COLOMA HIGH SCHOOL NEWS LETTER

COLOMA COMMENTS

MARCH 2026 ISSUE

A Message From The Principal

Comet Families,

As the standardized testing season approaches, we want to provide you with some helpful tips to ensure that your child performs to the best of their ability. Standardized tests are an important part of the academic year and can play a significant role in determining a child's future academic opportunities. Therefore, it is essential to prepare your child thoroughly for the test.

Here are some standardized testing tips that you can share with your child to help them succeed:

1. Get plenty of rest the night before the test. Lack of sleep can affect a child's ability to concentrate and perform to their best ability.
2. Eat a healthy breakfast on the day of the test. Studies have shown that a good breakfast can improve a child's cognitive function and help them focus better during the test.
3. Practice relaxation techniques. Deep breathing, stretching, and meditation can help reduce test anxiety and help your child feel more relaxed and confident during the test.
4. Read and follow instructions carefully. It is crucial to read all instructions carefully and thoroughly before starting the test to avoid making careless mistakes.
5. Manage your time effectively. Encourage your child to pace themselves during the test and manage their time effectively to ensure they complete all questions within the given time frame.
6. Answer the easy questions first. Advise your child to start with the questions they feel most comfortable with and then move on to more challenging questions.
7. Check your work. Encourage your child to double-check their answers to avoid making any careless mistakes.

By following these tips, your child will feel more confident and better prepared for standardized testing. We encourage you to reinforce these tips with your child and help them feel supported during this crucial time.

APR 6: RETURN FROM SPRING BREAK

APR 8: LATE START
REPORT AT 10:00 AM

APR 22: LATE START
REPORT AT 10:00 AM

Below is the testing schedule beginning April 16, 2026. The chart will give you information about breakfast and lunch schedules for each grade and day, transportation changes, and arrival and dismissal times.

	PSAT9/10 & SAT 4/16/2026	M-STEP Thursday 4/23/26 (Normal Day / 11th Grade Test)	Tuesday 4/28/26 (Normal Day / 11th Grade Test)
9th & 10th Grades	**PSAT 8:00-10:45** - Breakfast available in cafeteria at 7:40 - Bagged lunches available at dismissal. - Leave school immediately after testing. - Must provide your own transportation home.	Normal day: begin at 8:00am	Normal day: begin at 8:00am
11th Grade	**SAT 8:00-12:50** - Breakfast available in the cafeteria at 7:40 - Bagged lunches available at dismissal. - Leave school immediately after testing. - Must provide your own transportation home.	**M-STEP 8:00-10:30am** - Breakfast available in the cafeteria at 7:40am ***Normal day after testing***	**WIN 8:00-10:30am** - Breakfast available in the cafeteria at 7:40am ***Normal day after testing***
12th Grade	Virtual day - work at home in Google classroom	Normal day: begin at 8:00am	Normal day: begin at 8:00am

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Testing season is upon us! Students in grades 9, 10, and 11 will be participating in state testing after Spring Break:

- **Thursday, April 16th:** PSAT/SAT = 9th; 10th; and 11th grades
- **Thursday, April 23rd:** M-STEP = 11th graders only
- **Tuesday, April 28th**: WIN Work Readiness = 11th graders only

In addition to familiarizing yourself with our testing schedule listed below, please review the tips below for a positive test-taking experience:

- **Study:** The best resource for preparing for the PSAT 9, PSAT 10, and SAT is Khan Academy. All CHS students have a free, online account and can access full-length practice tests, videos, and specific test strategies. Students are encouraged to take at least one full-length practice test in the weeks leading up to the real thing.

- **Stay healthy:** Students should aim for a full 8-9 hours of sleep each night in the week leading up to the test (and every night beyond that!). As much as possible, students should also incorporate movement, a healthy diet, and relaxation in the days leading up to the test. Students should practice extra hygienic precautions by regularly washing their hands to reduce the chance of illness and ensure they can attend school on the day of their test.

- **Plan:** A few days before the test, students should finalize their transportation plans, collect all of the materials they will need on test day, and familiarize themselves with the test day schedule. On the day of the test, students should arrive on time, well-rested, and ready to go.

