

TRANSCRIPT

HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

#GreatThingsHappenHere



HAMILTON ELEMENTARY EARNS PRESTIGIOUS RECOGNITION



HOW THE HAMILTON IGNITE PROGRAM IS HELPING OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY



JOSI POPMA IS A STATE CHAMPION!

Also Inside...

- Aubree Folkert returns to her roots
- Hamilton 5th grade students learn about the skilled trades during DIG IN! Day
- Inside other unique Work Based Learning days for our middle schoolers
- A new home for Hamilton Virtual School
- Two Hawkeye seniors sign National Letters of Intent to continue their athletic careers
- A message from Dr. Lusk
- 2026-27 Hawkeye Preschool & Young 5s/Kindergarten Enrollment Information
- New cameras installed on Hamilton buses
- Blaine Lugten spotlighted by WZZM News
- All HCS school buildings are now HeartSafe

HAMILTON ELEMENTARY RECOGNIZED BY STATE LEADERS AS A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL



Hamilton Community Schools is proud to announce that Hamilton Elementary has been named a 2024–25 Michigan Blue Ribbon School, one of only 16 schools statewide to receive this prestigious honor from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The recognition was formally presented on November 13 during the State Board of Education meeting in Lansing, where Principal Dean Kramer, Superintendent Dr. Bradford Lusk, and teachers Kelly Church and Megan Petersen accepted the award on behalf of the school.

What Is a Blue Ribbon School?

The Michigan Blue Ribbon School distinction is one of the highest honors a school can achieve. It celebrates schools that demonstrate:

- Exceptional academic achievement
- Strong growth for all learners
- A safe, welcoming, and supportive environment
- Effective practices that help students of every background succeed

Blue Ribbon Schools are recognized for consistently going above and beyond—closing achievement gaps, personalizing learning, and ensuring every student has the tools and encouragement needed to thrive.

Why Hamilton Elementary Was Honored

During the ceremony, the Michigan Department of Education highlighted the heart of Hamilton Elementary's success: its people, its inclusive approach, and its relentless commitment to student growth.

A representative from MDE described Hamilton Elementary as:

"Serving approximately 375 students from young fives through grade 4 in a supportive rural West Michigan community, Hamilton's dedicated staff work together to create a safe, welcoming, and engaging environment where every student is valued and challenged to reach their potential."

They praised the school's commitment to inclusive programming, supporting students with a wide range of abilities, and shared how the staff "blends fresh ideas with proven practices," guided by data-driven decision-making. Another excerpt from the recognition emphasized the school's strong instructional systems:

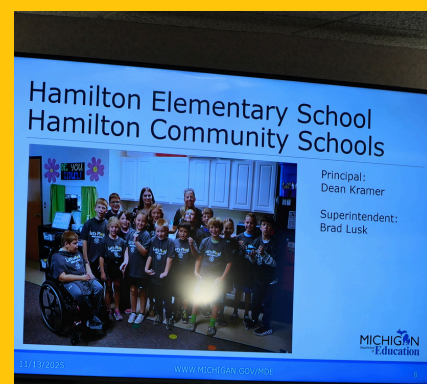
"Through the use of multi-tiered systems of support for reading and behavior, the school provides targeted interventions, clear expectations, and consistent encouragement so each child can thrive academically and socially."

The recognition concluded with a powerful affirmation of what makes Hamilton Elementary special:

"Being named a Blue Ribbon School affirms that what Hamilton does works—preparing students for purpose in a warm, welcoming, and supportive community. As the school says, we are Hawkeyes."

A Proud Moment for the Hawkeye Community

This achievement marks a historic moment: Hamilton Elementary is the first school within Hamilton Community Schools to receive a Blue Ribbon distinction. The honor reflects years of dedication from teachers, support staff, administrators, students, and families who work together to create a place where excellence is the expectation and every student feels seen and supported.



Scan the QR code for a recap of the recognition!

