

TRANSCRIPT

HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

#GreatThingsHappenHere



For the third consecutive year, the Hamilton Transcript Newsletter has received national recognition from the National School Public Relations Association!

CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2025!



SENIORS RETURN TO THEIR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



A THANK YOU TO OUR RETIREES

Also Inside...

- Hamilton senior qualifies for DECA International Competition
- Four Hawkeyes graduate with their CDL in hand thanks to innovative program
- Seniors learn as Teacher's Assistants around the district
- AgScience & Job Shadow Days get Hamilton Middle School students prepared for their futures
- Salmon In the Classroom program creates learning & memories at Blue Star
- Construction begins on the new HHS weight room and wrestling room
- HHS Fine Arts programs continue their incredible success
- Ribbon is cut on Hamilton El's new wing
- Blaine Lugten's unique graduation speech

FULL LIST OF GRADUATING SENIORS

There are 205 Hamilton seniors who received a diploma this year. They are the following:

A Altman, Audrey Ruth Alvarado-romo Jr, Jorge Luis Anderson, Blake Michael Atwood, Abigail Grace	G Gabrys, Tyler James Gallegos-Mariano, Efrain Garza, Miya Amorita Gates, Anthony Scott Geurink, Kaitlyn Jean Glupker, Hannah Grace Green, Jonathan Lyle Alan	Mayne, Penelope Louise Meekhof, Anaya Leigh Meekhof, Dylan Keith Meiste, Maxwell Alan Merfeld, Camden Reece Miller, Madden Kathryn Montgomery, Kierah Rae Moomey, Kamren Christopher Mulcahey, Audrey Lee Munniksma, Kaleb G Myaard, Maxwell John	Sibble, Ainsley Kate Sloan, Douglas Patrick Slotman, Ava Elise Smith-Jackson, Serenity Ivinia Smith, Brayden Aaron Staines, Shawn Ryan Stark, Justin Thomas Stoel, Abigail Beth Stoel, Madelyn Ruth Stoel, Zachary Robert Strong, Ashtyn David-Alan Sturgis, Robert Neil Stygstra, Lola Alexis Surber, Allyssa Lynn
B Basinski, Carter Matthew Becksford, Ryleigh Paige Becksford, Taylor Alana Berens, Cyrus Alexander Berens, Matthew James Bierschbach, Andrew David Bigford, Thomas Allen Bittner, Emily Karen Blauwkamp, Clayton Lee Block, Hayden Jeffrey Bloss, Gabriel Kenneth Bondsfield, Kyle Edward Borgman, Porter Shale Breuker, Colie Marie Breuker, Dakota Lee Brinks, Hailey Kathryn Bronkhorst, Jeren Michael Brouwer, Bradon Cole Brown, Carter Lee Brown, Hailey Joy Buikema, Lorelei Debrah Buikema, Robert Joseph Burch, Olivia Sue Bush, Ariana Faith Bush, Brennen Keller Byrne, Madeline Grace	H Hambley, Olivia Ruth Hamlin, Aiden H Hansen, Jackson Robert Haverdink, Hope Marie Haynes, Colton Joseph Hemmes, Elsa Joy Hernandez, Noah Paul Hickok, William Raymond Hofacre, Grace Elizabeth Hoffman, James Calvin	N Nevins, Isaac Charles Nykamp, Benjamin Jay Nykamp, Breslin Scott	T Tamminga, Izabella Loren TenBrink, Aubanie Grace TerBeek, Isabelle Joy Troke, Sienna Rose Troost, Isabelle Lealynn Turcott, Carson Sawyer
