

COLOMA COMMENTS

JANUARY 2026 ISSUE



A Message From The Principal

Important Dates

- FEB 4: LATE START
REPORT AT 10:00 AM**
- FEB 6: WINTERFEST DANCE**
- FEB 13: NO SCHOOL**
- FEB 16: NO SCHOOL**
- FEB 18 LATE START
REPORT AT 10:00 AM**
- FEB 25 BAND FESTIVAL
CONCERT 6:30 PM**

Comet Families,

The class of 2026 is coming into the home stretch! This is a busy time for families of seniors, but also extended families and friends.

Families of seniors are planning graduation parties, ordering announcements, making sure tickets are available for family members and friends who want to come to the graduation ceremony. Not to mention the usual busy parts and responsibilities of everyday life. The same thing can be said for your senior. Not only are they worried about their future and helping plan for the end of the year, he or she needs to finish this semester strong. We all want the Class of 2026 to help make a memorable year that each of them can look back on through the years with a smile on their face. The most important thing that each member of the Class of 2026 can do to ensure that happens is to finish strong.

Seniors can feel like they are being pulled in hundreds of directions. I am sure you will help your senior stay the course and help your child prioritize as the mad rush to the end of the year gets more stressful.

I would like to remind our seniors and their families about ordering cap and gowns:

- If you have not already done so, order your cap and gown from Jostens ASAP. The cost of the cap and gown is approximately \$60.00. We suggest making sure you place your order by February 16, 2026 through Jostens. You can contact Jostens at 1-800-JOSTENS or through their website at jostens.com.
 - Cap and gowns will be shipped to Coloma High School. Cap and gowns will be handed out the last day the Seniors are in school.

Coloma High School will be in touch in the coming months with updates throughout this semester. Please be on the lookout for these updates because they will have information you will find useful and hopefully keep stress levels down for all involved. Coloma High School looks forward to helping any way we can. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the high school office.



Seniors



!!! FAFSA is now open !!!

Importance of Completing FAFSA

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

1. **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.
2. 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.
3. 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



How to send your transcripts:

Coloma High School uses Parchment.com to make it easy for you to send and access your high school transcripts. Here's how to use it:

1. ***Login to Parchment.com.*** If you have not created a Parchment account, please take these steps:
 - a. Go to [Parchment.com](https://parchment.com) and click on "Order Now" on the front page
 - b. In the search bar where it says, "Find an institution," type in "Coloma High School"
 - c. Next, enter in your PERSONAL email address—do not use your school email address—and click "Continue"
 - d. Enter in your personal information and create a password. ***MAKE SURE TO WRITE DOWN YOUR PASSWORD SOMEWHERE SAFE***
 - e. Parchment should send you an email with a verification code to complete two-factor authentication
 - f. You may be asked to agree to Parchment's terms of service
 - g. Parchment will then ask about your GPA, colleges you might be interested in, etc. Go ahead and click "Skip" and it should take you to your main dashboard
2. ***Click on "Order" where it says "Order Your Transcript."***
 - a. You should see "Coloma High School" or the Coloma Logo displayed here. Do NOT click on "Order your enrollment verification."
3. ***Under "Where do you want this sent?" type in the name of the college or organization that you want to receive your transcript.***
 - a. If you need a copy for yourself or need to send it to someone like a hiring manager, click "I'm sending a copy to myself or another individual" and enter in the appropriate email address
4. ***Draw a signature in the signature box, check the certification box, and select "Place order" at the bottom of the page***

IMPORTANT NOTE: It's free to send your transcripts while you are a Coloma student.

After you graduate, there is a small processing fee per transcript



Fine Arts

“Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.”
— Thomas Merton

By Megan Ferguson

Ceramics Students Shine with Coil Projects!

Our high school ceramics students absolutely impressed with their latest coil-building projects! They explored a variety of coil techniques and combined them to create completely unique designs. Their challenge was to use at least three different coil styles and fill the space completely — and they rose to the occasion beautifully.

After constructing their pieces, students researched glaze options and carefully selected colors to bring their creations to life.

Even more remarkable? Many of these students had never worked with clay before! Their dedication, creativity, and hard work truly paid off. We couldn't be prouder of their achievements!



Melva Lerma Showcases Yarn Art in Art Club

Art Club students have been exploring the creative world of textile art and learning how to repurpose craft supplies in innovative ways. Recently, student Melva Lerma impressed everyone by showcasing her stunning yarn art, demonstrating both skill and imagination.