“Being selected as a Blue Ribbon School is a real point of pride for us! It is testament to the great staff, amazing students, and strong community that make up Hamilton Elementary School,” said principal, Dean Kramer. “We feel honored to have been recognized for the hard work that goes into making our school a great place for students and staff alike!”



HAMILTON GRAD RETURNS TO TEACH AT HER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

When fourth-grade teacher Aubree Folkert steps into her classroom at Hamilton Elementary each morning, she's reminded of just how special this place truly is. Not long ago, she was sitting on the other side of the desk—now, she's living her lifelong dream of teaching where it all began.



Aubree with her kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Jana Zweering.

"I graduated from Hamilton High School in 2021 and then went on to Hope College to earn my degree in elementary education," Folkert said. "Now, I'm so happy to be back here teaching at Hamilton where I once went to school."

Folkert's passion for education began early. She vividly remembers being just six years old in kindergarten when she first knew she wanted to be a teacher. "I fell in love with learning, but I was also fascinated by what my teachers were doing—how they helped students learn while continuing to learn themselves," she explained. "That's something that never changed for me."

As a senior at Hamilton High School, Folkert took part in the district's Teacher Assisting Program, allowing her to return to Hamilton Elementary and work alongside her own former kindergarten teacher, Jana Zweering. That experience solidified her calling. "It was really special to come full circle like that," she shared. "Working with Mrs. Zweering that year sealed the deal for me—it confirmed that education was exactly what I wanted to do."

Now in her first year teaching, Folkert's focus goes beyond academics. Building strong relationships with her students is her top priority. "Each day, I want my students to know that they are seen and valued," she said. "They're an important part of our classroom community, and I make sure to greet each one of them every morning."

Folkert also credits the support of her colleagues and the positive culture within the district for making her transition into teaching so meaningful. "It's been truly special to work with my teammates Erin [Slotman] and Morgan [Renkema]—they've been amazing mentors," she said. "Everyone here works together to help our students succeed."

Returning to Hamilton as a teacher has been nothing short of surreal for Folkert—but it's exactly where she wants to be. "This was my dream spot and my dream grade level," she said with a smile. "The fact that a fourth-grade position opened at Hamilton Elementary was such a blessing. I see myself teaching here for a very long time."

Scan the QR code for
Aubree's spotlight video!



 YouTube




WORK FOR US!

www.HamiltonSchools.us




Our Schools

Bentheim Elementary

 269-751-5335


Jared Randall, Principal
Gina Sloothaak, Secretary

Blue Star Elementary

 269-751-5630


Kari Huckaby, Principal
Deb Scholten, Secretary

Hamilton Elementary

 269-751-5413


Dean Kramer, Principal
Stacey Heneveld, Secretary
Emily Wabeke, Secretary
Sean Parde, Dean of Students

Hamilton Middle School

 269-751-4436

Liz Morehouse, Principal
Sean Deiters, Asst. Principal
Kris Henrickson, Secretary
Shawna Cozzello, Secretary
Ken Lentz, Dean of Students


Hamilton High School

 269-751-5185

Mitch Bosch, Principal
David Sheppard, Asst. Principal
Eric Talsma, Athletic Director
Tina Foidl, Secretary
Connie Yonker, Secretary
Bob Hippey, Student Support

Hamilton Virtual School


(At Sandyview Learning Center)

 269-751-5372

Mary Wilkinson, Principal
Rachel Boerman, Secretary

Hawkeye Preschool

(At Sandyview Learning Center)

 269-751-5372

Whitney Hobbs, Hawkeye Preschool Coord.
Rachel Boerman, Secretary

A SEASON OF GRATITUDE AND GROWTH AT HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Hello everyone,

As we reach the end of December, the horizon of a new calendar year invites us to reflect on what we are grateful for as individuals, families, and members of our wonderful community. Personally, I am thankful for good health, supportive family and friends, and the privilege of serving a district filled with such dedicated and caring people. Each conversation I have with parents, community members, and staff continues to fill my bucket and reaffirms that Hamilton Community Schools is a true destination district for families. Moving from the warmth of Thanksgiving into the beauty of a winter wonderland is always breathtaking, and it reminds us of the joy and wonder this season brings.