- **Attend**: Every single student needs to be in attendance and on time on their testing date. State testing is mandatory for all students in the State of Michigan, and it is required for students to be present for each scheduled test.

IN THE MEANTIME, RELAX AND ENJOY YOUR SPRING BREAK!

Classroom

Fine Arts

"Those who wish to sing always find a song."
— Swedish Proverb

By Greg Prather

Southwestern Michigan Vocal Festival (SWMVF)

On March 19, members of the Coloma High School Choir attended the annual Southwestern Michigan Vocal Festival (SWMVF) at Western Michigan University. 700 singers gathered from numerous High Schools throughout Southwest Michigan and Northern Indiana. 12 Coloma Choir singers were able to go to this very special event. Our choir had been working on the music since January to prepare for the SWMVF.

Unfortunately upon arrival, there was a massive power outage that extended from the WMU campus west to PawPaw, Michigan. We waited over an hour for repair and then WMU Administration closed the campus and so the Festival had to be canceled. However, all 700 singers gathered in the auditorium lobby and sang together before returning home. I'm very proud of our students who represented Coloma High School so very well.

Picured left to right: Zoey mandarino, Zoey Rickman, Molly Welch, Grace Daugherty, Aurora Bullock, Elizabeth Hardin, Cambel Kirby, Lizbet Acevedo-Vega, Brayden Henley, Khadon Bowman, Clinton Stockton, Gunner Yahr, Tripp Arnold and Mr. Prather

Classroom English

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." — Mahatma Gandhi

By Terry Sheehan

Beyond the Canon: Why High School English Electives Are Essential

For many high school students, "English class" is synonymous with a rigid set of expectations: analyzing The Great Gatsby, memorizing vocabulary lists, and mastering the five-paragraph essay. While these core requirements establish a necessary foundation of literacy, they often fail to ignite a genuine passion for language.

This is where **English electives** come in.

Far from being "filler" classes, electives like Public Speaking, Film, and Creative Writing–along with advanced academic classes such as AP English Lang and AP English Lit–serve a critical role in a student's development. They bridge the gap between academic obligation and personal investment.

In a standard curriculum, the reading list is usually mandatory. In an elective, students often choose the course based on interest. This slight shift in agency changes the learning dynamic entirely. Public Speaking teaches students not just how to write, but how to advocate for their ideas using logic, rhetoric, and confidence. Film allows students to stop being passive consumers of media, providing students with media literacy tools to understand how images, sound, and narrative are constructed to shape meaning and influence audiences. Creative Writing helps students develop their voices, experiment with language, and transform observation and emotion into art. AP English trains students to think critically, read closely, and write with precision in preparation for college-level work.

Critics often argue that English electives aren't "practical" compared to STEM courses. However, the soft skills cultivated in these classes are universally in demand by employers.

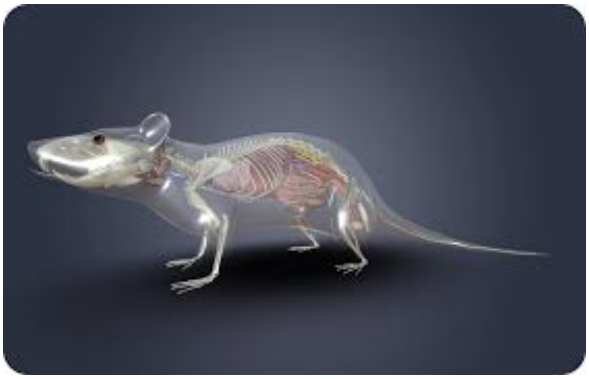
By meeting students where their interests lie, educators can improve reading comprehension rates among students who might otherwise disengage from school entirely. A student analyzing the narrative structure of a film is still learning literary analysis—they are just using a different medium.

English electives allow students to specialize, explore, and find their voice. They transform English from a subject students have to take into a subject they want to explore. By offering diverse options, schools produce not just better writers, but more critical thinkers and more empathetic citizens.

