COLOMA HIGH SCHOOL NEWS LETTER

# COLOMA COMMENTS

FEBRUARY ISSUE 2026

## A Message From The Principal

Comet Families,

Here we are at the end of February. I know I am looking forward to the weather turning and getting outside to enjoy working on my yard and having campfires. I also look forward to seeing the results of our students' hard work.

We have recently finished NWEA testing at the high school. The NWEA test measures student results in math and English over time. We look more at growth and how our students are progressing in their learning. We are proud to share that our 9th and 10th-grade students have shown consistent learning momentum:

- **9th Grade:** In Reading, 62% of students improved their score by at least one point, with an average increase of 2.3 points since Fall. In Math, 60% improved, with an average increase of 2 points.
- **10th Grade:** In Reading, 59% of students improved, with an average increase of 1.7 points. In Math, 56% improved, with an average increase of 2.2 points.

We will be sending home a Family Report within the next week. When you review your student's report, you will see a RIT score. This is a stable scale that measures exactly what a student knows and is ready to learn next. We compare these scores against SAT Readiness Benchmarks to ensure students are prepared for the rigors of college-level work:

- 9th Grade Targets: Math: 234–237 | Reading: 221–223
- 10th Grade Targets: Math: 237–239 | Reading: 224–225

Besides the NWEA test, the winter sports season is beginning to come to an end. Student-Athletes will begin to transition to spring sports. Watching our student-athletes compete in any season is exciting and brings the community together.

Not only are we in full swing for this year, but we are also looking ahead to next school year. Mr. Shaffer is hard at work making sure our students have the class schedules that work best for them for next year. This time of year seems to be the beginning of a sprint until the end of the school year.

Your child will also feel the anxiety and stress that goes along with this time of the year. Some areas where students and parents can help in this area are looking a week or two ahead of time and making sure plans are made in advance. Parents can help emphasize to their child how important attendance is to their success in school. There is nothing more stressful than being out of school for a day or two and then coming back to realize how much work has been missed.

If your child is feeling overwhelmed, we do have systems in place to help. Mr. Shaffer is available to set up an appointment to talk. We also have a full time social worker that works with students 6-12th grade. We can help steer parents and students to services that can help them so they can be successful.

Our staff wants all students at Coloma High School to be successful. We are all here to help to make sure that our students have the tools they need to reach their full potential.

**MAR 4:** LATE START CLASSES BEGIN 10:00 AM

**MAR 18:** LATE START CLASSES BEGIN 10:00 AM

**MAR: 27** HALF DAY

**MAR 30:** BEGIN SPRING BREAK

# Counselors Corner

*By Greg Shaffer*

## IS CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) FOR YOUR STUDENT???

**Career and Technical Education is preparing students to meet the needs of the high-wage, high-skill jobs that are rapidly becoming available in Michigan and across this country.**
**Coloma High School and Berrien County offer many opportunities for our students with CTE programs. Below are some quick facts about students who are enrolled into a CTE program:**
**Berrien County CTE Facts: (Based on 2019-20 data)***

- **Number of CTE programs in Berrien County - 66**
- **Number of Students involved - 2,345 (unduplicated) high school students were enrolled in CTE programs**
- **30.9% of Berrien County 10th through 12th grade students took a CTE class**
- **CTE Graduation Rates - 94.5%**

**Michigan Statewide Facts: (Based on 2019-20 data)***

- **114,523 high school students participate in CTE classes throughout Michigan**
- **CTE Statewide Graduation Rate - 95.64%**

**National CTE Facts***

- **7.6 million students at the secondary level participated in CTE**
- **77% of high school students participate in a CTE program while in school**
- **1/3 of CTE students are enrolled in programs preparing them for careers in leading industries**

**Skilled Trades***
**Skilled Trades are careers that often require less schooling and are in demand for fields like healthcare, information technology, advanced manufacturing, construction, and automotive. Today's Skilled Trades jobs offer a wide array of opportunities for high school and community college students**

- **545,000 Professional Trade jobs in Michigan**
- **15,000+ skilled trade jobs are available in Michigan**
- **47,000 new job openings are expected annually**

***Source: *Going Pro; ACTE/CTE Policy Watch; CTEIS Analytics Report; My School Data**

**Please contact Mr. Shaffer at gshaffer@ccs.coloma.org if you would like to have your student enroll into a CTE program for next school year; it's not too late!**
**Please click HERE for more details of CTE programs offered throughout Berrien County!**

# Classroom History

"In other periods of depression... you could base hope, but as I look about, I now see nothing to give ground to hope—nothing of man." — Calvin Coolidge, 1932

By Curt Mead

## Journey Through the Roaring Twenties & The Great Depression

This month, our learners are stepping back in time to explore three decades of dramatic American transformation, moving from the high-energy "Jazz Age" to the sobering depths of the country's greatest economic challenge.