Christmas offers a sense of nostalgia, connection, and hope—reminding us of cherished memories from years past, the meaningful experiences we enjoy in the present, and the promise of even brighter days ahead. As a district, we are energized by this same sense of momentum. HCS is well-positioned to continue enhancing our current offerings and expanding opportunities for students in the future. With significant improvements to learning spaces and materials across nearly all buildings, and with exciting work on the horizon for our newest facility—the Hamilton Virtual School—and for the middle school, we are grateful for the community's ongoing support. These advancements reflect our shared commitment to providing the very best for the next generation of Hawkeyes.

I hope this season brought bounty to our farmers and hunters, along with joy, cherished memories, and time to relax for all of our families and stakeholders. Thank you for your continued partnership and belief in the mission of Hamilton Community Schools. Take care and enjoy the blessings of the season. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year—and as always, #GoHawkeyes.

Dr. Bradford Lusk | Proud Superintendent, Hamilton Community Schools



Upcoming 'Scoop with the Supt.' Dates:

'Scoop with the Supt.' community forums are an opportunity for parents and community members to learn about district happenings from Dr. Lusk and enjoy free coffee. These are all held at Hawk's Nest Restaurant, typically twice per month:

Thursday, January 15
Thursday, February 5
Thursday, February 19
*All 9:00-10:00 AM



YouTube
amazon music

HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS NOW HAS A PODCAST!

Episode Topics Include:

- Early College Model Information
- A look inside Hamilton Athletics
- Hawkeye Preschool Information
- Hamilton High School Academic Offerings
- How Snow Days are Decided
- In-depth into Hamilton Virtual School's new home

“ We want to meet people where they are. The podcast lets us dive deeper into important topics and give our community the step-by-step details they may not get from a video or social media post.”

~ Dr. Brad Lusk on the H2Know Podcast ”



Scan the QR code to listen on Spotify today!



“ When we were considering where to send our daughter to school, we had three things in mind: safety, community, and the quality of education. We know Hamilton is a small, tight-knit community, which was very appealing to us. We drive approximately 30 minutes to and from school, and we're willing to travel because we know Hamilton provides a quality education.”



Sarah

Hamilton Community Schools Parent

“ Our move to Hamilton Community Schools has been such a positive experience for our family. Even though I drive 30–35 minutes each way to get our kids to Hawkeye Preschool and Hamilton Elementary, I don't regret it for a second. Our kids are thriving and absolutely love their schools. What has meant the most to us is how Hamilton truly makes you feel like part of the community—the teachers from both schools have even checked in with us at home to see how we're adjusting to the move, a new school, and a new baby. That level of care and connection has made all the difference, and we're excited to watch our kids continue to grow and thrive here.”



Coral

Hamilton Community Schools Parent

HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL IGNITE PROGRAM HELPS AT HABITAT FOR HUMANITY KENT COUNTY

Hamilton High School's new Ignite program is already making a meaningful impact on students and the community. This year, 14 high school students are partnering with Habitat for Humanity of Kent County, spending time each week on active build sites where they're learning hands-on construction skills while contributing to affordable housing projects across West Michigan.

"Five and an eighth. Don't forget it," Ignite teacher Cody Buresh called out as the group worked through siding measurements on a cold morning at one of Habitat's Kent County project homes in downtown Grand Rapids. With guidance from Habitat staff, volunteers, and Hamilton staff members Cody Buresh and Jeremy Vance, students spent the day putting up siding, learning proper cuts and measurements, and even helping with insulation and interior tasks. For many of them, it was their first time experiencing real construction work.