C Cantu, Zimber Grace Glori Capizzi, Ethan James Carlson, Reece William Casemier, Beau Elliot Chase, Jacob Warren Christenson, Jude Alexander Cooper, Landon Brandon Grace, Landon Matthew	J Johnson, Christyon Joseph Allen Johr, Keegan Alexander	O O'Connor, Logan James Obermeyer, Aidan Dale Olson, Ashlynn Joy Oosterink, Taylor Marie Oppenhuizen, Joseph Lawrence	V Van Der Hulst, Riley Daniel Van Houten, Drew Riley Van Ommen, Lauren Nicole Van Wieren, Turner Jack Vander Haar, Seth Gordon Vander Yacht, Cameron Jay VanDerHulst, Dominic Todd VanderKooi, Brett Richard VanderZwaag, Landon Jon VanWieren, Aiden Michael Verkaik, Michael Thomas Victoriano Flores, Lupita Lisangi Villa-Lemus, Jose Santiago Vork, Kianna Nicole Vriezema, Nathan John
D Dams, Shane Jacob DeWys, Kaden James Driesenga, Connor John Duren, William Thomas Dykstra, Abatu Josiah David Dykstra, Benjamin Timothy Dykstra, Isaac Jon Dykstra, Jaden Timothy	K Kapenga, Malachi Daniel Kay, Bailey Lynn Kaylor, Madalyn Jean Kensinger, Grayson Oliver Kooiker, Emily Catherine Kragt, Ally Jo Kramer, Abigail Mae	P Patch, Tristan Williams Peck, Alec Matthew Pelon, Alyssa Jo Perisee, Jalisa Marie Peterman, Haylie Rose Petroelje, Grant Andrew Phillips, Lincoln Christopher Popma, Benjamin Andrew Prins, Mason Daniel Prus, Gydian Seth	W Walker, Stephen Benjamin Weber, Alyssa Grace Wedeven, Danielle Kay Weener, Alissa Lynn Westra, Grant Jason Wettlaufer, Maya Grace Widner, Damian Michael Wills, Spencer Ray Winklepleck, Layla Anne Winsemius, Addison Rae Wolters, Chloe Brynn Wolters, Olivia Marie Wrenn, Maeve Margaret
E Eding, Logan Charles Elzinga, Carmen Phoenix	L LaForest, Piper Louise Lampen, Emily Madeline Lang, Kennedy Elle Langeland, Gabriel Joseph Lappinga, Seth David Lascari, Emerson Nicole Lauer, Esther Miriam LeTourneau, Jace Keith Lewis, Kiera Therese Lewis, Olivea Kaye Lewis, Owen Marc Lohman, McKoy Matthew Lopez, Myleigh Elizabeth Lubbers, Zachary Paul Ludema, Maya Nicole Lutz, Clayton Thomas Lynch, Aiden Thomas Lynema, Mekenna Riley	R Ramsey, Vernon Eli Reilly, Emma Lee Rietema, Sierra Kay Robertson, Aden Levi Rodts, Koral Marie Romero Jimenez, Justin Felipe Rotman, Carley Christine Ruiter, Isabelle Grace Russcher, Jacob Zechariah Rybicki, Adiah Carmen	Z Zehr, Abigail Mae Ziemann-Bell, Keagan Allen Zwagerman, Zoey Dawn
F Fales, Madison Christine Fales, Matthew Dillon Foss, Michael Gavin	M Maatman, Landen Tae Mannes, Alex Jay Martin, Melanie Jo Maslanka, Addison Grace	S Sabala, Gavin Pedro Sal, Ashlyn Taylor Sanchez, Aaron Sanchez, Xavier James Schader, Adriana Lynn Scholten, Kaydance Lilly Schreur, Zoey Madison Schrotenboer, Gabriel Michael Schultz, Tobias Paul Serie, Connor James Shaw, Ivy May Shelton, Koltin Ray	



