Break to work on completing FAFSA, scholarships, and college applications…AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH; BREATHE!

Importance of Completing FAFSA
Paying for college might feel overwhelming, but there are many ways to reduce the cost to your family.

The first step in securing any kind of financial aid is completing the FAFSA. To complete the FAFSA, go to www.studentaid.gov and create an account. The earlier you complete the FAFSA, the more financial aid is available.

Has your student received Medicaid for two consecutive years between ages 9 and now? They may be eligible for the Michigan Tuition Incentive Program (TIP), which provides significant financial assistance at various institutions. Complete your FAFSA and go to the MiSSG Student Portal to determine your eligibility at: www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid.

Whether or not students qualify for financial aid, everyone can apply for scholarships. Scholarships fall into three general categories:

National/state scholarships are often large prizes with large applicant pools and can be found through reliable websites such as Fastweb and CollegeBoard.

Local scholarships are available to CHS students or Berrien County students only, and applications are available NOW at: www.berriencommunity.org.

School/program-based scholarships are listed on college websites and are only available to accepted students who meet certain eligibility requirements. We recommend that students focus on local and college-based scholarships.

Questions?
Please feel free to contact Mr. Shaffer with any questions at: gshaffer@ccs.coloma.org or our College and Career Advisor, Chris Coburn, at ccoburn@ccs.coloma.org

January 6:
Return to School

January 8:
Delayed Start

January 20:
No School MLK Day

January 22:
Delayed Start

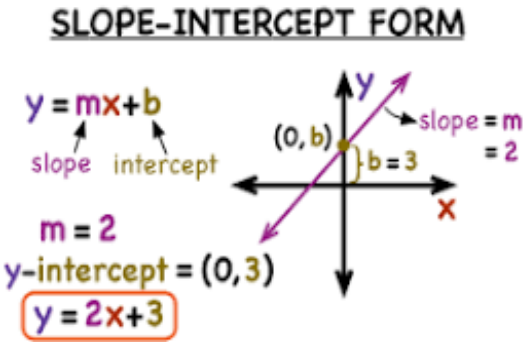
January 28 and 30:
NWEA Testing

Math Department

Math Success!

Math Department News: Slope-Intercept Proficiency

by Mr. Brian Klee



Students in Algebra 1 have improved their understanding of slope-intercept also known as "$y = mx + b$". The class learned and reviewed via example problems on entry tickets, had fun playing a Quizizz and completed a Khan Academy practice test. Their hard work led to an average score of 83.2% on the unit test with 93.8% of students showing proficiency or mastery.

Slope-intercept thinking and equations are used all the time in the real world. An example of this would be the equation $y = -7x + 28$ which models the relationship between cups of lemonade demanded "y" based on the price of the lemonade "x". In this problem, the dependent or "y" variable is lemonade and the independent or "x" variable is the price of the lemonade. The "m" of "-7" is the *movement* or *slope* in the equation which indicates that the number of cups demanded decreases by 7 for every $1 the price is increased. Meanwhile, the "b" of "28" is the *beginning value* or *intercept* of the cups of lemonade demanded when the price of the lemonade is free ($0).

Congratulations to all the students who developed their proficiency on understanding the most important part of the 1st semester of Algebra 1. Good luck to all students as the semester finishes!

Social Studies

World War I Propaganda

US History students in Mr. Mead's class recently completed the unit on World War I. One of the assignments in the unit was to create a collage poster using at least 3 pictures from an Internet search encouraging the support of your country's war effort. Then explain the spin on the propaganda. Such as, how does this influence the attitude about the war?

Each student was asked to describe how effective the propaganda was. "Will this be something that will make your countrymen want to run out, jump into a trench, and go over the top?"

I have included just a few of the amazing samples from the students

Special Education

In all my years teaching I've consistently noticed that holidays and school breaks can cause a lot of stress for students. I've seen students who would normally be in a great mood and do all their work during the day start acting out verbally, physically or just not engaging at all.

Behavior is a way of communicating! This website I found has some great ideas-

https://empoweringeducation.org/blog/five-tips-to-reduce-winter-break-anxiety-for-students/

Mindful questions for teens and teachers

Being mindful can help you connect with yourself and others. Journaling is a great way to encourage self-reflection and mindfulness. Here are some questions to journal or just ask yourself.

