

TRANSCRIPT

HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

#GreatThingsHappenHere



INSIDE THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM AT HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



HAMILTON GRAD GRANT WOLFRAM GETS CLOSER TO HIS MLB DREAM



HHS CHOIRS & BANDS MAKE HISTORY

Also Inside...

- Girls Wrestling Gains Momentum in Hamilton
- No surprise, Mrs. Sale takes action aiding a student at Hamilton Elementary
- Hamilton Middle & High School Bands receive unprecedented achievement at Districts
- Job Shadow Day helps students find their passions
- Blue Star Blitz broadcasters learn from the professionals during TV station tour
- "Mama, We Made It!" Snow Day Spoof Videos put HCS on the Big Screen
- The biggest year yet for the Hamilton Unified Basketball programs
- Hamilton Community Schools nurse receives State-Wide Recognition
- Young 5s/Kindergarten & Hawkeye Preschool Enrollment Information

HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL DECA PROGRAM IS READY FOR STATE!



The Hamilton DECA chapter, run through the Business Development course by Mr. Dan Meiste, had a great showing at the District II Conference at Grand Valley State University recently!

Hamilton competed against 17 other schools. Students competed in career pathway areas of interests for a chance to win medals on their test, role-play, and as a State Qualifier. Sixty six students competed, 34 students winning a medal, and 31 qualifying for the DECA State Conference in March.



Scan the QR Code to see how Kyle Bondsfield and Keagan Ziemann-Bell are preparing!



QUIZ BOWL TEAM QUALIFIES FOR STATE, JV WINS CONFERENCE TITLE



At the final competition for the Allegan County Quiz Bowl League on February 24, the varsity team qualified for the state competition while the JV team took home the league championship! All 20 varsity Hawkeyes contributed to the state qualification, but were led by the Hamilton Varsity Gold team of Keagan Ziemann-Bell, Daniel Grabinski, Kaden DeWys, and Kasey Thomas. They will compete at state in April!

The JV championship team is comprised of (from left to right in the right image): Gus Johnson, Sam Risedorph, Evan Bondsfield, Greyson DeWys, and Kyzen Dykstra.



16 HHS Band Members to represent Hamilton at the MSBOA Solo & Ensemble State Festival!



Find a full list of names and more details here!



Way to go, Hawkeyes!



2

Our Schools

Bentheim Elementary



269-751-5335

Jared Randall, Principal
Cindy Schipper, Secretary

Blue Star Elementary



269-751-5630

Kari Huckaby, Principal
Deb Scholten, Secretary

Hamilton Elementary



269-751-5413

Dean Kramer, Principal
Kim Sale, Secretary
Stacey Heneveld, 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
Tracy Haverdink, Secretary
Connie Yonker, Secretary
Bob Hippey, Student Support

Hamilton Virtual School

(At Sandyview Learning Center)



269-751-5372

Mary Wilkinson, Principal
Madalyne Dekkinga, Secretary

Hawkeye Preschool

(At Sandyview Learning Center)



269-751-5372

Whitney Hobbs, Hawkeye Preschool Coord.
Madalyne Dekkinga, Secretary

TRAIL BLAZERS ON THE MAT: GIRLS WRESTLING IS ALIVE & WELL IN HAMILTON



Scan the QR Code to watch the full video spotlight on the HHS wrestlers!



SCAN ME

Hamilton Community Schools is celebrating our trail blazers on the mat as five young women step onto the wrestling mat for the first time in district history! This groundbreaking moment reflects the growing popularity and inclusivity of wrestling in Michigan, with Adiah Rybicki, Korra Kapenga, Alyssa Volkers, Ally Pelon, and Ana Ruggles leading by example for future Hawkeye athletes.

The journey to this historic moment began with coaches Jocelyn Fritsche and Jessilyn Rockhold, who had been garnering interest from girls around Hamilton High School. Surely enough, several wanted to give it a try. “We had some meetings, had some barn practices, and just tried to get this going for them and give the girls a chance that we didn’t get when we were in school,” said Fritsche.

For these young women, joining the wrestling team represents both a personal challenge and an exciting opportunity. Adiah Rybicki, a senior with a background in Muay Thai kickboxing and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, saw wrestling as a chance to continue pursuing her passion for martial arts. “I just wanted to continue it my last year and have fun with it,” she explained. “Girls wrestling is the fastest-growing sport in Michigan right now, so it’s really cool that I can be a part of it.”

Sophomore Korra Kapenga, who grew up in a wrestling family, felt inspired by the success of other female wrestlers. “Just watching wrestling through the years but recently seeing other girls’ success made me want to try it out,” she said. “I grew up around it—my brother, my uncle, my dad all wrestled. It’s a big part of our family.” Kapenga acknowledged the high expectations in Hamilton’s wrestling program, noting, “The standard is high, especially with the success the Hamilton wrestling team has had in the past. Going into that room, we have expectations of winning certain matches, but to get there, we have to have tough practices.”

For Alyssa Volkers, a sophomore at HHS, wrestling was an opportunity to push herself physically and mentally. “I’m generally pretty strong, so I thought it might be fun. I like to try new things,” she said. Volkers added that wrestling has taught her invaluable lessons. “I’ve learned to be much more disciplined and learned how to fuel my body better with food and water—it’s a whole mental game that is so different from any other sport. By the looks of it, I don’t look like I enjoy it, but I honestly have so much fun with self-discipline.”

Similarly, Ally Pelon embraced the sport as a senior-year adventure. “I just decided that it might be fun—it’s my senior year, so might as well!” she said. Pelon also reflected on the significance of being part of the program’s first girls’ team. “It’s definitely cool to be a part of the first year of it. The guys did so well last year, and it’s fun to be a part of it this year.”