The project encourages students to think outside the box, transforming everyday materials into unique works of art while gaining hands-on experience with texture, color, and design. Art Club continues to be a space where creativity and sustainability come together beautifully.



By Terry Sheehan

Why take Advanced Placement English?

Advanced Placement (AP) courses are college-level courses offered by high schools in the United States and Canada. These courses provide students with the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school and prepare them for the rigor of college-level coursework.

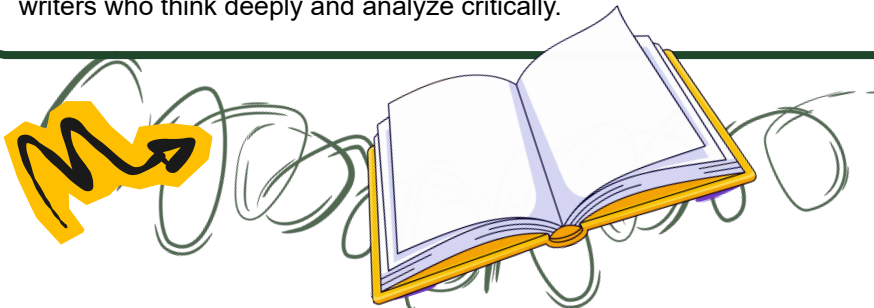
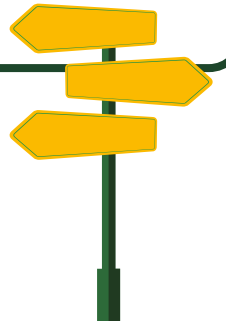
The Coloma High School English Department offers two AP courses that alternate every other year—**AP English Literature and Composition** and **AP English Language and Composition**. Both are intensive college-level courses taught to students in their junior and senior years that prepare students to read and write analytically. Although the courses are designed to prepare students for the AP Exam, it is not just a test prep course. This is a college level course where students will be required to engage on a daily basis with their peers in discussion of their reading perspectives, literary analysis, rhetorical analysis, an author's purpose, and an author's use of language.

As a college-level class, AP English clearly is not for every high student; it is for those students who are ready to participate and thrive in a college-level environment. The program exists for those students who enjoy and appreciate reading—and who do so independently; who write thoughtfully and articulately; and who strive to become discriminating, life-long analysts of literature and writing. Perhaps most importantly, successful AP English students must be open to new ideas and viewpoints of what they are reading, and be willing to share new insights and opinions with their classmates. At its core the class is a community of learners and, as such, must be discussion-oriented. Thus, active participation is essential to students' success in the course.

AP English is designed for students willing to accept an intellectual challenge and is intended to engage creative and analytical thinking skills. These courses are intended to engage students in becoming skilled readers of prose from various periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts, and in becoming skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes. It brings into focus the interactions among a writer's purposes, audience expectations, and subjects, as it promotes examination of the conventions and resources of language that contribute to effective writing. Students will experience, interpret, and evaluate challenging imaginative literature of recognized importance.

Reading and writing are approached as reciprocal processes in AP English, and students will have multiple opportunities to recognize and implement good writing and appreciate exemplary literature. What a student reads lends itself to what a student writes; what a student writes enhances and extends their understanding of literature and the writer's craft. Students will write to understand, explain, and evaluate literature in a clear and cogent style. Although critical analysis of the text is a primary focus of AP English, students will have the opportunity to write creatively.

Students in AP English will work towards an appreciation of the imaginative and aesthetic dimensions that contribute to a rich and wholly satisfying reading and writing experience. Students will take the AP examination in May (possibly earning scores that lead to college English credit) and will continue to develop as appreciative life-long readers and effective writers who think deeply and analyze critically.



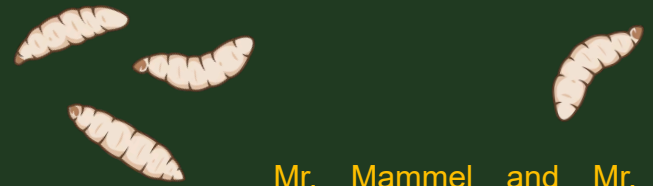
Current Projects in Wisniewski's Room

In my anatomy & physiology class this year, we have studied many different body systems such as skeletal, muscular, cardiovascular, and respiratory. For our skeletal unit, the students had to trace themselves, then draw, label, and color every bone of the body onto a large poster. The posters were hung up in the hall and are now posted in the back of my classroom. The students did a fantastic job with this project and had so much fun while learning!