"We've got the kids from Hamilton High School up here helping out, doing a bunch of things," said Don Perry, site supervisor for Habitat for Humanity. "They're putting siding up and then they're also doing various things inside."

Several students shared that the experience is helping them consider future careers. "I want to do construction long-term most likely," said Tyler, a sophomore at Hamilton High School. "Learning at a young age will just help in the future. I've learned how to do siding. I've never done siding and insulation before," added Joseph, a freshman in the program.

Others emphasized how valuable the hands-on learning has been beyond the classroom. "There are different kinds of drills, how to use those, how to build, how to measure really well, how to cut, how to saw stuff," said Jacob, a freshman. "It's a great opportunity to learn more about real work in the world."

The partnership with Habitat for Humanity Kent County has quickly proven to be beneficial for both sides. "I really think this is a very important thing that Hamilton School is doing," added Perry. "It's a really great partnership as far as we're concerned. It gives us an opportunity to impact the next generation and give them certain skills they need to survive. Not everyone out there is going to be a doctor or a lawyer or a banker or a businessman — and you can make a really good living at this."

Students have already completed tasks including roofing, siding, insulation, and even wrapping water and heating pipes to prevent freezing. Returning to the same project over multiple weeks has allowed them to build confidence and competence. "It's cool because you see kids be more confident once they get to redo a similar skill," said Buresh. "They've gotten better at it, more confident, and that's cool to see — not just as individuals, but as a group."

The experience has also given the students a chance to step outside of their day-to-day school environment and into a different community. "Partnering with Habitat for Humanity Kent County has been a really cool opportunity for our kids," Buresh added, "It's almost cooler getting outside of our little Hamilton community and getting into a community that we might not have as much interaction with. Being able to take this opportunity to learn these skills in a new environment has been really cool."

Some students already see the long-term value. "I think I want to be a construction or diesel mechanic," added a student. "This helps me get introduced to it." Another added, "It's important because in the future, if I have to do siding or simple insulation, I'll know what to do."

Whether they pursue skilled trades or another path, Ignite students are gaining real-world experience, confidence, and a sense of contribution. "Giving back to the community is amazing," said another student, "It's a good look for our school."

Hamilton High School's Ignite program continues to grow, offering meaningful, hands-on learning experiences that prepare students for purpose while making a positive difference in West Michigan.



Scan the QR code for a look at this experience!



WORK BASED LEARNING IN ACTION: HMS STUDENTS EXPLORE CAREER PATHWAYS



A look at 5th grade DIG IN! Day

Hamilton Middle School provides meaningful Work Based Learning experiences for all students. Experiences are designed to help students explore career pathways, connect classroom learning to the world around them, and help them think about their post-secondary plans by participating in career exploration.



Photos from 5th Grade DIG IN! Day as students learned about power tools (left) and HVAC systems (right).

5th Grade – Construction Pathway: DIG IN! Day

In December, our 5th grade students participated in DIG IN! Day. Students rotated through stations highlighting a wide range of construction pathways, including plumbing, electrical, HVAC, interiors, architecture, construction management and administration, low-voltage installation, marketing, carpentry, and tools of the trade. This event gave students the chance to get hands-on with equipment, explore behind-the-scenes roles, and learn how various skilled professionals work together to build the spaces we live, learn, and work in.

DIG IN! Day would not be possible without the incredible support of our community partners. We extend a special thank you to GMB Architecture + Engineering, ROUTE, EV Construction, Milwaukee Tools, O-A-K, DHE Plumbing and Mechanical, Town and Country Group, Buist Electric, Godwin Plumbing and Sobie Company for sharing their expertise, time, and passion for developing the next generation of skilled professionals.

6th Grade – Business Pathway: Grand Rapids Griffins Partnership

Sixth grade students partnered with the Grand Rapids Griffins hockey organization to learn about all of the aspects of business that go into running a professional sports team. Through this collaboration, students have been able to see how many different roles—from marketing and communications to sales and operations—work together to support a professional sports team. To see how all of the pieces come together, 6th graders got to attend a hockey game on November 13.