Coach Fritsche also expressed optimism for the future, saying, “I think within a couple of years we can get a girls’ program going and have our own separate practices and do our own dual meets. The boys have laid a great foundation for us.”

And Coach Fritsche may be right. In fact, Hamilton Middle School proudly had three female wrestlers this winter: Mykayla Provance, Lilly Jacobs, and Abbi VerHoeven!



Five girls are on the Hamilton High School wrestling team this winter. From left to right: Adiah Rybicki, Korra Kapenga, Alyssa Volkers, Ally Pelon, and Ana Ruggles (not pictured).

Hamilton Middle School is also well represented in girls wrestling!

Pictured Here (L to R): Coach Engelsman, Mykayla Provance, Lilly Jacobs, and Abbi VerHoeven, Coach Koops.





2025 HAMILTON BOARD OF EDUCATION



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Trustee

January was Board of Education appreciation month. A big thank you to all who are currently serving and all those who have served the Hamilton Board of Education in the past!

A PRECIOUS MOMENT CAUGHT ON CAMERA!

With Hamilton Elementary Secretary, Kim Sale

Anyone with a child who has attended Hamilton Elementary knows just how incredible secretary Kim Sale is. This moment further exemplifies all that she does for our students and staff. Just before break, a Hamilton Elementary student came into the office crying as the school day was about to begin. The student mentioned that they did not want to come to school that day.

Immediately, secretary Mrs. Kim Sale took action, consoling the student and asking them to sit down and chat with her. There Mrs. Sale sat, just listening, being a friend, and helping the student get their day off to a better start.

Mrs. Sale (like all of our secretaries) does so much around Hamilton Elementary for students and staff. This is just one example of what we call our Hawkeye Family.

“Those who enter Hamilton El will find me to be trustworthy, to be a good listener, someone who values making connections and building relationships,” said Sale when asked about this moment. “I want to be someone who engages in conversations that are purposeful, positive and helpful. Someone who makes it a priority to make others feel relevant and connected and understood and safe.

It's showing up for others and helping them build a confidence in themselves that perhaps wasn't there before. I strive to make it a positive experience for every person who enters our doors.

Remain calm - always.

I believe when you love doing something, you'll be good at it.

Working hard and having fun go hand-in-hand.

I will always willingly and silently show up in the shadows to provide support for our students, families and staff.

Always be ready to pivot - you never know what a day will bring or what's in store in the next 5 minutes. The only guarantee is that you'll never experience the same day twice.

My hope is that when people think of me - they say Kim's passion for these kids, these families, this staff, this place is contagious - the office at Hamilton Elementary is in good hands.”



HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS'
**HAWKEYE
HOMETOWN**

5K  '25

**SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025 | 10:30 AM START
HAMILTON TRANSPORTATION BUILDING**



SCAN ME

Sign up today! All runners signed up by April 1 will receive a free t-shirt. \$25 per runner. Register by scanning the QR Code or online: HamiltonSchools.us



HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL'S JOB SHADOW DAY OFFERS VALUABLE CAREER EXPLORATION FOR 9TH AND 10TH GRADE STUDENTS

Prepared For Life.

By: Ashley Meyer, Work Based Learning Coordinator

On Wednesday, January 29, 2025, all 9th and 10th grade students at Hamilton High School participated in Job Shadow Day, an initiative designed to provide meaningful Work Based Learning experiences. Students had the opportunity to explore potential career paths through one of three options:

1. Independently arranged job shadowing with a professional of their choice.
2. Participation in the Hamilton Healthcare Showcase at Corewell Health Zeeland Community Hospital.
3. Attended Workplace tours organized by Hamilton Community Schools.



Customized Job Shadowing Experiences

A total of 254 students independently arranged job shadowing experiences tailored to their career interests. These unique opportunities included everything from flying alongside pilots and observing air traffic control operations to shadowing legislative aides, detectives, Michigan DNR officers, engineers, construction professionals, farmers, and veterinarians. Through hands-on observation, students gained valuable insights into potential career paths and a firsthand understanding of the professional world.

Hamilton Healthcare Showcase

For the first time, 25 students spent the day at Corewell Health Zeeland Community Hospital, where they explored various healthcare careers. The experience included guided tours of hospital departments such as the laboratory, emergency department, ICU, technology, and facilities. Additionally, students engaged in a Q&A panel and networking luncheon with medical professionals. The afternoon featured interactive learning experiences, including simulated blood draws, intubation training, surgical tool sterilization, and insights into hospital facilities and nutrition services. A special thank you to Corewell Health Zeeland Community Hospital for hosting Hamilton students and inspiring future healthcare professionals.

Workplace Tours

Nearly 75 students took part in workplace tours coordinated by Hamilton Community Schools, visiting three different businesses for an immersive look at local industries. These visits allowed students to explore a variety of careers while learning about the products and services created right here in West Michigan. A sincere thank you to our participating businesses: Hudsonville Ice Cream, Ghostworks Marine, Hil-Man Automation, Andy Mast Greenhouses, Landscape Design Services, Royal Technologies, and GNS America. Their generosity and willingness to open their doors provided students with invaluable exposure to real-world careers.

Empowering Students for the Future

Job Shadow Day continues to be a cornerstone of career exploration in Hamilton Community Schools, equipping students with practical experiences that bridge the gap between education and the workforce. By engaging with professionals and exploring various industries, students gain clarity on their interests and potential career pathways, setting them up for future success.

Scan the QR Code to see the video recap of Job Shadow Day!



Hamilton Summer PBL: June 16-20

WHO: Hamilton students going into 9th and 10th grade

WHAT: Students work in a small group at a local business to solve a problem given by the business.