Class of 2025 Top Ten Graduates

From left to right (in no order): Emily Bittner (Valedictorian), Turner Van Wieren, Maya Ludema, Grant Petroelje, Audrey Altman, Landen Maatman, Sierra Rietema (Salutatorian), Justin Stark, Danielle Wedeven, Lincoln Phillips.

VALEDICTORIAN EMILY BITTNER



Emily Bittner, daughter of Mickey and Karlene Bittner, graduated with a 4.1341 GPA and a 1480 SAT. During high school, Emily was involved in National Honor Society, Hamilton Cyberhawks Robotics, pep band, jazz band, pit orchestra, and theatre. This fall, she plans to attend Iowa State University to study chemical engineering.

“The Hamilton High School Class of 2025 is a really competitive class,” Bittner said. “A lot of us were retaking the SAT and we have so many that are really competitive in sports. People in Hamilton are really nice,” she added. “Teachers reach out to you if they see you’re struggling and people want to see you succeed here. Hamilton has definitely helped prepare me for the real world because the staff helps us think for ourselves.”

Scan the QR Code to see the video with Emily and Sierra as they take a look back at their experience at HHS!

SCAN ME



SALUTATORIAN SIERRA RIETEMA

Sierra Rietema, daughter of Kate and Tony Rietema, graduated with a 4.11 GPA and a 1410 SAT. In school, Sierra was involved in soccer, golf, quiz bowl, and band. She served as President of the National Honor Society, was captain of the Color Guard, and held class officer positions. Outside of school, she is actively involved in volunteer work at her church. In the fall, Sierra plans to attend Taylor University to double major in Spanish and global studies, with an emphasis on international relations.



“Our class is extremely talented, from sports, to music, actors, and actresses, we have a very talented group,” Rietema said about the Class of 2025. “I have really appreciated how a lot of teachers get to know you on a personal level here. Hamilton has really prepared me for college and what’s next. During my freshman year, I really thought these were going to be a long four years. Not that high school wouldn’t be fun, but it’s just a lot of schooling. It actually went by extremely quickly and it was kind of a shock that graduation is already here.”

CLASS OF 2025 SENIOR AWARDS

Art Award:

Kamren Moomey

Athletic Boosters Scholarships:

Grant Petroelje

Justin Stark

Sierra Rietema

Lauren Van Ommen

Athletic Commitment Award:

Jeren Bronkhorst, William Hickok, Justin Stark

Business Education Award:

Jude Christenson

CHS Grifhorst-Jordan Award:

Londin Cooper, Adriana Schader, Dakota Breuker

Daughters of American Revolution Good Citizens:

Isabelle Ruiter

Drama Award - Musical:

Turner Van Wieren

Drama Award - Technical Crew:

Isabelle Ruiter

Drama Award - Straight Play:

Bradon Brouwer

Hamilton Way Award:

Audrey Mulcahey

Instrumental Music Award:

Drew Van Houten

Julie Genzink Scholarship for Golf and Tennis:

Danielle Wedeven

Language Arts Award:

Audrey Altman

Mathematics Award:

Emily Bittner

Outstanding Senior Female Athlete:

Kaitlyn Geurink

Outstanding Senior Male Athlete:

Jeren Bronkhorst

Roger and Louise Brinks Scholarship Award:

Bailey Kay

Science Award:

Emily Bittner

Social Studies Award:

Reece Carlson

Spanish Award:

Sierra Rietema

Vocal Music Award:

Emily Kooiker



Language Arts Award winner
Audrey Altman with Mrs. Jarvis.



Kamren Moomey, winner of the Art
Award, with Ms. Riess.



Vocal Music Award winner, Emily
Kooiker with Mrs. Israels.



Justin Stark, one of four recipients of
the Hamilton Athletic Boosters
scholarship with Mr. Dan Mast.



Mr. Talsma with the Athletic
Commitment Award winners.

Scan this QR Code for a list of
all 2025 Senior Award winners!



BLAINE LUGTEN LEAVES LASTING IMPRESSION DURING ENTERTAINING COMMENCEMENT SPEECH

On Thursday, May 22, Hamilton High School math teacher Blaine Lugten delivered a commencement speech the Class of 2025—and the entire Hawkeye community—won't soon forget. With a blend of heartfelt advice, humor, and show-stopping performances, Lugten took the stage at graduation not just as an educator, but as an entertainer, mentor, and proud Hamilton alum.

The veteran teacher—who is retiring after 29 years at Hamilton and 35 years in education—used his commencement address to inspire graduates in a way only he could: through music. From dancing to AC/DC to belting out Sweet Caroline, from leading the Hamilton fight song to a customized rendition of John Denver's Country Roads, Lugten had the entire gymnasium clapping, laughing, and cheering.

"There are multiple times when you'll fail," Lugten said early in his speech. "Dust yourself off, and get back into the game. I want you to go out and find your passion." That passion for him, he explained, has always been music—and he proved it.

As students and guests smiled and laughed, Lugten launched into a Hamilton-themed version of Country Roads:

"The hum of tractors all around me, just a small town in Allegan County..."

He gave shoutouts to familiar local landmarks—from the town's iconic trestle to its long-awaited stoplight—before ending with an emotional message to the Class of 2025: "So go and find your passion... But as you're looking back, please remember this town will always be your home."

The performance instantly took off across social media, earning thousands of interactions, with comments flooding in from current students, alumni, and community members praising Lugten's legacy and unique send-off. The video was even picked up by local media, cementing the moment as a standout highlight of the school year. Way to go, Mr. Lugten!



Scan the QR code for the video recap of Mr. Lugten's speech!