7th Grade – Manufacturing Pathway: Skilled Trades Day and Tours

Seventh graders took part in an engaging Manufacturing and Skilled Trades Day, where they explored a wide range of high-wage, high-demand, hands-on career pathways. Students rotated through stations focused on tool and die, automation and robotics, injection molding and assembly, engineering, CAD, and stamping die. These sessions gave students a close look at the precision, creativity, and advanced technology behind modern manufacturing and skilled trades careers. We extend a big thank you to our Skilled Trades Day partners for designing, presenting, and supporting these hands-on learning experiences: Transmatic, Mission Design and Automation, Haworth, Royal Technologies, Plascore, Artiflex Manufacturing, and Hil-Man Automation.

In addition, students participated in manufacturing tours to see real-world production environments in action. These tours helped students connect classroom learning to current industry practices. Thank you to our Manufacturing Tour hosts: Transmatic, Metal Flow, Koops, Tiara Yachts, Mission Design and Automation, Fogg Filler, and Yanfeng.

8th Grade – Agriculture and Natural Resources Management

This fall our eighth grade STREAM classes worked to provide solutions around improving the Hamilton Community School's campus as it relates to ecosystem health. Students learned about land use, water flow, forestry, soils, mitigation strategies. Students pitched ideas to a panel around improving overall ecosystem health.

NEW BUS CAMERAS STRENGTHEN STUDENT SAFETY AT HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Hamilton Community Schools is investing in major safety upgrades across its bus fleet through a new partnership with Pro-Vision, a West Michigan company based in Byron Center. All 16 route buses have been equipped with new interior and exterior cameras, including AI-enabled stop-arm cameras that capture clear, high-definition footage of vehicles that illegally pass school buses while red lights are activated.



Scan the QR code for a video look at how these cameras will operate.



"We are installing new camera systems on all of our route buses," said Transportation Supervisor Kathy Dykema. "We are now part of the Always Safe program with Pro-Vision, which will keep all of our cameras up to date and web-based so we can log in at any time rather than checking SD cards every morning. I'm super excited — pulling SD cards first thing in the morning wasn't always fun. Now I can access footage right from my desk."

Red-light violations have been a growing concern in Hamilton and surrounding districts. Dykema estimates that 5–6 red-light runners occur on a given day, especially along M-40 and on side streets. The new AI-enabled cameras automatically detect and record these incidents, sending an immediate alert to Dykema, who can then forward footage to School Resource Officer John Dekkinga for follow-up. "If a vehicle passes with the lights on, we can now read the license plate and issue a citation based on the video," Dykema explained.

She also emphasized the importance of community awareness: "Please be aware around school buses. If you see yellow lights, slow down and don't try to get by the bus — be prepared to stop."

'26-'27 YOUNG 5s / KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION NIGHTS!

HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Bentheim Elementary: Monday, January 26, 2026
Blue Star Elementary: Thursday, January 29, 2026
Hamilton Elementary: Tuesday, January 27, 2026
All from 6:00 - 7:00 PM

Parents may attend any one of these nights, regardless of location.
Childcare will be provided at all information nights!

Save the Date for Screening Days!

Bentheim Elementary: Friday, April 24, 2026
Blue Star Elementary: Thursday, April 23, 2026
Hamilton Elementary: Friday, April 17, 2026



SCAN HERE TO
PRE-REGISTER FOR YOUNG
5s/KINDERGARTEN!



CALL YOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
FOR MORE INFORMATION!

