

COLOMA COMMENTS

NOVEMBER ISSUE 2025



A Message From The Principal

Important
Dates

**DEC 10: LATE START CLASSES
BEGIN 10:00 AM**

DEC 18 HALF DAY/EXAMS

DEC. 19: HALF DAY/EXAMS

DEC. 22: BEGIN HOLIDAY BREAK

The holiday season is upon us. This time of the year can be extra busy and stressful. I hope all of you are looking forward to spending extra time with friends and family. Before we get to break on December 19th, high school students should be pushing themselves to finish this first semester strong. Final exams will be December 18th and 19th. Both days are half days for students. All classwork needs to be turned in before the holiday break. Report cards will be posted online in PowerSchool on January 6, 2025 and mailed home by January 8, 2025.

One thing students at the high school level seem to always struggle with is self-advocacy. Sometimes students can be intimidated or too prideful to ask for help. This is completely normal for their age, but it is a skill that needs to be sharpened. Students who struggle with independently asking for help or assistance usually have a tendency to have a lot of missing assignments. Missing assignments do nothing but hurt a student's chances for success.

Talk to your child about their classes, but also speak to them about trying to specify where they are struggling in a certain subject. Instead of "I don't get it," try to get your child to add to that statement like, "I don't get it because of...", " or "I am struggling to understand what..."

Your child can either ask a teacher for help during class, or before/after school. Our teachers and staff at Coloma High School are willing to help all of our students be successful. Learning to express exactly where a student is struggling can lead to a snowball effect. If a student struggles with one skill but does not express their struggles, then that one struggle becomes many. Usually skills build on top of one another. If a student expresses their struggles early enough, then their struggle will not become a major problem. A student will also see an improvement in their success.

Coloma High School still offers Homework Hour Mondays-Thursdays from 3:00-4:00pm. If students want a place to get their homework done or have a question, we have a teacher ready to help students. Sometimes a smaller environment with not as many people around can help a student express their questions or struggles. Your child can take advantage of this time to help study for final exams.

We can see the end coming to the first semester. It is time for all students to tighten down and focus on making it to that finish line. We can all help support students at Coloma High School by having conversations with students about their classes and how they can improve.



Scheduling for the 2026–2027 School Year

Students recently participated in our Annual Electives Presentation, where staff and students shared details about the numerous elective options available at Coloma High School. This event helps students explore their interests, discover new passions, and make informed choices for next year's schedule.

Scheduling sessions will begin in **late November** and continue through **December** during students' **RTI periods**. For those not in the building during RTI, we'll offer additional sessions to ensure everyone has the chance to meet. **All students should meet with Mr. Shaffer before Christmas Break** to finalize their schedules.

This is a wonderful opportunity to **talk with your student** about their course selections. As their home supporter, your input is an important part of the decision-making process. If you'd like to meet to discuss options together, Mr. Shaffer is happy to schedule a **one-on-one meeting** with you and your student.

Student Dignity Program

Student Dignity Program

We're proud to celebrate the success of our new Student Dignity Program, which ensures every student has access to essential personal care items.

Discreet bins located in restrooms are stocked with toiletries such as deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, tampons, and more — allowing students to take what they need, when they need it, confidentially and respectfully.

Launched this fall through a \$500 mini-grant, the program has already had a positive impact on student confidence and well-being.

To help sustain and grow the program, community members are invited to contribute through our Amazon Wish List by clicking [HERE](#). Every donation supports our shared commitment to student dignity, confidence, and success at Coloma High School.

The Importance of Completing the FAFSA

Paying for college can feel overwhelming, but completing the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** is the key first step to unlocking financial aid. Visit www.studentaid.gov to create an account and complete your application. The earlier you apply, the more aid you may receive.

Scholarship Opportunities

- **National/State Scholarships:** Larger awards with more applicants. Trusted sites include Fastweb and College Board.
- **Local Scholarships:** Open to CHS and Berrien County students at www.berriencommunity.org.
- **College/Program Scholarships:** Found on college websites and available to admitted students who meet eligibility criteria.

We encourage students to focus on **local and college-based scholarships**, which often provide the best opportunities.

For questions about scheduling, scholarships, or the FAFSA, please contact:

Mr. Gregory Shaffer

School Counselor, Coloma High School

✉ gshaffer@ccs.coloma.org

☎ 269-468-2400 ext. 4004

Spanish

By Amanda Ferris

Inspirar para lograr.
Empoderar para el éxito.

Cultura y Música

¡In October, all students participated in our music competition of Locotubre. This year's theme was Battle of the Best: top songs from previous years. Students created brackets and we voted along with thousands of other students around the world to determine the #1 song. In the beginning of November, Candela by Alvaro Soler was announced as the winner. This is a great way to expose students to Spanish music and it is always fun to hear that students add some of these class songs to their own playlists!

Spanish classes participated in Wooly Week the last week of October. Students engaged with a new Sr. Wooly video, learned a handful of new vocabulary words about time, and participated in several activities that included all four skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Congratulations to all the winners of Wooly Week that participated in the student raffle!

Spanish classes also discussed Día de Muertos that happens in the beginning of November. We read about the holiday and how it is celebrated in Mexico, the United States, and other countries. Spanish 1 students watched Coco, which is a fantastic representation of the holiday. Spanish 2-5 students decorated calaveras, a popular skull decoration. It has been a fun couple months with culture and music that we can connect with the language.