HHS SENIORS SURPRISED WITH LETTERS FROM YEARS AGO

As the Hamilton High School Class of 2025 prepared to graduate, a touching tradition gave seniors a chance to reflect — opening letters they wrote to themselves years ago just days before their final day of high school. Some dated back to freshman or sixth-grade years, while others reached all the way to first grade. The result was a wave of laughter, emotion, and nostalgia as students revisited childhood dreams, predictions, and even snacks — like Kaden DeWys, who left himself a saltine cracker and a dollar coin.

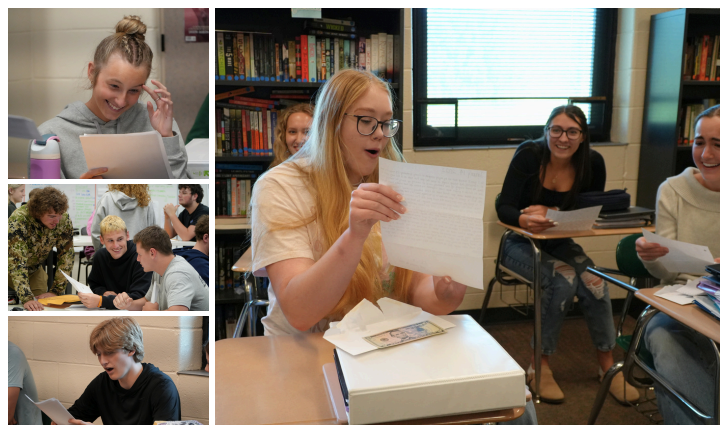
"I wrote about goals for wrestling and said hopefully Michigan wins the national championship and the Lions make the playoffs — which both happened," said Malachi Kapenga with a smile.

Letters ranged from silly to sincere. Madison Fales joked about future jobs, while Abigail Kramer wrote, "Things happen for a reason... the hard things are hard, and you will try." Layla Winklepleck correctly predicted Spanish would be her favorite class — and now plans to minor in it this fall in college. Others, like Abatu Dykstra, reflected on how plans can change: "Dear Abatu, I hope you're the best football player... Oh, I'm not a football player."

The activity sparked gratitude and growth. "It's kind of like talking to my younger self," said Kramer. "It's really cool."

As Riley Van Der Hulst put it, "I can see that I didn't try that much freshman year, but looking back now, it's sweet to see how far we've come."

From misspelled words to meaningful insights, the letters offered a window into just how much these students have grown — and a heartfelt sendoff from "Dear Me" to "You made it."



Scan the QR code for the full video of our Seniors reading their letters!



AGSCIENCE DAY INTRODUCES 8TH GRADERS TO AGRICULTURE & ANIMAL SCIENCE CAREERS



Hamilton Community Schools recently hosted AgScience Day — a hands-on, educational event introducing 8th grade students to the wide world of agriculture and animal science. The experience, filled with excitement and exploration, gave students a deeper look into the many careers and skills connected to agriculture, a major industry in the Hamilton area.

“We’re doing an agriculture day, so we get to learn about animals and farms and all that stuff,” said 8th grade student Joelle. “It’s amazing!”

Throughout the day, students rotated through various stations where they could interact with animals, try their hand at veterinary skills, learn how animal feeds are made, and explore careers in farming, transportation, and more. One student mentioned having experience working with horses on a farm, but still found the behind-the-scenes demonstrations eye-opening and valuable.

“I was really excited for today,” said 8th grade student Addalyn. “I’ve done work around this, but it’s great to see different perspectives. Everyone does things a little differently, and it’s nice to see what they think and how they do it.”

Community members, local farmers, and agricultural professionals partnered with the school to help students connect what they learn in the classroom with real-life applications and future opportunities.

“It’s amazing what Hamilton is doing with exposing kids to trades,” said Brandon of Brink Farms. “Not all students are going to college, and that’s okay — we’re helping them see what else is out there. Agriculture is huge in this area.”

AgScience Day wasn’t just about information — it was about inspiration. Whether it was learning how cows are now milked robotically, exploring the use of smart collars, or simply interacting with animals up close, students were immersed in meaningful, hands-on learning that expanded their view of what’s possible.

“We live in an agricultural community,” added Jeff of Hoeve Farms. “And as generations move further from the farm, it’s important we bridge that gap. This day helps students understand what’s happening around them and consider careers that are vital to our community.”

From farming to veterinary work, transportation to food production, AgScience Day showcased the many ways students can get involved in the industries that fuel West Michigan and beyond.