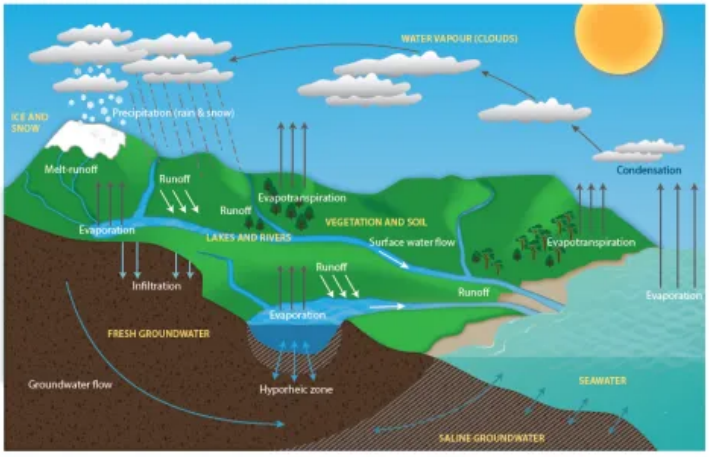
Classroom Science

By Seve Mammel

What Students are Learning



Mrs. Mazigian's biology classes have dug deep into their work this week with rat dissections. Students have been able to see how similar the internal organs are to other animals (like us!).



Fourth marking period is going swimmingly for Mammel and vanNeil as students learn about the water of our planet. They have discussed surface water, groundwater, and the water cycle. Next up is meteorology as we discuss our wacky weather, whether or not we like it.

Third marking period Mrs. Van Niel and Mr. Mammel were pushing forward in 9th grade science, focusing this semester on Earth Science. the third marking period was all about the rocks as we explored geology.

The year will finish strong with our heads in the stars as we rocket off to astronomy.

Classroom

Physical Education

"Your health account, your bank account, they're the same thing. The more you put in, the more you can take out." —Jack LaLanne

By Caterina Rocca

Spring Into Motion

Spring is the perfect time to reset. With longer days and warmer weather, it's a great time to get outside, move a little, and build momentum–no matter your fitness level.

Move with Purpose
Health isn't one-size-fits-all. To keep your energy high and your stress low, aim for one of these weekly targets.

- **The Steady State**: 150 minutes of moderate activity (like a brisk walk)
- **The Burn**: 75 minutes of vigorous activity (like a pick-up game or a trail run)
- **The Foundation**: 2 days of strength training to keep your muscles and joints resilient

The Power Interval: Try HITT
HIIT (High-Intensity-Interval Training)-This is a fast way to build cardio fitness in under 20 minutes by spiking your heart rate and then letting it recover.

The HIIT Formula:

1. **30 seconds "All-Out"**: Sprint, do burpees, or mountain climbers
2. **90 seconds recovery**: walk slowly or do a light jog to catch your breath.
3. **Repeat**: 6-8 times.

Tip: Push your intervals to 35-40 seconds or cut rest to 60 seconds as you get stronger.

Alternatives
1:1 ratio HIIT: 1 minute hard, 1 minute easy
Pyramid intervals: Start shorter, gradually increase work interval, then decrease back down.

The "Talk Test" Check
Not sure if you are pushing hard enough?

- **Moderate Intensity**: You can hold a conversation.
- **Vigorous Intensity**: You can only get a few words at a time before needing a breath.

Spring Essentials

- **Hydrate**: Don't wait until you're thirsty–drink water regularly to stay energized and hydrated as the weather warms up.
- **SPF**: Wear sunscreen when you're outside–even on overcast days–to help protect your skin.
- **Check the Pollen**: If you have allergies, it's helpful to be aware of daily pollen levels.

Spring is a great time to reset, get moving, and enjoy the outdoors!

Clubs and Such

In Other News

"The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away."
— Pablo Picasso (attributed)

By Robbie Trail

Congratulations Mrs. Traylor

United Way of Southwest Michigan celebrated the top five school campaigns making an impact in our community. In addition to recognizing Coloma Community Schools as one of the top five, one lucky participant from each school received a $200 Honor Visa Gift Card as a thank-you for their generosity. This year that recognition was given to Shyann Traylor.

Introducing Paul Cunnington

Paul is happy to be bringing theatre back to Coloma High School. In addition to theatre, Paul coaches the competitive Color Guard and Winter Guard programs at CHS. He has over 15 years of performing and marching arts experience, and is a former competitive twirler.