WHEN: June 16-20, 2025
M-TH 8am-3pm
Fri: 8am-10am

WHY: To satisfy a WBL graduation requirement for the training category and to practice employability skills



- All transportation is provided
- Lunch and snacks are provided
- Sign up as soon as possible to guarantee a spot



Sign up by emailing Ashley Meyer (ameyer@hamiltonschools.us)

AN UPDATE FROM DR. LUSK!



Bond updates can be found on our district website under 'Our District' or by scanning the QR Code!

Dear Hamilton Families,

I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for your continued support of Hamilton Community Schools. Your involvement and trust in our district play a vital role in our ability to provide the best possible educational experiences for our students.

As we move through the school year, I am excited to share that bond work on Hamilton Elementary is progressing on schedule. Thanks to your support of the 2023 bond, we are making significant improvements that will enhance learning environments for our students. Additionally, we are preparing to launch Series Two of the 2023 bond this summer, which will bring further enhancements to our district. Your commitment to investing in our schools is deeply appreciated, and we look forward to sharing more updates as these projects develop.

Another area of growth we are celebrating is the increasing number of families utilizing our Preschool and Hawkeye Kids program. Your trust in these services affirms our mission to provide high-quality educational experiences for our youngest learners and essential support for our working families. We are proud to see these programs expanding and making a positive impact in our community.

Additionally, we are pleased to report an increase in Formative assessment scores at the elementary and middle school levels. This growth is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our students, teachers, and staff toward academic excellence. This academic improvement is balanced with providing the Hawkeye Experience of a well rounded education including extracurricular activities and post-high school career opportunities.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Hamilton Community Schools family. Your partnership and dedication make a difference in the lives of our students every day. We look forward to continuing this journey together as we build an even brighter future for our children.

FACILITY UPDATE

As many know, the school board recently approved the school district to start the planning process for a proposed activities building in place of the old bus garage. The proposed building was intended to provide space and resources for educational and athletic activities which are in need. The survey results which were open to anyone and found on our website, showed a strong support for such a building. There were numerous comments from the survey stating that this type of building is supported, needed, and would provide a resource for the community which has been lacking. With this in mind, the district started exploring and planning the building.

After a couple of meetings with the architecture and construction companies who handle the district bond needs, it has become clear that due to unforeseen issues with the water supply and drain field, the cost to fix/replace each would far exceed the allotted funds for the project. Planning for buildings in the school district realm is different than in other sectors as approval needs to occur first, then planning happens. Once we knew that more funds were going to be needed for water/septic, the size of the building began to shrink and less room was available for the activities intended for the building.

After careful consideration, the proposed building planning has been paused. While the building is supported and would provide a benefit for the school district and community, the cost/benefit analysis proved to not be enough to move forward with the current overall plan. Many of the comments from the survey encouraged the district to "think big" and to have a true "community rec center." Since the vast majority of comments sought an expansive facility to suit many needs, the difficulty of the water/sewer coupled with the limited budget proved to be too much at this time. The idea of building such a facility will not be lost, rather the plan will be revisited when an opportunity to provide a more comprehensive building for the district and community arises. The district strives to be good stewards of finances and proper analysis of projects is needed before moving forward with a project. Pausing on this project is the most beneficial decision for our district at this time.

During the mentioned planning phase, more information about our district as a whole was discovered and collected showing another area in our district which can be addressed. When data/information such as this becomes available, the district digs deeper into the information to discover root causes to address for maximum efficiency. Our analysis has begun and the district will likely bring a new proposal to the school board in the near future. Having the opportunity to consider such options/plans is due to being good stewards of the district finances and excess bond funds. We will continue being fiscally responsible in all decision making, along with being student focused.

Dr. Bradford Lusk, Proud Superintendent



Upcoming 'Scoop with the Supt.' Dates:

'Scoop with the Supt.' community forums are an opportunity for parents and community members to discuss any district happenings, ask questions, and enjoy free coffee and light breakfast in a relaxed setting. All will be held at Hawk's Nest Restaurant (3420 M-40).

- Thursday, March 20 | 9:00-10:00 AM
- Thursday, April 3 | 9:00-10:00 AM
- Thursday, April 17 | 9:00-10:00 AM
- Thursday, May 1 | 9:00-10:00 AM
- Thursday, May 15 | 9:00-10:00 AM



SENIOR EVELYN BOEVE BUILDING HER FUTURE AT THE CAREERLINE TECH CENTER



Scan the QR Code to watch Evelyn's Spotlight!



SCAN ME

Hamilton High School junior Evelyn Boeve is making big strides in building her future—literally. As a student in the Ottawa Area ISD's Careerline Tech Center (CTC) construction program, Evelyn is learning valuable skills that she believes will benefit her for years to come.

"I do this program because I have family that does construction and HVAC, and I can use these skills in jobs that I do in the future," Evelyn shared. "Right now, we're working on how to do framing, and I've learned life skills on how to build houses and things I can use when I own a home."

Evelyn's involvement in the program reflects her eagerness to step outside the traditional classroom setting and into a more hands-on learning environment. She credits the partnership between Hamilton Community Schools and CTC for giving her the chance to explore her interests in a meaningful way.

"I'm really grateful that Hamilton does this with the CTC because it gives me more opportunities to do things outside of class and allows me to do more hands-on things," she said.

The construction program has not only taught Evelyn technical skills but also helped her gain confidence in navigating what she calls a "male-dominated field."

“ I don't really know what I want to do in the future, but it's really shown me that I can learn more about trades in male-dominated fields. It's shown me that I can do more than I thought I could,” she explained.