In my biology class, we have conducted some recent labs. We tested water tension properties using water droplets on pennies and adding different substances to see their effects on water tension. As we began our unit in cells, we stained and looked at onion epidermis under the microscopes, then swabbed our cheeks, stained the slide, and were able to see individual cheek cells under the microscope! They had so much fun with these hands-on learning activities.



Putting Wax Worms to Good Use



Mr. Mammel and Mr. Mares, the curriculum and grant director, have put together a grant proposal through MISTEM. This will be funding for research into the use of wax worms in digesting and disposal of plastic grocery bags. These bags are normally thrown into landfills and do not decompose for hundreds of years. Wax worms, commonly used for fishing bait, have an enzyme in their saliva which breaks down these bags quickly. Nothing else seems to do this effectively.

The research will involve students analyzing how to maximize the consumption of the bags with recommendations for upscaling to industrial disposal. Students will maintain and monitor the conditions, visit local disposal facilities, and present their findings to local and regional community groups. This long-term research project is designed to engage students as they record, observe, measure, modify, and present their findings to a variety of community stakeholders. Look for updates and more information to come.



Physical Education



“Exercise is good for your mind, body, and soul.” – Susie Michelle Cortright



By Travis Hargan

Exercise Can Improve Students' Mental Health

Research shows that exercise can be the best defense against a lot of the common mental health issues that students struggle with.

Stress

Students face enormous stress in the classroom and in their lives, including peer pressure, work overload, and high stakes testing. Exercise controls the emotional and physical feelings of stress, and it also works at the cellular level. Physical activity is a natural way to prevent the negative consequences of stress because it can ward off the ill effects of chronic stress and actually reverse them. In addition, studies show people who add physical activity to their lives become more socially active, which boosts confidence and helps establish and maintain social connections.

Anxiety and Panic Disorders

Anxiety is defined as a natural reaction to a threat, but worrying when there's no real threat, to the point where one can't function normally, is an anxiety disorder. Panic is the most intense form of anxiety, and I've witnessed my students having panic attacks during tests and cooperative learning situations, or sometimes just from the general pressures of school.

Studies show that the majority of studies show aerobic exercise significantly reduces symptoms of anxiety disorders. Through exercise, people learn to alleviate anxiety and rebuild their confidence. Exercise reroutes the brain's circuits, reduces muscle tension, and teaches a different outcome to an anxiety-provoking situation, ultimately setting an anxious person free from their worrisome tendencies.

Depression

Aerobic exercise is known to have a positive impact on depressive symptoms. Studies suggest that endorphins produced in the brain during exercise contribute to a general feeling of well-being. Exercise also boosts dopamine, which improves mood and jump-starts the attention span. Thirty minutes of moderate exercise a few days a week can do wonders for students who suffer from depressive moods.



Students of the Month

January



Inspire to Achieve
Empower for Success



Freshman

Madison Smith



Sophomore

Lila Groendyk



Junior

Josephine
Brookshire



Senior

Caleb Sherrod



Starfish Award



Sara Sawyer

Sara is not one to seek out the spotlight, but our staff couldn't help seeing the light lying within. She has been working for Coloma high school as part of our awesome cafeteria staff for 10 years. She always offers genuine and sincere greetings and words of kindness to each and every student she encounters.

While she's not at the school sharing her gentle compassion with both students and staff, she enjoys time with her family. Sara is very creative and likes scrapbooking and creating all natural products.

When asked to offer words of wisdom for our students she said, "Always remember God is with you."

YEARBOOK

**NOW IS THE BEST TIME TO ORDER A YEARBOOK.
CAPTURE THE MOMENTS BY RESERVING A YEARBOOK TODAY.**

[CLICK HERE](#) job 3180

It is also time to start submitting senior pictures! The submission deadline is April, 1 2026

There are a few guidelines to follow:

- Color photos only
- Plain/neutral background preferred
- Full face view, facing forward
- Clothing and jewelry must fit school dress code guidelines
- No creative filters or photographic treatments
- No weapons or hand signs of any kind

The **ONLY** way to submit senior portraits for the yearbook is to follow the link below and submit them through the eShare site.

Use the Upload Your Portrait option, eShare Link (code **comets67**)

***Failure to follow these directions or submit a photo will result in your school ID picture being used.
If you have any questions, please reach out to me or someone on the yearbook staff for assistance!
Thanks!

senior
PICTURES



YEARBOOK

eShare

Submit senior portraits for the
yearbook by visiting the Yearbook
Order Center or eShare link



Use the **Upload Your Portrait** option, code comets67

Deadline is April 1st!!

THESE
ARE THE
**BEST OF
TIMES**

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\$60

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