"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy"— Prince Hamlet



By Kevin Vanpetegham

William Shakespeare is a name we all know, but why all the fuss over a British writer who died over 400 years ago? First off, Shakespeare in the classroom is a study of language. Shakespeare introduced approximately 3,000 words and phrases into the English language. He is a poet, and a study of Shakespeare is challenging and enriches our language. Furthermore, Shakespeare is a master storyteller. His plot lines include war, revenge, mistaken identity, madness, love and corruption. His themes are universal and give us great opportunities for critical analysis in the classroom. Shakespeare is part of our cultural consciousness. He is often referenced as an icon in our culture, and students need to understand that. Shakespeare is even part of the Michigan Department of Education's recommended core texts for high school language arts. Why? Because Shakespeare is relevant. Students relate to Romeo and Juliet's newfound love and Hamlet's angst. Most of all though, Shakespeare is fun. Even the most reluctant of students are drawn into the compelling worlds that Shakespeare creates because he speaks to all experiences.

I am very excited to be teaching Hamlet to our English 11 students throughout the month of December. Hamlet incorporates timeless motifs about procrastination and perfectionism that are relevant to our students. Shakespeare's decision to burden the character of Hamlet with both internal and external conflict gives the character a great feeling of depth and relatability that students crave. While many students enter into this thorough study of one of Shakespeare's greatest works reluctantly, year after year they walk away with a great appreciation of this old, but timeless and amazing work.

All Hail the Bard!



Science

By Brandy Van Neil

“To myself I am only a child playing on the beach, while vast oceans of truth lie undiscovered before me”
— Isaac Newton

Newton's First Law in Action

Have you ever wondered why a football only moves when you throw or kick it, or why you lurch forward when your car suddenly stops? These everyday experiences can all be explained by Newton's Three Laws of Motion, the foundation of classical physics and a major part of what students in physics are exploring in class right now. In a recent activity, students performed experiments to observe Newton's First Law of Motion. Newton's First Law states that an object will remain at rest or continue moving at a constant speed in a straight line unless acted upon by an outside force. This is why a notebook doesn't move unless someone picks it up, and why a rolling skateboard will eventually slow down—friction is the outside force acting on it.

While in cooperative groups, physics students performed a variety of experiments regarding this law. These experiments included a coin toss where students attempted to catch a stack of coins balanced on their forearms in their hand. Students also tried to get a penny to fall into a beaker that was sitting on top of a card by quickly pulling the card. This is similar to the classic pulling the table cloth trick. Finally, students balanced a stack of coins on a physics car and noted what happened to the coins when they pushed the car gently compared to a push with more force. For all of these experiments, students had to explain how Newton's First Law of Motion could be observed.



Newton's 3 Laws of motion

1 st	Law		$\Sigma F = 0$
2 nd	Law		$\Sigma F = m \cdot a$
3 rd	Law		$F = -F$



Physical Education

By Caterina Rocca



Physical activity is good for the body and good for the brain.



Health Corner: Winter Fitness Tips



As colder weather sets in, staying active becomes more challenging — but also more important. Winter often brings lower energy levels, changes in eating habits, and less daylight, all of which can affect overall health. The key is keeping a routine that blends movement, strength, and good nutrition.



Stay Active Indoors

Simple indoor exercises like body-weight squats, lunges, push-ups, and planks help maintain strength without needing equipment. Even 15–20 minutes a day can boost metabolism and support mood.



Get Outside When You Can:

Walking on safe, cleared trails or around the neighborhood provides fresh air and helps break up long periods indoors. Bundle up and use layers to stay warm.



Stay Consistent:

Winter routines feel harder at first, but sticking to them prevents seasonal weight gain and helps maintain mental clarity.

Boost Your Immune System:

Eating nutrient-dense foods becomes especially important during winter. Focus on lean proteins, whole grains, colorful vegetables, fruits rich in vitamin C, and warm, hydrating options like soups or herbal tea. Avoid skipping meals — steady nourishment keeps energy stable.



Art Club

By Megan Ferguson

"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."

– Pablo Picasso

Scarecrows Among Us Contest

Coloma Art Club participated in the Scarecrows Among Us competition in the city of Coloma. Business and organizations competed against each other by creating original scarecrows that were on display for the entire month of October. **Art Club won "People's Choice" with 318 votes. They also won "Most Complex" and "Best Overall".**



Participants Standing: Joslynn Jorden, Abigail Fleischmann, Trevor Kirby, Jason Hicks, Aaron Case, A'zaiuh Hill, and Ava Leaman. Seated: Crisstal Almora Castillo, Angely Garcia Hernandez. Not pictured (Junior High): Lindsey Almora Castillo, and Itzyana Perea

Students of the Month

November



Inspire to Achieve
Empower for Success



Freshman

Joslynn Jordan



Sophomore

Melanie Reyna



Junior

Amiya Lee



Senior

Callie Crisenbery



Starfish Award



Mr. Brett Walsworth

Brett Walsworth has been with Coloma Community Schools for 27 years. He started teaching in the jr. high and was there for ten years before moving to the high school. This year he is teaching in both buildings. Over the course of his career he has taught English, Creative Writing, U.S. History, Civics, and World History.

He enjoys sharing his passion for learning with his students and watching their growth throughout their years in school.