“This is amazing,” a student said with a smile. “It’s a change of pace, we’re out of the classroom, learning hands-on — it’s awesome!”

JOB SHADOW DAY PROVIDES CAREER EXPLORATION FOR 7TH - 10TH GRADE STUDENTS



Our annual job shadow day for 7th through 10th grade students allows them to get out of the classroom and explore different careers that they are interested in!

SALMON IN THE CLASSROOM BECOMES AN INSTANT HIT AT BLUE STAR ELEMENTARY

For the first time ever, Blue Star Elementary's fourth-grade class capped off their Salmon in the Classroom experience with a day of fishing on Lake Michigan. Thanks to the Big Red Foundation and 14 local charter boats and first mates, 40 students hit the water and brought in over 100 fish—including a 15-pound and a 22-pound trout.

Salmon in the Classroom, a Michigan DNR program, teaches students about ecosystems and conservation by letting them raise salmon from egg to smolt. The students even had a chance to release their salmon into Bear Creek and the Kalamazoo River in early May. The fishing experience on May 28 tied the whole experience together.

"Many of these kids had never been on a boat or gone fishing," said Big Red Foundation board member and captain Mark Rapson. "This is something they'll remember forever."

Teachers saw the day as a full-circle moment. "They raised the salmon and learned the science," said Mr. Szczecowski. "Now they see the 'why.'" Fourth grade teacher Ms. Jes Ruch-Guerrin added, "We're incredibly thankful to the Big Red Foundation. This wouldn't have happened without them."

One student summed it up best: "I've never been fishing before... it was new, fun, and now I love it!"



Scan the QR code for the full video recap of their fishing experience!

Scan the QR code for the salmon release video!



2025 RETIREES

377 Combined Years of Service to HCS!



Vicki DeJonge
Bus Driver
24 Years



Cheryl Bleeker
HE Paraprofessional
32 Years



Cindy Schipper
BE Secretary
42 Years



Nan Lubbers
HE Paraprofessional
32 Years



Kim Sale
HE Secretary
16 Years



Blaine Lugten
HHS Math Teacher
29 Years



Sharon Inman
HHS Paraprofessional
18 Years



Andy Losik
BSE & BE STEM Teacher
28 Years



Travis Pertner
HHS Math Teacher
28 Years



Lon Haverdink
Custodial Supervisor
31 Years



Tara Dessauer
HHS Special Education Teacher
7 Years



Jodie Ferrell
HE 1st Grade Teacher
35 Years



Katie Jarvis
HHS English Teacher
24 Years



Jill Koopman
HE 2nd Grade Teacher
31 Years

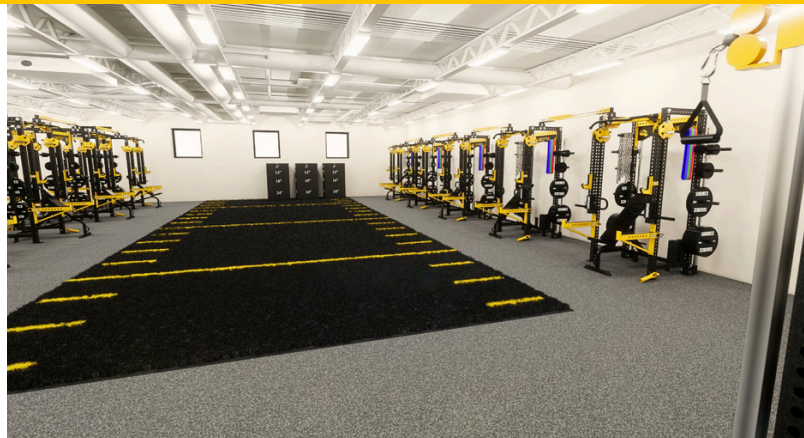


Congratulations and thank you for your years of dedication to Hamilton Community Schools!

WORK BEGINS ON THE HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION REDESIGN



Scan this QR Code for an inside look at the weight room and renderings!



Thanks to support from the Hamilton community and the 2023 bond, work has begun on the Physical Education classroom redesign bond scope — featuring a brand new weight room and wrestling room that promise to elevate the student experience both academically and athletically. The transformation comes after years of making do with an undersized weight room, often forcing staff to cap Strength and Movement classes and turn students away due to space constraints. Despite those limitations, students never complained — instead, they continued to show up and work hard in tight quarters, often extending into hallways for workouts.