Bentheim Elementary: (269)751-5335



Blue Star Elementary: (269)751-5630



Hamilton Elementary: (269)751-5413

HAMILTON GIRLS SWIM & DIVE SHINES AT STATE MEET AS JOSI POPMA MAKES PROGRAM HISTORY

The Hamilton girls swim and dive team capped off an unforgettable season with a spectacular showing at the MHSAA Division 3 State Finals, held in early December at the Holland Aquatic Center. The Hawkeyes brought home multiple top-ten finishes, a school record, and the first diving state title in school history.

For Head Coach Liz VandeWege, the weekend was the culmination of months of relentless work.

“The girls team worked really hard this season to reach goals that we set back in August,” VandeWege said. “It’s a testament to their dedication, grit, and drive to succeed.”

Throughout the season, Hamilton swimmers and divers reached new milestones: two school records, three conference champions, four All-Conference honorees, 57 personal records, a diving regional champion, a state diving champion, a two-time Paralympic state champion, and ultimately, an 8th-place team finish at the State Meet.

Popma Wins Historic State Diving Title

Hamilton junior Josi Popma made history on Saturday, becoming the first state champion in Hamilton diving with a score of 399.40. After placing third last season, Popma entered the finals with a chance to claim the top spot—but the title came down to her very last dive.

“We knew she had a shot at winning based on her scores,” VandeWege shared. “Her level of focus and commitment at practice is what got her to where she is. It came down to her final dive. She knew it wasn’t her best, but because of her high degree of difficulty, she was able to pull off the win that she very much deserves. We are so proud of her and the work she’s put in this year.”

Hoover Repeats as Paralympic State Champion

Charlee Hoover also brought home hardware, earning state titles in both the Paralympic 50-yard and 100-yard Freestyle events. While she raced without direct competitors this year, her improvement throughout the season was dramatic.

“She dropped five seconds in her 50 free and thirteen seconds in her 100,” VandeWege said. “I’m thankful to have Charlee on the team and especially grateful that the MHSAA has this event.”

Top Performances Across the Board

The Hawkeyes delivered big swims and dives throughout the meet:

- Alyssa Volkers — State Runner-Up in the 200 Freestyle, breaking her own school record with a 1:54.41; 3rd place in the 500 Freestyle (5:14.13).
- Adi Garvelink — 14th place in the 100 Breaststroke (1:11.97).
- 200 Freestyle Relay (Keira Volkers, Adi Garvelink, Paige Kleinheksel, Alyssa Volkers) — 7th place with a time of 1:41.11.
- 200 Medley Relay (Alyssa Volkers, Adi Garvelink, Keira Volkers, Paige Kleinheksel) — 9th place with a season-best 1:53.28.
- Maya Miller — 9th place in Diving with a score of 326.75.

As Hamilton continues to build upon the years of success in its swim and dive program, Coach VandeWege sees even more potential ahead.

“Swimming is such a great opportunity for any person to build strength, cardiovascular endurance, and friendships,” she said. “I’m looking to build the program and get more kids involved in everything that the swim and dive world has to offer.”



Scan the QR code for the interview with Josi!

A NEW HOME FOR HAMILTON VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Learn more about the district's purchase of the Hamilton CRC

Hamilton Community Schools has reached an important milestone in its long-term facilities planning, officially purchasing the Hamilton Christian Reformed Church property to serve as the future home of the expanding Hamilton Virtual School beginning in the 2026–2027 school year.

A Thoughtful, Collaborative Purchase

After weeks of discussion and collaboration, the congregation of Hamilton Christian Reformed Church approved the sale by a 36–6 vote on October 5. At its October meeting, the Hamilton Board of Education unanimously approved purchasing the church building, parsonage, and the surrounding 2.9 acres for \$500,000. General fund dollars will be used for the purchase, while 2023 bond funds will support necessary renovations and facility upgrades.



Scan the QR code to learn more about this purchase.

As part of the agreement, Hamilton Christian Reformed Church will continue to operate in the upper portion of the facility through a lease-back arrangement and will continue to hold services on Sundays. Hamilton Virtual School will utilize the lower level, which will be remodeled into modern, flexible learning spaces intentionally designed for online and hybrid learners.

