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NEWS

The Balcony, the Library & Beyond: Where Dalton Parks It For Labs and Why

JANUARY 30, 2026 BY MIKA HIGGINS-WOO

Whether it is locking in on homework on the 12th floor benches or socializing with friends in the library, Dalton students have many places to spend their lab periods. In order to get a sense of where Dalton students go during free periods as well as what they might wish for in an ideal lab space and atmosphere, *The Daltonian* reached out to several members of the Dalton community. Below are their opinions, wishes, and insights.

The majority of students *The Daltonian* reached out to replied that the main space they go to during lab periods is the library; however, students spoke about different parts and ways they utilize it.

Nola Gitterman '27 spoke about the center section of the library with tables and chairs. Gitterman mentioned that, in addition to being a common area where she and her friends catch up between classes, it's also "the best [most central] place for everyone to be able to get to their next class if we're all on different floors." She added that the library's atmosphere and people are friendly, saying "it's a fun place, and I love the librarians." Lastly, she mentioned enjoying the balance and diversity of people in the library, remarking that she gets to experience "a lot of different kinds of personalities." Isabel Allen '27 added that the library is a great multipurpose place, and that she "choose[s] to go to the library because it is where all of [her] friends go" but also "because it is a place where I can get work done if I choose."

Hasin Aka '27 spoke about a different part of the library: the couch. Located to the side of the librarians' desks, it is a common place students go to socialize with friends. Similar to Gitterman, Aka mentioned that the benches are "convenient...place[s] to relax and work."

Finally, Olivia Cooney '27 mentioned the library quiet room as an effective place to study. Cooney remarked that she always "feel[s] very productive while in the quiet room" and that the atmosphere of the library as well as the helpful librarians allow her to "focus and enjoy working more than [she] would otherwise." Matilda Beyer '26 added to this sentiment: "If I

really need to focus, I like to go to the quiet room in the library because it takes away all other distractions...overall, [it's] a very locked-in, academic vibe."

One downside that almost everyone who spoke about the library mentioned was its tendency to be crowded. Especially with the elimination of the 14th floor as a space to spend free time this year, the library has become many students' primary lab spot, creating the problem of finding a seat. Aka explained that he sometimes has to resort to finding an "empty classroom on the 5th or 2nd floor" to work in if the library is too full.

In order to combat this overcrowding problem as well as to "enjoy a change of setting," Beyer explained that she usually leaves Dalton to work at a nearby cafe. She remarked, "I always feel more productive with a coffee or sweet treat." She added that with the introduction of the phone policy and Yondr pouches this year, she finds leaving Dalton the only way for her to maintain habits she had in years prior: "I always like to listen to music, so it's more convenient [to be] outside Dalton. It's also easier to find out where my friends are when I can text them, so I also find it more convenient to meet up with friends outside of Dalton."

Another spot that Dalton students cited as a popular place to spend labs are the benches on the science floors. These are little study spaces off the side of the hallway, panelled with bright colors. Aniya Scott '26 remarked that the benches on the 12th floor are a great spot for her because they have "comfortable seating and access to a charging port." She adds, "[r]egardless of what I'm working on, I find it convenient to do it on the bench" because it is "rare, secluded,...and feels like a cozy enclave." Additionally, she compared the 12th floor benches to similar seating on the 5th floor, arguing that the 12th floor is more comfortable due to the 5th floor's "overhanging coats and the lack of any cushioning." Finally, she mentioned the effect that the phone policy has had on her choice of study spot, explaining that she has been drawn more to the benches than in past years because the lack of phones in other spots like the senior lounge and the balcony has increased the amount of loud socialization between students and thus, the amount of distraction. Because of the absence of phones, she remarked "I can't just resort to putting on headphones and music, so instead, I find my cozy enclave where I can focus."

Ayla Rosen '27 agreed, saying that her experience of the benches has been mostly positive with "people who are...normally very focused and busy." Rosen also mentioned how her

schedule impacts her study spot, remarking that in past years she studied in the library more because she had classes on the lower floors, “but because I don’t have any classes on 5 this year, I don’t go there as often.”

The final spot that Dalton students mentioned was the second floor and the balcony. Despite the 2nd floor being a high traffic area as many classes take place there, many students tend to work and meet friends there due to the comfortable couches near the admissions office, and the recently added couches lining the sides of the hallway.

Stella Miller '26 stated that she “pretty much exclusively hangs out in the balcony. It’s mostly a habit thing, because [she’s] been spending [her] time there since [she] was a freshman.” But it’s also close to a bunch of her classes, and it’s in the theater, which is where she spends most of her time anyway. Beyer agreed, noting that “[t]he balcony’s vibe is definitely very artsy because it’s mostly theater kids who hang out there.”

In contrast, outside of the balcony the second floor is diverse in terms of students who choose to work there. “I think the vibe on the second floor is very different depending on where you are,” Beyer said. Because a lot of students pass through this floor on their way to class, it can be a very diverse range of vibes and friend groups.”

When asked what they would wish for in the perfect study space at Dalton, students generally brought up similar points. Allen wished for a place similar to the Commons—a recently added hang-out/work spot located in the gym building—but located on 89th Street. She remarked that although the layout of the Commons is ideal for her, it is simply “too far away to utilize.” Miller agreed with this point, stating that “It would be great to have a space like the Commons if it weren’t in another building.”

Cooney hoped for the return of a space similar to the 14th floor of previous years, with “some kind of food, coffee maker, or fridge available,” as well as couches and tables. Cooney added that she thinks this atmosphere can be achieved in the Commons.

Finally, Aka wished for a room full of couches, “a place where people can relax and lie down.” Similarly, Beyer hoped for “another space like the couches by admissions on the second

floor.” Beyer said she liked the “organization of that space because it’s easy to have conversations and it’s also very comfortable.” However, Beyer added that sometimes she gets kicked off the admissions couches because that is where tours meet. Because of this, she would like something similar but that is specifically meant for students.

In the end, Dalton students have found a diverse range of study spots around the building that foster a sense of productivity and community. From the cozy benches on 12 to the couches on the second floor, there are a wide-range of spaces available to students throughout the day.

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