“The students have made the most of what we’ve had,” said physical education teacher, Dan Van Hekken. “But I don’t think they fully realize how incredible this new space is going to be. This was long overdue and I can’t wait to see their reactions.”

With approximately 70% of Hamilton High School’s 800 students using the weight room throughout their time at HHS, the new facility couldn’t come at a better time. The updated space more than doubles the previous size and includes 15 workout stations — up from eight in the previous space — as well as the latest equipment and expanded features for both athletic and personal development.

Much of the design and equipment selection came through the collaborative efforts of Van Hekken and Athletic Director Eric Talsma, who led a strategic planning process that included touring several high school and collegiate weight rooms throughout West Michigan. Their goal was to create a space that met Hamilton’s unique needs — selecting each piece of equipment with intention to best support student-athletes and physical education classes.

“We’ve got five single half racks, five double half racks, a 20-foot wide by 18-yard long turf section, four different cable machines, kettlebell and dumbbell storage, and even a 16-foot low bridge with J squat,” said Talsma. “This isn’t just an upgrade — it’s a complete transformation that will allow us to increase participation, efficiency, and ultimately student growth.”

The new weight room provides more than just physical benefits. For many students, weightlifting is a key part of their routine — not only for sports but for their mental health and overall well-being.

“We have a lot of students over the years that have added weight lifting as part of their day because they enjoy the mental health aspect of it,” said Principal Mitch Bosch. “They enjoy getting out and being active.”

“I think it’s going to be a great space,” said junior Joselyn Paskvan. “A new weight room doesn’t automatically make better athletes, but it will provide a space where we can make a decision to get better.”

“It’ll be a lot more efficient,” added junior Brett Schrottenboer. “We’ll have more stations and a better rotation system for everyone to get stronger together.”

In tandem with the new weight room, the existing space is being repurposed into an updated wrestling room.

From students to administrators, the message is clear: this is a win for all of Hamilton High School.

“We’re just so grateful,” said Talsma. “This is only possible because of our community’s trust and investment in our students. Thank you for making this happen — we’re proud to be Hawkeyes.”

Work in both the weight room and wrestling room will be completed by August 2025 and ready for the 2025-26 school year.



HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARN FROM TEACHERS AROUND THE DISTRICT



View Hoffman's TA video spotlight by scanning this QR Code!

View Sibble's TA video spotlight by scanning this QR Code!



Four Hamilton High School seniors gained hands-on classroom experience this year through the district's Teacher Assistant (TA) program—an opportunity to support younger students while exploring a future in education.

Ainsley Sibble worked with Mrs. Laura Modreske in the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program at Sandyview Learning Center, offering calm, compassionate support to some of the district's youngest learners.

Adriana Schader split time between Mrs. Schuiteman and Mrs. Postma at Hamilton Middle School, developing strong mentoring skills while connecting with students.

At Bentheim Elementary, Haylie Peterman served in Mrs. Melinda Bronkhorst's fourth-grade class. "My students looked forward to the days Ms. Haylie was in our classroom," Bronkhorst shared. "She did a great job with each student and was always willing to help. She will be missed!"

James Hoffman, wanting to be a Special Education teacher in the future, found his passion in Mrs. Jana Zweering's kindergarten class at Hamilton Elementary. "I went in unsure about kindergarten," James said. "But I've come out loving it."

"He's been an integral part of our year," Zweering added. "The kids always ask for him when he's gone. He's gone above and beyond, and I hope this gives him a strong foundation for his future in the classroom."

These four seniors didn't just explore possible careers—they left a meaningful mark on the students and teachers they served. Way to go, Hawkeyes.



Ainsley Sibble
with Mrs. Laura Modreske
in ECSE at Sandyview LC



Adriana Schader
with Mrs. Schuiteman
and Mrs. Postma at HMS



Haylie Peterman
with Mrs. Bronkhorst
at Bentheim Elementary

“

Unbelievable growth and priceless relationships - that's how I'd describe the TA experience this year. These TAs were all-in for serving their students and supervising teachers. The bonds they built were evidenced in the touching end-of-year goodbyes, and they will be dearly missed! The TA program is a wonderful opportunity in which our amazing supervising teachers pour into these young professionals, preparing them to succeed on the next step of the journey.