While her exact career path remains undecided, Evelyn knows the skills she's acquiring will always be valuable. Whether helping with her family business of Boeve Heating & Cooling or pursuing her interest in youth ministry, the foundational knowledge and hands-on experience she's gaining now will serve her well.

Hamilton Community Schools is proud to see students like Evelyn thrive in programs that encourage exploration, creativity, and skill-building beyond the traditional classroom. For Evelyn, it's an opportunity to not only learn but also to discover her potential and broaden her horizons.

"I might help out with the family business and may do some youth ministry work," she said with a thoughtful smile. "But no matter what, these are skills I'll take with me for the rest of my life."

As Evelyn continues framing walls and framing her future, she serves as a shining example of how Hamilton students are preparing to make an impact in our community and beyond.



BLUE STAR BLITZ BROADCASTING STUDENTS VISIT WZZM TV STATION

The Blue Star Blitz student broadcasting team had an incredible opportunity in early February! Fifteen students from the team visited the WZZM 13 news station to gain hands-on experience in video production and learn from professionals in the broadcasting industry. Chief Meteorologist Samantha Jacques graciously gave the students a chance to step into the spotlight, allowing them to experience being in front of the cameras in a fun and immersive way. Describing the Hamilton students as "a fun and lively bunch," Jacques guided them through the process of reading weather forecasts like broadcasters and gave them a behind-the-scenes look at video production. The opportunity provided valuable insights into the world of broadcasting, with students learning not only the technical aspects of the profession but the fun parts too. Blue Star fourth grade teacher and Blue Star Blitz director, Ms. Jessica Ruch-Guerrin, applauded their time there, emphasizing how it helped students understand the detailed processes behind news production.

"I think it was such a great experience to see what happens behind the scenes," Ms. Jess added. Visiting WZZM 13 sparked a new excitement within the students for the profession. One of the more memorable moments was when some students had the chance to point to West Michigan on the green screen, which resulted in plenty of laughs and memories. In addition, meeting the editors, producers, and other behind-the-scenes professionals gave the students a fun look at how the news is created and delivered. In reflecting on the experience, one student remarked, "It was pretty unique that we got to go," while another said, "We learned how we can up our game with our announcements."



13 ON YOUR SIDE abc



Scan the QR Code for the full video recap of their fun visit!



HAMILTON GRADUATE READY FOR THE SHOW



Scan the QR Code for
the full video on
Grant's journey!

2015 HHS Alum Grant Wolfram working hard to make Milwaukee Brewers Opening Day Roster



2015 Hamilton High School graduate Grant Wolfram has taken the next big step in his baseball career, signing a major league contract with the Milwaukee Brewers. The 6-foot-8 left-handed pitcher, who was previously in the Texas Rangers organization, joins the Brewers' 40-man roster as he prepares for the next chapter of his professional journey.

Wolfram's passion for sports began early. "Ever since I was in 1st or 2nd grade, I knew I wanted to play professional sports but didn't know which one. Baseball gradually took over." His time at Hamilton helped shape him into the competitor he is today.

“ I have a lot of memories from my time at Hamilton,” Wolfram recalled. “We won a lot of games when we were there, won the conference my junior year, won a district my senior year, came up short in the regional championship. I loved Hamilton, I loved playing with those guys and I keep in touch with Brian Grabinski, Ken DeGood, Tom Burton, Matt Bierschbach, a lot of the coaches.”

Among those who played a key role in his development was his coach, Ken DeGood. “I knew he wasn't going to let me get complacent, he held a standard for me and the team. There were multiple times he pulled me to the side and told me I need to lead this way or set an example.”

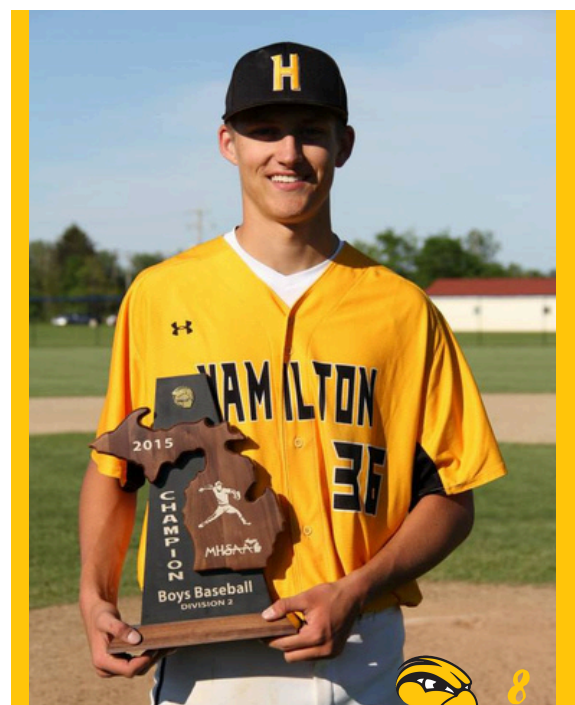
After a standout career at Hamilton, Wolfram passed up being drafted by the Detroit Tigers out of high school and opted to play collegiately at Central Michigan University before transferring to Davenport University. In the 2018 MLB Draft, he was selected by the Texas Rangers in the 18th round. Over the past several seasons, he worked his way up through the Rangers' minor league system with impressive numbers. In 2024, he split time between Double-A Frisco and Triple-A Round Rock, finishing with a 4-1 record, 3.13 ERA, and six saves over 60.1 innings. Following the 2024 season, Wolfram became a free agent and weighed multiple offers before ultimately choosing the Brewers. “I was torn between the San Francisco Giants and the Milwaukee Brewers, and the location definitely played a factor. My wife can drive with our newborn baby and be home in four hours.”

