

COLOMA COMMENTS

DECEMBER ISSUE 2025



A Message From The Principal



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.

When students get back from break, Coloma High School will be gearing up for standardized testing such as the MSTEP, PSAT, and SAT. 9th and 10th grade Students will also complete the second round of NWEA testing which helps the district progress monitor our school wide goals. 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.

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!

Important Dates

**JAN 1ST
AND 2ND: NO SCHOOL**

**JAN 7: LATE START CLASSES
BEGIN 10:00 AM**

JAN 19: NO SCHOOL

**JAN 21: LATE START CLASSES
BEGIN 10:00 AM**

Counselors Corner

By Greg Shaffer



Scheduling

We have begun the scheduling process for next school year and we will continue to work with your student(s) with their course selections. As students request their courses they were asked to share their choices with you at home. We would kindly ask that you review their choices with them...great way to have your student talk to you about school!

Click [HERE](#) to view the scheduling slideshow that was presented to students

Seniors

The 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

Social Studies

By Tyler Cantrell

“We must consult our means rather than our wishes.”

— George Washington

Students Create a Budget

Coloma Comets in economics class recently turned theory into reality by tackling one of life’s most practical challenges: building a personal budget. The project asked students to imagine themselves ten years in the future, living independently and responsible for every financial decision they make. Instead of abstract numbers on a worksheet, the budget included real costs for housing, transportation, food, insurance, utilities, healthcare, entertainment, savings, and taxes.

After researching local and national cost-of-living data, students calculated monthly expenses and identified the lifestyle they hoped to lead. Some envisioned downtown apartments and frequent travel, while others preferred suburban homes, reliable vehicles, and steady savings. With their desired lifestyle defined, students then selected a potential career they were interested in pursuing, ranging from skilled trades and education to engineering, healthcare, and business.

The next step proved to be the most eye-opening. Students researched the starting and average salaries for their chosen careers and compared those incomes to their projected budget. For many, the numbers did not immediately align. A few discovered their dream lifestyle required a higher income than their chosen career typically provides, while others realized they could live comfortably with less income than they had expected.

Rather than viewing the mismatch as a failure, the class treated it as a learning opportunity. Students explored options such as adjusting housing choices, reducing discretionary spending, delaying major purchases, or increasing savings gradually. Others considered alternative career paths, additional education, certifications, or side income opportunities that could better support their goals.

By the end of the project, students gained more than budgeting skills. They developed a clearer understanding of how income, expenses, and personal values intersect. The exercise emphasized that financial planning is not about giving up dreams, but about making informed choices. By linking career decisions to realistic budgets, students left the class better prepared to navigate adulthood with flexibility, awareness, and confidence.

Projects like this demonstrate the power of experiential learning, showing students that economics is not distant or abstract, but a daily tool that shapes independence, responsibility, and long-term success when thoughtful planning meets realistic expectations for their future lives as adults in society today.

Welding/Machine Tool

By Chuck Luchies

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.” – William Arthur Ward

A Huge Thank You For Our New Laser Welder/CNC Cutter

Coloma High School Metalworks would like to thank Amhawk International, Rays Welding, Lindberg MPH, Alro, Coloma Lions, and Maximum Mold for their donations to help us purchase a Laser welder/CNC cutter. In the last 10 years laser technology has really come a long way and changed the industry to make it faster, more detailed, and more efficient, but it was at a substantial cost that was out of reach for our program. Recently there has been a big push to get laser technology into the hands of the smaller shops and into schools. We were able to find the X-Tool Company who has been a leader in laser technology for a decade and ordered one of their new metal fab laser setups. With this machine we will be able to do more detailed cutting faster and start to experiment with laser welding which has a strong possibility of being the future of welding in controlled environments. Once again, this purchase would not have been possible without the donations of our great community sponsors! Merry Christmas and thank you for your continued support!

Maximum Mold

SINCE
1948

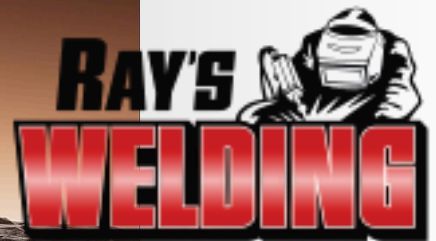


Alro Steel
America's Premier Metals Service Center



XTOOL

LINDBERG/MPH



By Joshua Fields

Math Success!

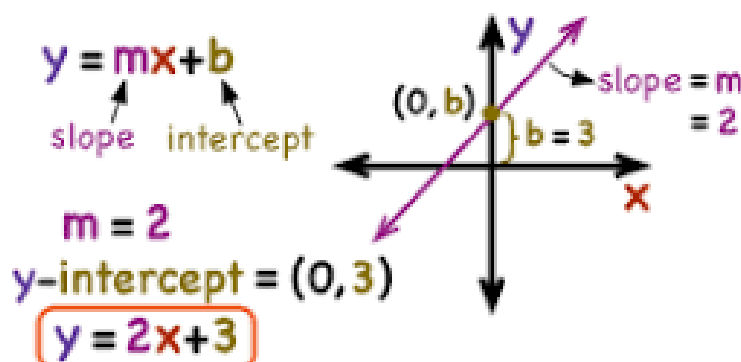
Slope-Intercept Proficiency

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, Formative practices and a Khan Academy practice test. Their hard work led to 76% 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!