~ Mrs. Sarah Kapenga, HHS Teacher Assistant Advisor

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HHS SENIOR ETHAN CAPIZZI QUALIFIES FOR INTERNATIONAL DECA CONFERENCE

Hamilton High School senior Ethan Capizzi has achieved an impressive milestone in his academic and professional journey—qualifying for the DECA International Career & Development Conference (ICDC), a prestigious event that brings together top-performing students from around the globe.

Capizzi earned this honor through his outstanding performance in the Automotive Marketing Services category, where his combined scores in multiple choice testing and role-play scenarios earned him a National Qualifier medal.

"This medal signifies that overall I had the best average scores with my role plays and my multiple choice test out of my flight," Ethan shared, proudly holding up the plaque he received.

For Ethan, this accomplishment is more than just an award—it represents personal growth and the rewards of stepping out of his comfort zone. "I'm a very introverted person," he admitted. "Going after it and taking the chance ended up doing really well, I guess."

Ethan credited his success to the encouragement and support of Hamilton High School business teacher and DECA advisor Mr. Dan Meiste.

"Without him walking me through and giving me the confidence to do what I do, I would never have this or be able to experience the opportunities DECA has offered me," he said.

The DECA ICDC is known for showcasing students who excel in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management. Ethan's qualification for the international stage not only highlights his dedication and skill, but also serves as an inspiration to fellow Hawkeyes who are considering exploring new challenges.



CDL PROGRAM SEES CONTINUED SUCCESS IN SECOND YEAR AT HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL



Scan the QR Code for a video look inside the program!

Four Hamilton High School seniors also received their Commercial Drivers License in the month of May

Four Hamilton High School seniors are shifting their futures into high gear—earning their Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDL) in early May through Hamilton's innovative CDL program, now in its second year.

Congratulations to Max Meiste, Porter Borgman, Hayden Block, and Eli Ramsey, who completed the demanding training and licensing process with the help of 17 generous local donors who helped fund the program. Their efforts are already paying off as these students hit the road toward career-ready opportunities.

For each student, the CDL opens a unique path. Eli plans to pursue a career in excavation, using his CDL to haul heavy equipment. Max dreams of traveling the country as a truck driver. Porter, already working in plumbing, sees the CDL as a backup plan and added skill for the future. Hayden hopes to deliver heavy equipment to local farms.

"I wasn't really expecting to be able to do this while still in school," Eli said. "But it's nice to have it before I even graduate high school."

All four seniors expressed deep appreciation for the donors who helped fund their classes, tests, and training—an investment that gives students a valuable credential and real-world experience before even walking across the graduation stage.

"The donors really helped us out," said Hayden. "It's a huge advantage at a young age and puts us in a better spot for the future."

The CDL program is just one of many career-focused opportunities available to Hamilton students, preparing them to be workforce-ready, confident, and adaptable. As Max summed it up: "Hamilton has gotten me ready for the future by giving me this opportunity."

Thanks to continued community support and student determination, the Hamilton CDL program is paving a strong path forward—one mile marker at a time.



THANK YOU TO THE 2024-25 CDL PROGRAM DONORS

Heasley Seeds LLC
Koops Well Drilling
Centennial Acres Equestrian Center
DeYoung Refuse
Generation III Excavating
Al's Excavating
Haworth Helps
Teddy's Transport
FCG Truck Driver Training

Brink Truck Lines Inc
Midwest Industrial Lumber
MarJo Construction
TNT Roofing
Inontime
Schoenborn Family Farms
Specialized Demolition
Brewer's City Dock

“FCG Truck Driver Training is proud to support the next generation of CDL holders who will help keep America moving. Hamilton Community Schools provided four driven, respectful students who exemplify the character and responsibility needed in this industry. Their one-of-a-kind CDL program is giving students a direct path to strong career opportunities right out of high school. Great things are happening at Hamilton!”
~ Bill Baareman, Owner of FCG Trucking Company



Congratulations, Abatu!

Abatu Dykstra Gets into The University of Michigan!

I am pleased to inform you that you have been admitted to the University of Michigan College of Engineering class of 2025.

“My time at Hamilton has truly been a blessing. I feel privileged to say that the school has provided me with more than I could have ever imagined.

This place has given me platforms to perform and express myself at such high intensities, academically and athletically.

And most importantly, the faithful people of Hamilton have supported and refined my character immensely.”