Meeting Rapid Growth in a Cost-Effective Way

Superintendent Dr. Brad Lusk emphasized during the district's H2Know Podcast that this purchase is the result of extensive planning and exploration.

“Since the repurposing of Sandyview Learning Center, the rapid enrollment growth of both the Virtual School and Early Childhood Center has exceeded expectations,” said Lusk. “We’ve explored multiple options—from building additions to other property purchases—and this opportunity provides the most cost-effective and efficient long-term solution for our district.”

Hamilton Virtual School has experienced significant demand over the last few years, outgrowing its current instructional footprint. The new location will allow the program to grow while also giving staff and students a permanent, purpose-built home.

Expanding Early Childhood Opportunities

Beyond meeting Virtual School needs, this move unlocks new capacity at Sandyview Learning Center—home of the district's Early Childhood Center (ECC) and Hawkeye Preschool.

“In the 2022-23 school year, we had two half-filled classrooms [at Hawkeye Preschool],” Lusk shared. “Now we’re up to four and had a waitlist for a fifth. We couldn’t run the fifth because we didn’t have a room.”

By moving the Virtual School out of Sandyview, space opens for additional preschool programming and community-based early childhood opportunities—helping meet the strong demand from Hamilton families.

What's Next?

Renovation and construction work will begin in early 2026, with the goal of opening Hamilton Virtual School's new home for the start of the 2026–2027 school year.



SAFETY & SECURITY WITH SRO DEKKINGA

Bus Safety

School Bus violations are a serious offense and each incident is investigated to the best of our ability. With the new school bus cameras (more information can be found at the top of page 7 of this edition of the Transcript newsletter), our district will be able to hold each individual accountable for jeopardizing the safety of the students and issue citations based on footage captured. This will hopefully hinder offenders from passing not just Hamilton School buses but all buses on the roadway.

Speed in School Zones

As drop off and pickup becomes busier and busier in front of Hamilton Middle School and Hamilton High School, a friendly reminder that 136th Ave, between 48th St and 50th St, is a 25 MPH school zone during pick up and drop off hours. The times are posted on the sign as you enter the zone.

Thank you for your continued support in helping keep the students and community safe!

Officer John Dekkinga, Hamilton Community Schools Resource Officer



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2026

Middle School Unified: Staff vs. HMS Team 3:30 PM
High School Unified: Staff vs. HHS Team 4:30 PM
Boys Varsity Game vs. Spring Lake: 6:00 PM
Academic Awards between games
Girls Varsity Game vs. Spring Lake: 7:45 PM



JOIN THE HAWKEYE PRESCHOOL FAMILY!



2026-27 Hawkeye Preschool Open Houses!

Thursday, January 15 | 5:30-6:30 PM

Monday, January 19 | 6:00-7:00 PM

Sandyview Learning Center (4317 46th Street, Holland, MI)



Come and learn more about enrolling at Hawkeye Preschool in the 2026-27 school year!



GET TO KNOW
HAWKEYE
PRESCHOOL!



Hawkeye Preschool: 269-751-5372



Contact Whitney Hobbs for more information on Hawkeye Preschool: whobbs@hamiltonschools.us

OTHER HAWKEYES TAKING FLIGHT...



Congratulations to HHS senior Bryce Morrison signing his National Letter of Intent to continue his academic and wrestling career at Grand Valley State University!



Meet Avery (right), a 6th grade student at Hamilton Middle School, and her classmate Isaiah! After being named Student of the Month, Avery earned a special token to use in our school's book vending machine. Instead of choosing a book for herself, she decided to surprise Isaiah with something that matched his passion — shipwrecks! Avery used her reward token to get Isaiah a Titanic book, knowing how much he loves learning about famous shipwrecks like the Edmund Fitzgerald and Titanic.