### What We Are Covering

Our US History class explores how the United States navigated a period of intense contradiction. We begin by examining Postwar Tensions and the "Politics of Normalcy," investigating whether the 1920s truly brought prosperity to all.

Students are currently tackling a central Compelling Question: How did the cultural and economic reforms of the 1920s shape the modern United States? From the Clash Between Traditionalism and Modernism to the expansion of government under the New Deal, we are analyzing how these eras redefined our national identity.

### What Is Being Learned

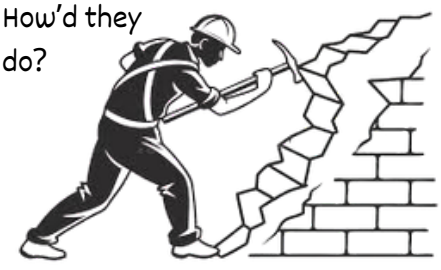
Beyond just dates and names, students are developing a "big picture" understanding of several key historical areas. They are exploring "The Boom," which covers the social trends and innovations that fueled popular culture. Additionally, the curriculum addresses "The Bust" by examining the complex causes of the Great Depression and the human impact of the economic collapse. Finally, students are learning about "The Reform," focusing on how the federal government's response to the collapse forever changed the relationship between citizens and the state.

### Diverse Learning Styles & Activities

To ensure every student connects with the material, a multi-sensory approach designed for all learning styles is utilized. For visual and auditory learners, students engage with history through a dedicated Video Library and primary source analysis. Interactive and kinesthetic learners participate in high-energy lesson games and use a Games Library to turn vocabulary and concept-building into a competitive, hands-on experience. To promote critical thinking, every lesson concludes with an assessment or a Timeline Challenge to help students synthesize what they've discovered. Furthermore, the "Perspective Matters" approach uses the Primary Source Library to allow students to read the actual letters and documents of the people who lived through history, rather than just reading about it.

RECONSTRUCTION

How'd they do?



# Classroom Auto Shop

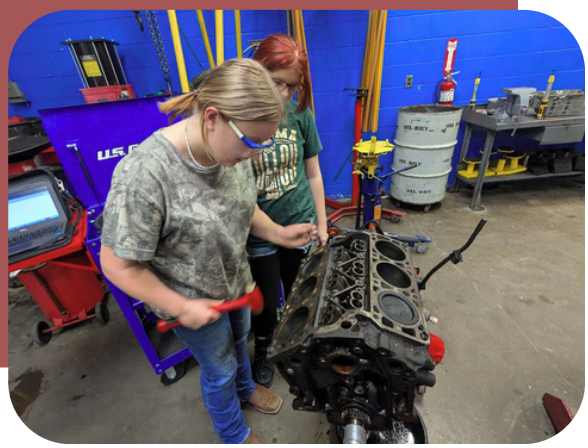
"The Difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra" — Unknown

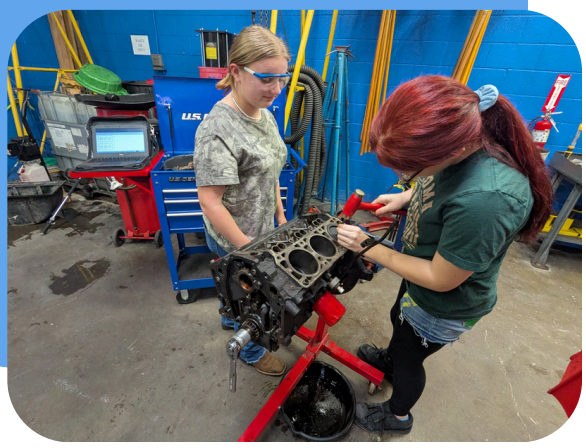
By Ryan Ransom

## Internal Combustion Engine or ICE Diagnostics

A group of first-year students requested a supplemental project to study the internal components of an internal combustion engine. Consequently, I provided them with a GM 3.1 liter engine for complete disassembly. Upon full breakdown, they will be instructed on how to measure, or blueprint, the engine. Given that this engine was contaminated with coolant in the oil, it will be informative to observe the nature of the bearing wear they discover.

This project is conducted during any available time, contingent upon the completion of their regular assigned work. I commend the initiative of students who seek to exceed minimum requirements.





Pictures include the following Students

Coraline Murphy
Rayanne Smith
Owen Meek

# Classroom Math

"The true logic of this world is the calculus of probabilities."
— James Clerk Maxwell

*By Brian Klee*

## Fun with Probability

Students in Precalculus have had fun collecting data to better understand concepts of permutations, combinations and distributions in finding probabilities. To better understand each concept, students competed in a round robin rock-paper-scissors tournament and a paper basketball shooting competition.

Joshua Padilla-Gamino shoots the winning shot in the 2nd hour paper basketball shooting competition.

