

# Groveport Games On: Documenting GMHS Esports

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03.03.2026

Worldwide, esports revenue is projected to reach \$5.1 billion in 2026. That's part of why you see the esports industry blossoming in colleges and high schools around the country. Did you know that it's happening here in Groveport too? The GMHS esports team, which competes against other schools across a variety of video game titles, had a very eventful season, and they deserve appreciation.



The GMHS Fortnite team, led by coach Scott Wilson, traveled to Ohio University on February 21 to compete in the regional championship. There, they earned a first place finish for both the regional and state championships, bringing home OHSA sanctioned hardware for the school! The 2026 state champions are Hernan Dorado, Santiago and Sebastian Contreras, Nate Yerian, and Ahpollo Taylor.

“Watching the team play during the season, I knew we had some special talent,” said Coach Wilson. “Our starters are highly skilled at building, editing, and aiming. They are also highly skilled in game strategies and tactics so I knew we had something special. I actually told them all season that we had what it takes to win, and it was all going to come down to if we wanted it enough to put in the time.”

The Fortnite team took first place with 68 points, 28 points higher than the second place finisher, Loveland HS. According to Coach Wilson, this was the largest margin of victory in the history of the Esports Ohio (ESO) State Tournament. Groveport's players won all three rounds of the tournament, and none of the players were ever down (defeated) in the matches. Both of these achievements are a first in the history of ESO. They placed over prominent esports teams such as Shaker Heights HS, Beavercreek HS, and Lima Shawnee.

“We knew we had to play aggressively and not be timid to win,” said Wilson. “I would say we definitely put the league on notice for next year.”

Along with this success, the GMHS Super Smash Bros. Ultimate (SSBU) team also had an eventful season while competing in the Central/Southeast Regional (CSE) at Ohio University on February 22. As the fifth seed, they placed third, tying with Grandview High School. They defeated Sheridan High School in the first round before losing to Dublin Coffman High School for the state qualifier.

“My mindset when going into a match mostly centers around confidence,” says SSBU player Krishan Patel. “I find that when I'm unconfident, I tend to perform much worse; when I simply try my best, I am able to perform the way I know I can.”

The SSBU team went 6-1 in the main season. Their only loss was to Grandview High School, and they defeated (amongst others) London HS, who went on to place 1st at the CSE Regional. In the past, GMHS placed third in the 2024 CSE Regional, where they also lost to Dublin Coffman, and second in the 2023 CSE Regional, where they again lost to Dublin Coffman. Fortunately, they defeated Dublin Coffman in the 2023 State Championship, earning them a 3rd place finish in state that season. It's a rather underrated school rivalry.

“We didn't make regionals last year, so making it this year felt like proof that the program actually leveled up,” said SSBU Coach Trent Wilcox. “I was proud because it came from the unglamorous stuff: taking losses without tilting, showing up to practice, being coachable, fixing bad habits, and learning how to play as a team instead of five solo missions.”

As a player for the SSBU team since my freshman year, and as the captain this season, it's been an honor to work with so many excellent players over the years, and watch them grow as both players and people. Without exaggeration, the esports program has changed my life, and I know it has for others as well.

If you're an underclassman GMHS student, consider joining an esports team next year if SSBU, Marvel Rivals, or Fortnite interest you at all. Esports is an OHSA sanctioned sport, and many students who compete have received scholarships and collegiate team signings. The esports world is more prominent than ever, and it starts at the local level, between high schoolers competing for their schools.



# Groveport's New Scheduling Platform

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03.03.2026

Groveport Madison students are preparing for next school year. Counselors have held meetings with all grade levels to introduce a new website for scheduling: Schoolinks.com. This website is a more centralized way for counselors to put in scheduling for upcoming students, compared to the old way with papers for each student.

Melanie Reed, a counselor at Groveport Madison, said, "I do think Schoolinks is a better alternative compared to papers, students can plan all 4 years out. Some students complain about the papers and don't end up turning them in. [Schoolinks] allows them to check graduation requirements. Teachers get to recommend classes to students without requiring signatures." She also went on to say, "It's not going away, and we will continue using it."

Deonte Brown, a 10th grade student at Groveport Madison, shared his thoughts on the new website. He stated, "I don't really like Schoolinks; it's kinda laggy and slow; it's also lowkey confusing." Deonte believes paper scheduling is better and allows you to see all the classes offered more easily.