The Hamilton community has shown overwhelming support for Wolfram, something he deeply appreciates. “It's amazing. I love reading the comments and having all of the support in Hamilton. I am closer to home now, so hopefully, I'll be able to see some familiar faces at the ballpark in the coming years.”

Looking ahead, Wolfram is determined to make an impact at the major league level. “The hard work is not over. I want to play ten years in the big leagues, that's the goal as well as winning some World Series, we'll see if that can happen.” As he continues his work in spring training, he remains focused. “It would be hard to say it's just another spring training when it's not because I'll be on the 40-man roster at this point, but I am trying to approach it like another spring training. This is my seventh one now and my second big league camp. I feel really good about where I'm at, just coming in here and trying to compete for a spot.”

A key part of his preparation includes mental visualization. “I do this visualization every night before I go to bed, and a lot of it recently has been trying to envision myself in big league stadiums and different scenarios. I know the first series is in New York City against the Yankees, so I've kind of had that 'okay, who are the lefties in their lineup' kind of visualization and what it's like pitching in Yankee Stadium.”

Despite his professional success, Wolfram remains grateful for his roots in Hamilton. “I enjoyed my time at Hamilton. A lot of great people, hard working people. In fourth grade, I had Mr. Reinstra, and Mr. Bosma stands out in middle school—he's followed me throughout my career. He's fun to talk to about baseball. There are so many people that stand out and keep in touch, so many great, great teachers. I'd send my kids to Hamilton. I loved it.”



FOX 17 STORY: HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PARODIES POP CULTURE IN ITS CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

By: Sam Landstra, FOX 17

FILLMORE TOWNSHIP, Mich. — When the lake-effect snow machine begins to churn in Michigan, the best set of words any student can hear is "snow day."

At Hamilton Community Schools, the district superintendent and communications coordinator have taken to announcing winter-weather-related closings by way of pop culture parodies, including Christmas Vacation and a classic Coca-Cola ad.

"Back in the day, we'd have to watch TV and watch the ticker at the very bottom," Supt. Brad Lusk said. "Now we incorporate social media into that."

"In education, we can take ourselves very seriously, as we should," added Zach Harig, communications and marketing coordinator. "We also like to have some fun."

The fun started two winters ago, when a Hamilton student broadcaster's play-by-play of a snow day announcement went viral, reposted by ESPN, Barstool Sports, Good Morning America and many, many more media outlets.

"Breaking news! Lusk called a snow day right here at the student section," said then-sophomore Aiden Lynch at the end of a Hawkeyes basketball game. "No school for me tomorrow."

From there, the door "creaked open."

"Now, Brad will come into my office on a Monday morning and say, 'This weekend, I was thinking about our next snow day video,'" Harig said. "What do you think about doing it this way? Or doing this?"

Barely into the second semester of the school year, some serious bouts of winter weather have already prompted Hamilton to call six snow days.

A parody of the Christmas lights scene from Christmas Vacation and a recreation of Mean Joe Greene's Coca-Cola commercial have accompanied two of these cancellations. A pair of cousins — a senior and a second grader — played roles in the latter.

"When I heard [a snow day] was called, I went right to Instagram to see the video," said Malachi Kapenga, a state champion wrestler who played Mean Joe Greene in the announcement. "It was cool."

In the original ad, former Pittsburgh Steelers defensive tackle Mean Joe Greene tosses a little boy his jersey after the boy offers him a Coca-Cola: "Hey, kid. Catch." The spot is regarded as an all-time great.

In Hamilton's parody, Kapenga gave his cousin, Maverick, a T-shirt that read, "Breaking news: Lusk called a snow day." As of Thursday, the video already had 30,000 views on Facebook.

"As soon as I get a video like that shot, I can't wait to get back to the office and get to work on it," Harig said.

A tribute to Rocky and an arm wrestling competition between Kapenga and Lusk have also been posted to the school's social media platforms.

"Celebrate it," Lusk said. "Celebrate the fun that comes with it, the anticipation. If we can ... add a little joy to that, why not?"



WRESTLING

Scan the QR Code for the link to the full story & video!



Play and Learn With Weekly Field Trips

Enrollment Opening March 7th

For students Young 5- 4th Grade MUST BE 5 TO ENROLL

Outdoor adventures, Group activities, Story telling, Puzzles, Games and more!

2025 SUMMER PROGRAM

HAWKEYE Kids

Scan the QR Code to Register!



June 16-27th
July 7th- August 8th



Sandyview Learning Center
4317 46th Street, Holland
MI 49423



6:30 AM - 6:00 PM



269-751-5372

whobbs@hamiltonschools.us

HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL BAND MEMBERS READY TO REPRESENT AT STATE!

Congratulations to the Hamilton High School band members who participated in the MSBOA District Solo and Ensemble Festival! Of the 25 events that participated, 16 earned 1st Division ratings and qualified for State!

- Alyssa Weber- flute solo
- Ethan Csapos- clarinet solo
- Ben Bosscher- alto sax solo
- Tristan Patch- alto sax solo
- Michael Garvin- tenor sax solo
- Karley Riddle- trumpet solo
- Tyler Michielsen- trumpet solo
- Annika Johnson- french horn solo
- Evan Bondsfield- french horn solo
- Drew Van Houten- trombone solo
- Ella Oppenhuizen & Leah Elkins- flute duet
- Kenzie Pelletier & Maddie Rizo- oboe duet
- Karley Riddle & Mackenzie Topp- trumpet/clarinet duet
- Jacob Weber & Ricky Towne- trombone duet
- Alyssa Weber, Ella Oppenhuizen, Leah Elkins & Abby Miedema- flute quartet
- Drew Van Houten, Gus Johnson, Annika Johnson, Joey Oppenhuizen & Tyler Michielsen- brass quintet



Congratulations, Hamilton High School Band
16 1ST DIVISION RATINGS!