Congratulations to HHS senior Maddie Jipping who committed to continue her academic and volleyball career for the Golden Grizzlies of Oakland University!



The Hamilton High School women's chorale and Honor's Choir sang the national anthem and 'O Canada' at the Grand Rapids Griffins on November 14!



A shoutout to our 7th and 8th grade band members who took part in the Solo & Ensemble Festival in November. Of the 16 events, 15 received 1st Division ratings!



Our Hamilton High School Theatre Department, led by Mr. Connelly, kicked off the 2025–26 season with an outstanding run of performances. A Night of One Acts '25 delivered witty chaos in A Simple Task and fast-paced hilarity in American History in 60, showcasing the energy, talent, and comedic timing of our student cast. They followed it up with a whimsical and laughter-filled run of The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet in early December, bringing Dr. Seuss-style storytelling, rhymed couplets, and imaginative staging to life.



Hamilton High School's HVAC Co-Op students put their skills to work by helping Oakland Christian Reformed Church diagnose a heating and cooling issue in the building's Narthex upper room. After touring the facility, taking measurements, and evaluating the system, students presented their findings to the church's building committee in November. Four students, Landen, Brooklynn, Alex and Will spoke on their ideas to fix the problems.



Hamilton Middle School cheerleading picked up a big win at their competition on November 20!



The Hamilton wrestling roster features seven female wrestlers this winter! From left to right: Brianna Ortiz, Makayla Provance, Korra Kapenga, Eryn Barnhill, Ana Ruggles, Abby VerHoeven. (Not Pictured: Alyssa Volkers)



Hamilton Community Schools would like to extend a warm thank you to Mary Wedeven, who dedicated an incredible 44 years to our district, 39 of those full-time prior to her retirement in 2018. Since then, she returned to help wherever needed in our district. She OFFICIALLY retired on November 20! Thank you, Mary!



YouTube
Scan the QR code to watch the WZZM segment on Mr. Lugten!



Hamilton High School "retired" teacher, Mr. Blaine Lugten was spotlighted by 13 On Your Side (WZZM) News on December 5 as he returns as a substitute teacher at HHS. He retired in June but immediately answered the call to return when substitutes were needed to start the school year.



****This is a district-wide mailer sent to ALL residents of the Hamilton Community Schools district. If you live outside of our district and feel you received this mailer by mistake, please email your name and address to Hamilton District Communications & Marketing Coordinator, Zach Harig: zharig@hamiltonschools.us**

HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ACHIEVES HEARTSAFE DESIGNATION ACROSS ALL BUILDINGS

Hamilton Community Schools has officially earned the HeartSafe School designation across every building, highlighting the district's dedication to student and staff safety. The accomplishment follows extensive emergency preparedness work led by District Nurse Jen Yoder and School Resource Officer Deputy John Dekkinga, along with Medical Emergency Response Teams (MERT) in each school.

In early December, Yoder and Deputy Dekkinga conducted more MERT drills around the district, one of four held annually in every building. Each drill simulates a different emergency such as cardiac arrest, a severe allergic reaction, or an injury like a concussion.

"A MERT drill is a medical emergency response," Yoder explained. "We have teams in all buildings who know how to respond. We try to make each scenario fit the concerns of that building."

These drills help maintain Hamilton's new HeartSafe status, a three-year certification awarded to schools that meet strict standards for cardiac emergency preparedness. Requirements include CPR-certified staff, accessible AEDs, a building-wide cardiac response plan, and routine drills and training.

"This designation shows our staff's dedication to helping others in a crisis situation," Yoder said. "We train, we practice, and we're ready." Hamilton's transportation department also participates in the training, expanding emergency readiness beyond the classroom. With every building now certified HeartSafe, HCS continues to show its strong commitment to providing a safe and secure environment for all.



Hamilton High School Medical Emergency Response Team members discuss key takeaways and areas of improvement after a drill in early December.



Scan the QR code to learn more and watch a MERT drill.