Michael Anderson, a 10th grade student at Groveport Madison also shared his thoughts. He stated, "It's different and a nice change to scheduling." He believes that Schoolinks is complicated, but over the years it will get better. Michael thinks Groveport should keep Scholinks for future years because the school needs a change and everything is digital now anyway.

Of course, with any new technology, there will be difficulties. Some people will be open to change while others will want the old way back. We'll see how Schoolinks help Groveport Madison Highschool with scheduling in the future and what changes happen in the next year.

# Finding His Calling: Mr. Cordle's Teaching Journey

LaRon Glover

03.03.2026

In today's world, understanding the importance of currency is just as important as walking across that stage and earning your diploma. Mr. Brandon Cordle, an educator here at Groveport Madison teaching Financial Literacy, gives students the knowledge and skills they need to make smart financial decisions. From budgeting to investing, his class' main focus is preparing students to be financially independent beyond the walls of GMHS. While many students see Financial Literacy as just a regular class, for Mr. Cordle, teaching is personal.

A true Cruiser, Mr. Cordle grew up in the district. He stayed active in sports and extracurricular activities such as soccer, band, and bowling. Those early experiences, along with being raised by hardworking, influential parents, helped shape his values and work ethic.

Teaching wasn't always Mr. Cordle's goal. In 8th grade, he thought about being a firefighter; in high school, his teachers – specifically his social studies teachers – changed his perspective. Their influence and the way they ran their classrooms inspired him to teach instead. He went on to major in Social Studies in college, where he also spent three years in marching band traveling and meeting lifelong friends.

His first year of teaching came with challenges, especially “managing the classroom” he says. Still, he describes this year as a good experience that has helped him grow. Although he currently teaches finance, he's hoping to branch out and teach other social studies courses such as American History or Government in the future.

Mr. Cordle connects with his students by talking to them and finding common interests. One of Mr. Cordle's ways of finding those interests and connecting is through his “daily questions” that he uses to begin each class. These questions really give his students a chance to express themselves, talk to each other, and voice different opinions.



Taze Owens, a student who took Mr. Cordle's class during the fall semester, enjoyed the class. Taze said, "I love the way he could turn a boring class like Financial Literacy into something engaging and fun."

Not only is Mr. Cordle dedicated to teaching, but he's also dedicated to music; this is a habit that has stayed with him since his band days. He described those days as enjoyable, as he made a lot of friends and lifelong connections, and learned more about music along the way.

For Brandon Cordle, teaching isn't just about lessons, it's about impact.

# On the Edge of Opportunity

Jumaria Owoo

03.03.2026

The great philosopher Socrates believed that to be truly educated is to be aware of the limits of one's own knowledge, and that one should continuously seek wisdom through questioning and understanding. He famously said, "To know is to know that you know nothing." This statement was meant to emphasize the importance of humility and curiosity in learning.

Unfortunately, many students today aren't taught this valuable lesson. Rather than being encouraged to question and explore ideas, students are instructed to memorize information for the sake of "learning" to pass standardized tests.

While many students use repetitive memorization techniques, they often miss the underlying meaning of the concepts they are meant to be learning. Many topics are best learned through a communicational activity; these activities can spur learning through collaborative interaction.

For many, education has shifted from a process of discovery to a system of score sheets, ranking, and rigorous benchmarks. When success is measured by numbers, students lose the motivation to truly understand the world around them.

The future of our world could be created right within the borders of our community, but that can't happen if we continue to lose classes that foster intellectualism and creativity.

Subjects such as art, philosophy, and advanced literature teach students how to think, not just what to think. Without these opportunities, students are deprived of the skills needed to be an innovator who leads society.

While most Ohio schools offer CCP courses that allow students to participate in a variety of high-level classes, not every school provides equal access to these programs. Neighboring districts and states also lack programs with the same opportunities given to other students.

This inequality doesn't remove the expectations placed on students who wish to succeed, but it does create a barrier that makes higher education more difficult to reach for some students than

others. When educational opportunities depend on circumstance rather than student potential, many capable individuals are left behind on the margins of society.