MSBOA District Solo and Ensemble Festival

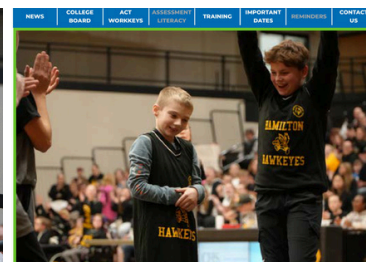
“All of the students involved did a wonderful job on their performances. We are excited that every event that qualified for State have chosen to participate in that event as well. State District Solo & Ensemble Festival will be held at Portage Northern High School on Friday, March 14 and Saturday, March 15,” said band director and teacher, Mr. Joe Herrick. A job well done to our Hawkeyes!

HAMILTON UNIFIED BASKETBALL PROGRAM TAKES THE NEXT STEP

Since becoming Unified Champion Schools through Special Olympics Michigan in 2023, Hamilton Middle School and High School Unified basketball programs have been growing and remaining busy! This season, the high school team was a part of the OK Black Unified conference, playing in eight games throughout the winter in conjunction with our girls basketball schedule. Meanwhile, the Hamilton Middle School basketball team played two official games this winter, including on ABC Night on February 7! The memories made by both teams and the buzz around the school buildings has been contagious! Our peers and athletes have strengthen their friendships both on the court and in the classrooms and hallways.

“My favorite part is where everybody just comes together, there are no differences,” said senior Serenity Smith-Jackson. “We come just come together, have fun, and play a game of basketball.”

➤ Hamilton Unified Basketball also became the talk of the entire state! The Michigan Department of Education featured the photo of Cole Statler and on its newsletter, sent to over 36,000 subscribers across the Midwest!



The Hamilton Middle School Unified basketball team hit the court for their first ever game on February 7, playing 1st half of a scheduled game. The energy was electric, and the support from the Hamilton community. Photo credit: Zach Haring, Hamilton Community Schools.

MICHIGAN Department of Education

JOIN THE HAWKEYE FAMILY.



2025-26 YOUNG 5S/KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT IS NOW OPEN!

Save the Date for Screening Days!

Bentheim Elementary: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 (269) 751-5335

Blue Star Elementary: Thursday, April 24, 2025 (269) 751-5630

Hamilton Elementary: Friday, April 18, 2025 (269) 751-5413

SCAN HERE TO REGISTER!

2025-26 HAWKEYE PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION



Questions about Hawkeye Preschool?
Call Sandyview Learning Center at (269) 751-5372 or email Whitney Hobbs: whobbs@hamiltonschools.us



HAMILTON WRESTLERS REPRESENT AT FORD FIELD

Congratulations to our Hamilton wrestlers who represented the Black & Gold at Ford Field! The Hawkeyes had five All-State wrestlers in an impressive showing.

- Bryce Morrison 3rd
- Jake Chase 4th
- Shane Dams 5th
- Chase Morrison 6th
- Malachi Kapenga 6th



A MASTERFUL PERFORMANCE OF 'MATILDA JR.'

The Hamilton Middle School Vocal Performance Classes left the audience raving about their two performances of 'Matilda Jr.' on February 27 and 28!

"There were 52 students from 7th and 8th grade vocal performance in the show and I am so proud of each of them," said Mrs. Holly Israels. "They all had their own jobs to do to tell the story of "Matilda", both on stage and backstage, and they did them well! This was a very complex show with a lot of choreography, beautiful singing, and even some magic! Congratulations to the students for their excellent work and a big thanks to Mr. Snoap, Mr. Connelly, Mrs. Savalle, and all the volunteers who helped with costumes, props, painting, and more!"



➤ Save the date for the Hamilton High School theatre performance of 'You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown' March 27-29!

HAMILTON BANDS MAKE SCHOOL HISTORY

UNPRECEDENTED! The Hamilton 7th grade band, 8th grade band, and high school band all received straight Division 1 "Excellent" ratings at the MSBOA District Festival at Allegan High School on February 28. This outstanding achievement marks the first time in Hamilton Community Schools history that all three bands earned top ratings at the event! Under the direction of dedicated band director, Mr. Joe Herrick with assistance of Mr. Paul Connelly, Hamilton's musicians impressed the judges with their skill, precision, and musicality.

"I couldn't be more proud of our students," said Mr. Joe Herrick. "They have put in an awful lot of work to get to this point and to see all of the wonderful things the judges said to them or wrote in their feedback was really gratifying. Our students are continuing a long tradition of excellence in our band program, both musically and how they represent our school when on these kinds of trips."



GROWING OUR OWN: MEET HCS PARENT, BENTHEIM EL. STAFF MEMBER & ASPIRING TEACHER, MARISA HALFORD

Marisa Halford has worn many hats within Hamilton Community Schools—parent, substitute teacher, paraprofessional, and now, student teacher. With four children spanning ninth, seventh, fourth, and second grade, she has been deeply connected to the district since her family moved to Hamilton years ago. Now, she is working toward her teaching certification through the West Michigan Teacher Collaborative Program and taking the next step in her journey.

"We moved here just before my now-ninth grader started kindergarten. We picked this community because we heard great things about the school," Halford shared. "All my kids went to Bentheim and have had wonderful experiences. When I started substitute teaching, I really enjoyed subbing here. I enjoy the people I work with and the sense of community and family that exists, not only within this school but within our district."