1. What are three things you can see, hear, and feel right now?
2. How does your body feel at this moment? Are there any areas of tension or relaxation?
3. What emotions are present within you right now? Can you observe them without judgment?
4. How can you bring more kindness and compassion into your daily routine?
5. What is one small act of kindness you can do for yourself or others?
6. How can you practice being more present and engaged in your daily activities?
7. What is one challenge you are facing, and how can you approach it with mindfulness?
8. How can you incorporate mindful breathing into your day, paying attention to your breath moving in and out?
9. Can you identify any automatic negative thoughts? How can you challenge and reframe them for mental clarity?
10. How does it feel to engage in a mindful activity or hobby, fully immersing yourself in the moment?
11. How can you practice mindfulness while spending time with a family member, fostering deeper connections?
12. What does it mean to listen to someone truly? How can you practice active listening in your conversations?
13. How can you incorporate mindfulness into your study routine to improve focus and concentration?
14. What does it feel like to engage in a mindful body scan, releasing tension in different body parts?
15. How can you bring mindfulness into your interactions with friends, fostering understanding and empathy?
16. How can you incorporate mindfulness into your morning routine to set a positive tone for the day?
17. What does it mean to approach challenges with a beginner's mindset? How can you cultivate curiosity in your approach?
18. What is one thing you can do today to show kindness and compassion towards yourself and others?

AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY

During the 2nd Marking period in Automotive Technology our 3rd year students have been deep into electrical diagnosis tasks. The 3rd year students are practicing measuring parasitic draw. This is one of the most important tests a technician needs to know when diagnosing a vehicle with a battery that goes dead overnight or over a few days. The student pictures went through the Snap On NC3 Multimeter Certification last year as a 2nd year student and is now putting what he learned in that course into practice to diagnose a bugged vehicle.

Parasitic draw, also known as the magic that causes your battery to go dead overnight or in a few days, is one of the most difficult electrical problems in the industry to diagnose. As this problem is so common we do spend significant time on it. The students experience what normal and good looks like so that when they see a problem they will recognize it. They will also know what to do to isolate it. This is one of many electrical tasks the students will learn how to handle.

Kudos On a Job Well Done!

Freshman

Ross Smothers

Sophomore

Chris Gesse-Mead

Junior

Alizee Avilez-Godinez

Senior

Gary Wilson

Ryan Ransom

Mr. Ransom is our December Starfish winner. He has been teaching and inspiring our auto technology students for 20 years!

Outside of school Mr. Ransom stays busy shooting Trap and downhill skiing. He also likes working on and running off-road rigs on obstacles.

The thing he enjoys most about teaching is Watching the light of understanding come on in a student's eyes and seeing his graduates making it out in the community!

When asked to give us his words of wisdom he said "Never stop trying and never give up. The only way to be great is to keep trying new ways to solve whatever obstacle you come across."

This Year's Previous Starfish Winners

Greg Prather was our starfish winner in November. Greg has been with Coloma Community schools for four years. He splits his time between the Intermediate, Jr. high and high school where he currently teaches Choir, Online/Distance Learning, and Michigan Virtual. His favorite part of teaching is helping students grow ad musicians

In his spare time Mr. Prather enjoys aviation and has his pilot's license. He also finds entertainment watching auto racing.

Study hard, participate in extra activities, and have fun

Tyler Cantrell

Mr. Catrell was given the starfish winner for the month of September. This is Tylers fourth school year teaching at Coloma Community schools. He teaches Civics, World History and Behavioral Sci/Psy. He is our National Honor advisor and helps with summer programs.

When home, he enjoys baking and regularly shares his treats with staff. He is also a coffee lover and talented barista.

Megan Ferguson

October Starfish winner. Mrs. Ferguson has been our fine arts teacher and works at both Coloma high school and jr. high for the 8 years.

Outside of work she enjoys crating her own artwork across various mediums as well as reading, fishing, gardening, and exploring the world. She dreams of establishing a self-sustaining homestead in the future. My favorite part of teaching is working with students who start the semester saying, "Mrs. Ferguson, I'm not going to do well in your class; I can't draw." I love proving them wrong, showing them that they are capable of drawing and that being an artist is about much more than just drawing. I am passionate about helping students appreciate the gift of creativity as a meaningful and healthy outlet for their well-being.

Her words of wisdom come in the form of her favorite quotes by Salvador Dalí: "A true artist is not one who is inspired but one who inspires others." I often hear students question the value of attending school, and I want to challenge them to discover the connections between what they learn in school and how those skills can be applied after graduation. Strive to be self-sufficient—don't rely on others for answers; seek them out for yourself! While you may not always understand the purpose of a specific class, approach it as an opportunity to practice essential life skills such as time management, resilience, and effective communication. These are tools that will serve you far beyond the classroom.