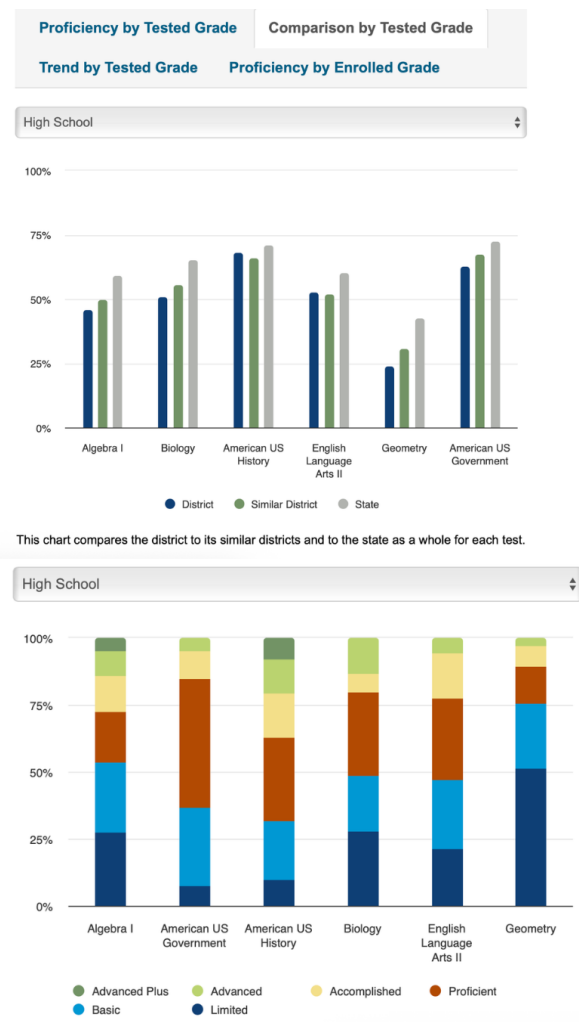
The teachers at GMHS seemingly agree that our education system has become too focused on standardized testing and metrics. The lack of encouraging students to foster curiosity, creativity, and a well-balanced education is not at the hands of our staff, but our national education system as a whole.

When schools must decide which classes to cut, higher level classes frequently are removed in favor of remedial courses designed to boost performance metrics. National and state incentives tied to test performance push schools to measure success through scores instead of intellectual growth, which can be harder to quantify.

This pressure is reflected in the 2024-2025 course assessment district proficiency data. In core subjects such as Geometry and Algebra, fewer than half of students at GMHS reached proficiency, with the large majority remaining at the Basic or Limited levels in the case of Geometry.

Teachers of higher-level courses often inspire deeper thinking with stimulating exercises and assignments, but how is that represented in the base curriculum for all students? Strict program requirements and testing schedules leave little room for exploration beyond the everyday lesson.

Many higher-level institutions pride themselves on the professors who work for them; an appeal that draws students in to take advantage of the courses offered by those with renounced degrees. These professors represent what education can be at its best: thought-inducing, driven by inquiry, and filled with passion.



As society advances, the ability to collaborate and think creatively will become even more valuable than before. Jobs have always required minds that can problem solve, communicate, and imagine; these skills cannot be measured by multiple choice exams alone.

True education will prepare our students not only for college, but for life. And while the future remains uncertain, it is widely believed that students who can adapt and think critically will thrive in the toughest of situations,

When students are encouraged to wonder and challenge themselves within the curriculum, when they are required to study, they become stronger thinkers.

The way we educate students today will determine the creators of tomorrow. When curiosity and creativity are replaced by super-scores and limited opportunities, we risk losing the qualities that make way for progress.

By re-centering education, schools can become places where students do not just prepare for the future but learn to actively shape it.

# Scroll Less, Flip More

Kelsie McKee

03.03.2026

65% of students at GMHS say that they do not read, according to an informal survey of twenty students. This leads to the obvious question: why don't teenagers read as frequently as others or as teenagers from the past?

The popular perception is that kids today spend more time on their phones, and that's why the percentage of kids reading has gone down. Surprisingly, students report that sleep is the main reason they do not read, rather than other activities. They say this is due to exhaustion from school, assignments, work, and possibly life in general. However, some of these same students also report that they struggle to get enough sleep because of screen time.

The August 2025 Walton Family Foundation and Gallup Voices of Gen Z study found that 35% of students don't like reading, while another 43% of students rarely or never read for fun. This doesn't seem surprising considering comments from peers. However, reading can be eye opening and create an escape without blocking out reality.

Reading can help you escape life without completely ignoring it. It's a way to do something that will both entertain you and keep you away from a screen. In some ways, you could even compare reading to social media. On social media, you spend time scrolling on TikTok or Instagram looking at the lives of random strangers; reading is similar to this, just with a different perspective, more compelling characters, and without the need to compare yourself to others.

Reading more can be beneficial to many people. Unfortunately, reading may just not be something that people want to do in their free time, especially if they don't read this article to learn about how great reading can be.