Her path to wanting to become teacher started two years ago when her youngest child entered kindergarten. Halford began substitute teaching and quickly found a passion for working in the classroom. This led her to accept a position at Bentheim Elementary as an MTSS paraprofessional, where she learned she could put her Bachelor's Degree in Supply Chain Management to good use again and turn it into a teaching career.

"I heard about the West Michigan Teacher Collaborative, where if you already had a Bachelor's degree, you could apply to it and it was a way to get student teaching and earn your teaching certificate," she explained.

The application process was rigorous. Halford applied in November 2023, and after being selected for an interview, she joined 80 other candidates at Grand Valley State University's downtown Grand Rapids campus in February 2024.

"The whole process was extremely nerve-racking because you're with people you don't know, and you're all essentially competing against each other for a spot," she recalled. "I had to give a five-minute mini-lesson that provided enough detail to show I could teach in front of other people who were also interviewing. Then, we were put into groups and given a problem within a school to solve. At the end, we had a one-on-one interview with two panelists."

By mid-March, Halford was one of approximately 50 individuals selected for the program. Now, she is gaining hands-on experience in the classroom under the guidance of veteran kindergarten teacher Lisa Rumsey at Bentheim Elementary.

"It's just been amazing learning from her. I feel like I take notes every day so I can remember these things for next year," Halford said.

Looking ahead, Halford hopes to have her own classroom in the 2025-26 school year. She hopes to complete her teaching certification in April after months of classes, meetings, and classroom learning.

"My goal ultimately next year is to have my own classroom. I would love to stay in Hamilton, but I understand if that's not possible and will look in the area," she said.



Scan the QR Code for the link to Mrs. Halford's video!



WORK FOR US!

Hamilton Community Schools is Hiring!

Bus Drivers • Custodians • Food Service
Paraprofessionals • AND MUCH MORE!

Apply Today using the QR Code or at HamiltonSchools.us



Apply Now!



THANK YOU TO OUR HAMILTON OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE STAFF!



Scan the QR Code for a video interview with our Operations Team!



The Hamilton Community Schools operations team works extremely hard year-round to ensure our facilities are functioning and in great shape for our students and staff.

Get to know our fantastic operations and maintenance team in the video above! A big thank you to (left to right in the image above): Keith Folkert, Dustin Drake, Todd Kuiper, and Mike DenBesten for all they do for the betterment of Hamilton Community Schools.

BEHIND THE BADGE: CATCHING UP WITH HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS SRO, DEPUTY JOHN DEKKingA

Since starting in the School Resource Officer role back in August, School Resource Officer, Deputy John Dekkinga has been hard at work learning all things about the job. Fortunately, Deputy Dekkinga says he has learned a lot from mentors like Deputy Joe Knapp, Deputy Jason Kruithoff at Fennville Public Schools, and various other SROs in Allegan County.

“I am loving the role and am loving the interaction I am able to have with kids. Hopefully, I’ll be a positive role model for them and the kids that crave that connection from someone who isn’t a teacher, isn’t a parent, isn’t a coach,” Dekkinga added.

In the first six months on the job, Deputy Dekkinga has focused a lot of time on online safety and teaching our students the importance of their digital footprint. On top of that, he has been an important part of safety and security meetings and trainings.

“This is a huge job, there are a lot of things that go on behind the scenes that people don’t see,” he explained. “Basically, it can change by the hour. Things can pop up at a building and I’ll go and address it but there’s the balance of being involved at the school and at the Sheriff’s Office, so it’s balancing both worlds and being proficient in both.”

As a 2018 graduate of Hamilton High School, Dekkinga knows his way around the district.

“I couldn’t imagine working for a better community. This is one of those places that you graduate from and you come back five years later and it’s the same place. There are a lot of the same faces, teachers, coaches, etc. things like our Academics, Basketball, Community Night make you appreciate the people in this community and the way everyone comes together.”



Scan the QR Code for a video interview update with Deputy Dekkinga!



ACADEMICS, BASKETBALL, COMMUNITY NIGHT BRINGS HAMILTON TOGETHER

Scan the QR Code for a video recap of the evening!



Take a look at 'Academics, Basketball, Community Night' at Hamilton High School on Friday, February 7! The night was centered around honoring over 100 Hamilton High School students for their outstanding academic achievement. Hamilton also hosted Zeeland in Middle and High School Unified Basketball games before the varsity girls and boys took the court. Basketball teams also signed posters and autographs, with the HHS Honors Choir performing the national anthem.

Thank you to our community sponsors who have done so much to support the Hawkeye Hometown Community Series to put on events like these!

HAMILTON CHOIRS EARN "EXCELLENT" RATINGS, QUALIFY FOR STATE



For just the seventh time in our district's history, both the Hamilton High School Honors Choir and Women's Chorale earned Excellent ratings to qualify for the State Choral Festival! The Women's Chorale earned high scores in both performance and sightreading. Meanwhile, the Honors Choir sang songs in both French and English and also sightread at Districts. In fact, one of their performances was just one point away from a perfect score!

“ The choir students' work for festival is very technical and precise, but they are dedicated and want their music to be the best it can be,” said Mrs. Holly Israels. “The result of this technical work is really quite magical. When everyone works together to create something expressive and artistic, it is like nothing else. We are also excited that this work was recognized by the festival judges, reflected in these ratings. Each person's work is so vital to the team. I am proud of every one of them and can't wait to see what they are able to do next! We are looking forward to performing at State Choral Festival in May, which will be held at the Jack H. Miller Center for the Arts at Hope College. Congratulations to Mrs. Holly Israels, Mr. Paul Connelly, and all students on all of their hard work paying off!”



Listen to the Honors Choir District Performance!



Listen to the Women's Chorale District Performance!





ALL-SCHOOL READING AT BLUE STAR!