SLOPE-INTERCEPT FORM



Special Education

By Shyann Traylor

"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day-in and day-out." — Robert Collier

On-Campus Work Based Learning

Mrs. Traylor's class is hard at work earning their Seal of Employability, a special recognition awarded to high school students who demonstrate they are prepared for the workplace or additional education after graduation. This seal emphasizes essential professional skills—such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, responsibility, and organization—that employers consider highly valuable. Because these programs are designed by individual states or school districts, the exact requirements can vary, but the goal remains the same: to help students develop confidence and readiness for life beyond high school.

Six students in Mrs. Traylor's class are practicing these soft skills during their life skills period by working in three different on-campus locations: the high school office, the cafeteria, and athletics. The students pictured below in the bottom left picture are stationed in the high school office, where they take on a variety of responsibilities such as organizing mail, making copies for teachers, wiping down door knobs and tables, and completing other small tasks as needed. The student in the bottom right picture is stationed in the cafeteria. He is responsible for sweeping, wiping tables, mopping, and stocking items. Through these hands-on experiences, students build real-world skills that support their journey toward earning the Seal of Employability.



National Honor Society

By Tyler Cantrell

“No matter what happens in life, be good to people. Being good to people is a wonderful legacy to leave behind.”—
Taylor Swift, NHS Alumna

NHS Delivers Cookies to a Local Assisted Living Facility

On Wednesday December 5th the National Honor Society took freshly baked chocolate chip cookies to the Woodland Terrace assisted living facility to wish all the residents a very Merry Christmas. Residents delighted the students with stories, laughs, and sharing of special holiday memories while enjoying time together. It was refreshing on a cold day to see the warmth and joy from the conversations and shared cookies. They are all looking forward to returning in February for Valentine's Day.



1st Row Seated: Callie Crisenbery, Taylor Truman, Cassidy Emrath, Karsyn Jacobs. 2nd Row: Shelby Thomas, and facility's activities director - Norma. 3rd Row Standing: Ava Cartwright, Maverick Kraemer, Lizbet Acevedo-Vega, McKenzie Harris, Lilah Hyska, Brooklyn Nord, Mr. Cantrell, and Joshua Padilla-Gamino.

Students of the Month

December

“
Inspire to Achieve
Empower for Success
”

A+

Starfish Award



Kevin Vanpeteghem

We are so grateful to have Mr. Vanpeteghem working at Coloma High School for the past 27 years!

He coaches varsity baseball here at CHS. In addition he enjoys collecting sports cards, coins, and license plates. He also sets up at shows and at the local antique mall to buy and sell those items. He loves travelling, tent camping, and hiking with his family. In the summer he delights in spending time growing his vegetable garden and watching Detroit Tigers baseball.

He offers us all very valuable words of wisdom. “Have an insatiable appetite to be the best at everything you do and do everything in your power to spread that attitude by investing in others, believing in yourself, and by being a catalyst for positive change.”

Freshman

Myla Klee



Sophomore

Jeremiah Johnson



Junior

Daisy Estrada



Senior

Chloe Utley-Gaston



2 Time Winner!

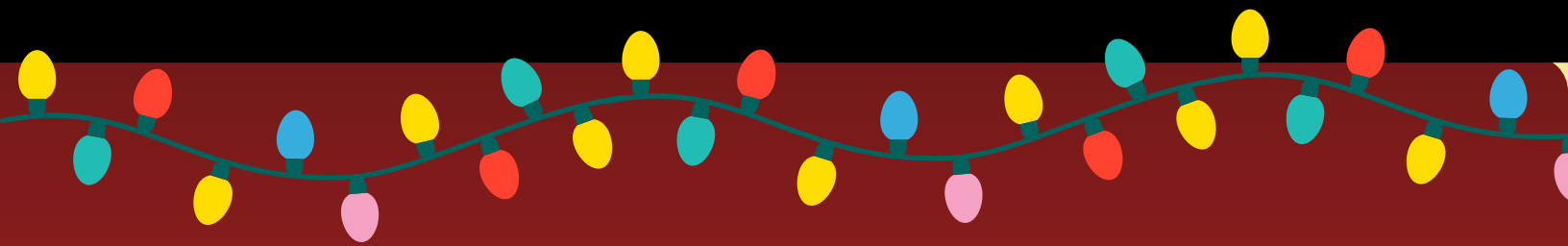


CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Mammel

Winner of the High School
Staff 8th Annual

Chili Cook Off



Merry Christmas
and
**Happy New
Year**

We are looking forward to Seeing you in 2026