2nd hour students look on as Alexander Smith's scissors is beaten by Ana Segura's rock to decide the 2026 Rock, Paper, Scissors Championship.

The round robin rock-paper-scissors tournaments illustrated the difference between permutations in which order matters and combinations in which order doesn't matter.

An example of a permutation would be listing every person's individual schedule:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alex vs Ana | Ana vs Alex | Josh vs Ricky | Ricky vs Josh |
| Alex vs Josh | Ana vs Ricky | Josh vs Alex | Ricky vs Ana |
| Alex vs Ricky | Ana vs Josh | Josh vs Ana | Ricky vs Alex |

Permutations list every possible match-up in every possible order of contestants making it look as if 12 games would be required to play the round robin tournament.

Meanwhile an example of a combination would be listing every round of games:

| Round 1 | Round 2 | Round 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Alex vs Ana | Alex vs Josh | Alex vs Ricky |
| Josh vs Ricky | Ana vs Ricky | Ana vs Josh |

Combinations list each match-up only once showing that only 6 games would be required to play the round robin tournament because the order the contestants are listed doesn't actually matter.

# Classroom Special Education

"Self-Advocacy is learning how to speak up for yourself, making your own decisions about your own life..." — Unknown

By Shyann Traylor

## Building Independence from the Inside Out

**The Foundation: A Safe Place to Grow**

In our classroom, we believe that learning—whether it's algebra or life skills—can only happen when a student feels truly safe. We have dedicated ourselves to creating an environment where students feel secure enough to take risks, make mistakes, and discover who they are. When a student feels seen and protected, the door to learning swings wide open.

**Self-Advocacy: Finding Our Voice**

One of our biggest focuses lately has been self-advocacy. For many of our students, frustration often stems from a lack of tools to express their needs. By practicing how to say:

- "I need a break."
- "I need help."
- "I don't understand this yet."

...we are seeing a direct impact on classroom harmony. We've found that when students have the words to advocate for themselves, the "big behaviors" decrease because they no longer need to use those behaviors to communicate their distress. We are learning that our voices are our most powerful tools.

**Work Ethic in Action: Our High School Partners**

Back in November, we launched our Work-Based Learning Program right here at the high school. While there was some initial hesitation and "I don't want to go" moments, the transformation has been the highlight of our year!

What started as a challenge has turned into a point of pride. Students are now tracking the calendar and eagerly reminding staff when it's their day to work. They aren't just learning tasks; they are building a professional identity and a sense of purpose.

Why These "Simple" Skills Matter

Skills like showing up on time, pushing through a task, and asking for help are often taken for granted. In this room, we celebrate them as the milestones they are. Watching these students gain an understanding of themselves and their capabilities is what makes this work so rewarding.

# Classroom Band

"Where words fail, music speaks".
— Hans Christian Anderson

*By Marc Hartman*

## Congratulations MSBOA District VI Solo Perfomers

The High School Band wants to give a big congratulations to all of these students who performed at MSBOA District VI Solo and Ensemble Festival on February 14th.

Grace Lute- Duet
Victoria Perea- Duet
Isaac Perez- Solo and Quartet
Isaac Tavolacci- Duet and Quartet
Madalina Gallegos- Quartet
Evan Ott- Quartet
Bristol Stewart- Solo and Duet
Paxton Brethauer- Duet
Raine Athan- Duet
Brooklyn Nord- Duet
Isabella Kiser- Duet

Students pictured Left to Right: Isaac Tavolacci, Raine Athan, Isaac Perez, Madalina Gallegos, Brooklyn Nord, Bristal Stewart, Evan Ott, Grace Lute, Paxton Brethauer, and Victoria Perea. Not pictured: Isabella Kiser

And a special congratulations to the following events that received a Division 1 rating qualifying them for the State Solo and Ensemble Festival at Portage Northern High School in March:

Quartet of Isaac Perez, Isaac Tavolacci, Evan Ott, and Madalina Gallegos
Duet of Paxton Brethauer and Raine Athan
Duet of Bristol Stewart and Isaac Tavolacci
Duet of Brooklyn Nord and Isabella Kiser
And Bristol Stewart on her Solo!

# Students of the Month

# February

Inspire to Achieve
Empower for Success

A+

Freshman

Kollen Norden

Sophomore

Daniela Aguilar Alvarez

Junior

Joseph Clayton

Senior

Aaron Case

## Starfish Award

## Shelley Mazigian

Shelley is director of food services and has been with Coloma Community Schools since 1999. She goes above and beyond in her position. She not only makes sure CCS students have a variety of healthy food items, she is also the reason students have such a warm and inviting place to eat their lunch. She is patient and compassionate towards students and staff and her staff adore her stating "she is the best boss ever!"

Shelley loves her family fiercely and enjoys spending time with them.

When asked for her words of wisdom she said, "Enjoy life and do not let anyone steal your joy!!!