The Blue Star Elementary all-school reading is an absolute HIT among students every month. Older students come together with younger students to form friendships and help them with their reading skills! It's one more example of how we're building the Hawkeye Family experience.

“Blue Star is a family, we all get to be together with different kids that we don't know and we become friends and help make them stronger readers,” said one first grade student.



Scan the QR Code for the video on the Blue Star All-School Reading!



SLEDDING WITH DR. LUSK & MR. RANDALL AT BENTHEIM!

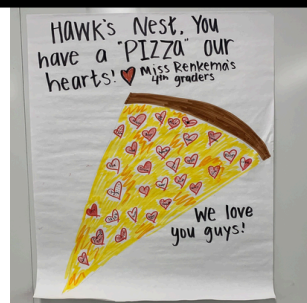
As a part of Bentheim's PBIS system, students can earn B.E.S.T. bucks for being on their B.E.S.T. behavior (Be Respectful, Everyday Effort, Safety First, and Take Responsibility). Students can use their best bucks to purchase prizes or enter their bucks into drawings for fun prizes and cool experiences. In February, the winner of the B.E.S.T. drawing was Fritz (pictured right) from Mrs. Blahnik's Kindergarten class. The class won a sledding session with Bentheim principal Mr. Jared Randall and superintendent, Dr. Brad Lusk. The weather was beautiful, the hill was in perfect condition, and everyone had a blast!



Scan the QR Code for the sledding video!



WHEN A SCHOOL PROJECT LEADS TO A PIZZA PARTY...



Dear Hawk's Nest,

My name is [redacted] and I am a fourth grade student at Hamilton school. Our class is writing letters about things we feel strongly about. I chose to write to you because your food is the best I like the ice cream flavors that you have and how I order a burger you always give it a smile, which makes my day. You are the best restaurant because the ice cream is great, you make people's days with your food, and you're food is better than my school's lunch!

The first reason that you are the best restaurant is your ice cream is great. I like how you have shabert for my brothers who cannot have lactose. I also like the vanilla ice cream you have - it's very flavorful and your twists are really good too! The chocolate in the hell is great! I love that you have tiny cones for little kids, and I like that you give size options for the medium, big, and small cones. I love that you make monster cookie dough and other flavors for other people who really enjoy those flavors.

The second reason that you are the best restaurant is you make people's days with your food. Once, when I ordered a burger, you added a smile on the bread, which made me feel good! You give people options to choose what they want to drink, instead of just water. You sometimes joke around with families. You serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner, which is really helpful to families who have to work late or early in the morning.

The first reason that you are the best restaurant is better than our school's lunch. Once I got boneless chicken wings and they were disgusting. The chicken nuggets are really bad at our school and your guys's chicken nuggets are the best. Another food that is bad and not really good is the pizza pockets and pizza. They also, only give you a tiny chicken wing which is not a lot of food! I would make my day if you would give our class free food from your restaurant!

In conclusion, I just wanted to let you know that your food is some of the best, and that I love your restaurant. There are so many wonderful things about it that my family and I appreciate. I hope that you have a great rest of your day! P.S. It would make my day if you would bring free food from your restaurant. There is 28 people in my class. Thank you so much!!!!

Warmly,
[redacted]

In December, Ms. Renkema's 4th grade students at Hamilton Elementary wrote letters to people/businesses they wanted to persuade of something. One of the students wrote to Hawk's Nest Restaurant explaining why they are the best restaurant. In mid-February, Hawk's Nest surprised the entire class with a pizza party! Thank you for all that you do, Hawk's Nest Restaurant!

JEN YODER NAMED 2025 SCHOOL NURSE OF THE YEAR

Hamilton Community Schools is proud to announce that district nurse Jen Yoder has been named the 2025 Michigan Association of School Nurses (MASN) School Nurse of the Year. This prestigious award recognizes Yoder's dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to the health and well-being of Hamilton students and staff.

Yoder, a 1998 graduate of Hamilton High School, extends her impact beyond medical care—she is a trusted resource, advocate, and educator, ensuring students receive the support they need to thrive in and out of the classroom. Please join us in congratulating Jen!

“It was really exciting and surprising, I cried a bit on the phone when I was told,” said Yoder. “It's an honor just to be nominated and to think that people trust and appreciate me enough to think I am worthy of that nomination. I am doing what I am called to do and what I love. I am just beyond grateful that the community has come around me.”





****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**

THE REVIVAL OF THE HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL GREENHOUSE PROVIDES UNIQUE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The Hamilton Middle School greenhouse was once under-utilized, but is now flourishing and playing an important role in the HMS STREAM (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, Math) program.

"It was built a number of years ago and I had the opportunity with the help of HMS principal Liz Morehouse and our superintendent Brad Lusk to get the greenhouse going again," said 8th grade teacher, Mr. Steve Hickok.



As the STREAM English component teacher, Hickok is putting the Greenhouse to great use throughout the school year. Through the donation of HCS parent Dan Mast and Andy Mast Greenhouses, Hickok's classes are now taking care of the plants every day and learning a lot about the variation of plants and the attention they all need.

"One of the great things about doing these hands on projects like this is we're learning a lot about what to do, but also what not to do," Hickok chuckled. "We actually had a Rest In Peace portion of the greenhouse because we quickly learned what not to do to some of the plant species."

Hickok's first hour Enrichment class has been caring for the plants and are now taking orders from teachers around the school.

"We have a large selection of plants that we've been growing this semester and we've begun delivering them to our customers inside Hamilton Middle School," Hickok added.

With the greenhouse's control temperature of 68-72 degrees, the greenhouse has also been used by several HMS teachers for a warm yet semi-outdoor class study space this winter.