Outside of CHS, Paul works at Lake Michigan College supporting local high school students on their journey to attend the college of their dreams.

In the spring he and our students will be performing the play Madhouse. This production has 24 student actors in 8th - 12th grade. Additionally 4 backstage crew, and 4 students running lights and sounds, making theatre once of the largest student groups at Coloma.

About the Play: MADHOUSE!

Madhouse! is a comedic mystery. On a dark and stormy night, a family gathers for the reading of a will for Byron Pembroke, a deceased mystery writer. While his greedy children expected easy cash, it turns out the writer created one more mystery - The inheritance is hidden and is finders keepers to ANYONE who finds it first.

A cast of zany characters wander into the mansion and join the hunt, while family drama unfolds. From a news crew, to ghost hunters, to superfans of the author, and more, this play is full of humorous characters and zany encounters.

Students of the Month

March

Inspire to Achieve
Empower for Success

A+

Freshman

Chloe Hiler

Sophomore

Carter Fannin

Junior

Bristol Stewart

Senior

Royce Lute

Starfish Award

Brenden Jacobs

In Brenden's position as CHS permanent substitute he arrives at work never knowing what the day will bring. He was chosen as our starfish recipient because he always takes on any assignment with a smile and willingness to help out in any way possible.

Brenden attended Adrian College to pursue a career in Education with a focus on Social Studies/History. He first developed a love for History in 8th grade because of a teacher who made it IMPOSSIBLE to be bored in his class. His dream of being a teacher soon followed. He stated, "My time back at Coloma has truly re-sparked this love for teaching tenfold and I am beyond thankful to be part of this staff."

Brenden Jacobs Words of Wisdom:
"Your failures and setbacks do not define you. Your vision and work ethic do. Work hard and fight for your success in the world."

APRIL IS
Child Abuse Prevention Month

WHAT TO SAY IF A CHILD DISCLOSES TO YOU

- Stay calm, do not act angry or shocked. Do not make promises you can't keep.
- "I believe you"
- "Thank you for telling me this, I'm sure that must have been difficult to talk about"
- "I'm not really sure what will happen form here, but I'm going to have to talk to some other people about this to help keep you safe."
- "You can come to me and talk again later if you want to."
- Questions, open ended only:
- "What happened next?"
- "Is there anything else I should know?"

THINGS NOT TO SAY/DO:

- "This will never happen to you again."
- "Are you sure?" / "Is this the truth?"
- "Do your parents know about this?" / "You should tell your parents about this."
- "Why didn't you tell sooner?"
- Yes/No Questions
- Offering suggestions
- Make the victim write a statement
- Talk to the victim and alleged offender at the same time

NATIONAL WEAR BLUE DAY

FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026

Wear BLUE to show support and raise awareness for the prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

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

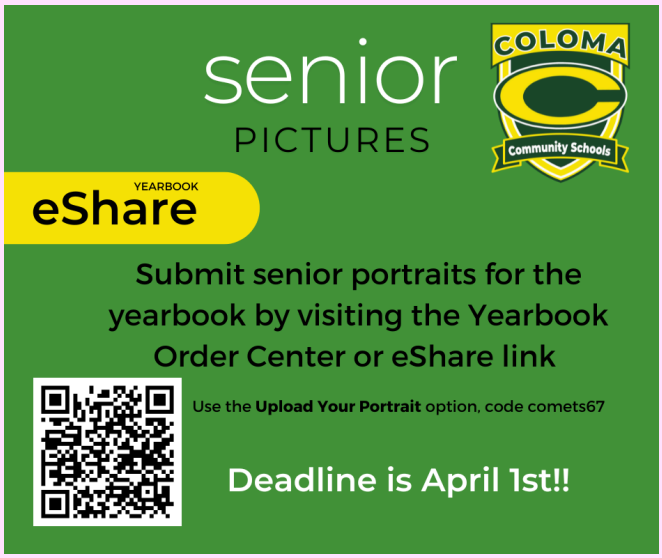
CLICK HERE **job 3180**

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!