~ **ABATU DYKSTRA**

Hamilton High School Class of 2025



BOND UPDATES & A MESSAGE FROM DR. LUSK

Hello everyone,

I hope this Transcript finds you well and looking forward to summer sun and fun! As we wrap up another school year, I want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude to our incredible staff for their unwavering dedication to our students, schools, and community. At the end of this school year, we are bidding farewell to staff members whose combined service to Hamilton Community Schools totals over 375 years. Their contributions have left a lasting impact on our district and they will be greatly missed around the district. At the same time, we are fortunate to be welcoming new educators and team members who bring energy and passion to continue moving us forward.

Looking ahead, we're already excited for what the next school year will bring. Big things are planned for our students and staff, and the momentum for continued excellence is strong. But before we get too far into the fall, we're making the most of this summer. Across the district, important updates are happening:

- Brand new playgrounds will be installed at all three elementary buildings, providing safe and exciting spaces for our youngest learners.
- A new exit drive from Hamilton Elementary will be added to help ease traffic congestion on M-40. There will also be an addition of over 30 parking spots added to Bentheim Elementary for parent and staff parking.
- High school construction projects will be completed, further enhancing the learning environment.
- And when our students return, they'll find new desks and chairs in their classrooms, along with updated teaching stations for staff—fresh resources for a new year of growth.

To our families, staff, and community members: thank you for your continued support and partnership. We hope you enjoy a safe, restful, and fun summer. Please take the time to reflect on all the great things your student(s) accomplished this school year, along with taking time to relax and recharge the battery for the 2025/2026 school year. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in the fall—with fresh spaces, new faces, and exciting opportunities ahead. Take care, enjoy the break, and as always #GoHawkeyes



Dr. Bradford Lusk | Proud Superintendent, Hamilton Community Schools



Upcoming 'Scoop with the Supt.' Dates:

'Scoop with the Supt.' community forums will not be held during the summer. However, find a list of the first dates of the 2025-26 school year below! These are all held at Hawk's Nest Restaurant:

Thurs., August 21 | 9:00-10:00 AM

Thurs., September 4 | 9:00-10:00 AM

Thurs., September 18 | 9:00-10:00 AM



**District
Facebook**



**District
Website**



**Bond
Updates**

HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL FINE ARTS PROGRAMS CONTINUE STATE SUCCESS

It was a standout spring for Hamilton High School's fine arts programs, as both the vocal and instrumental music ensembles earned top honors at their respective state festivals — showcasing the talent, dedication, and hard work of Hamilton students.

At the State Choral Festival on Friday, May 2 at Hope College, both the Women's Chorale and Honors Choir earned Excellent ratings — a rare and impressive achievement.

"This is HUGE for us!" said Vocal Music Director Holly Israels. "Women's Chorale has only earned an Excellent at State three times before — this is the fourth time ever. And having both choirs earn Excellent ratings in the same year? That might have only happened two or three times total."

Meanwhile, the Hamilton High School band, under the direction of Joe Herrick, earned straight Division I (Superior) ratings and all A's across the board at the MSBOA District Festival at Kent City High School.

"One of the judges told me it was one of the best performances she's heard all year," Herrick said. "That kind of feedback means the world — not just to me, but to our students."

Congratulations to these outstanding student musicians and their directors for making this spring one to remember and for representing the very best of Hamilton's fine arts programs.



HAMILTON STUDENTS REPRESENT AT TULIP TIME FESTIVAL

Take a look at the sights & sounds of Tulip Time!



11 HAWKEYES COMPETE AT MHSAA TRACK & FIELD STATE FINALS HOSTED AT HAMILTON

Hamilton High School once again played host for the MHSAA Division 2 Track & Field State Finals on Saturday, May 31. The Hawkeyes were well represented with eleven state qualifiers! They are the following:

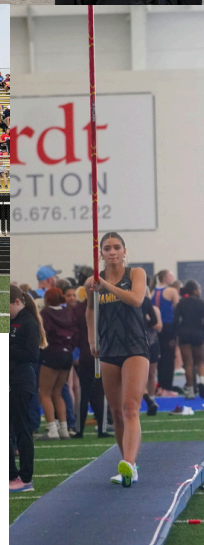
- Bella Tamminga - Pole Vault
- Cyrus Berens - 4x100
- Jeren Bronkhorst - 4x200, 4x100, 4x400, 200 M Dash
- Abatu Dykstra - 4x400
- Logan Eding - Discus
- AJ Friedrichsen - 4x200, 4x100, 4x400
- Hudson Hulst - 110 M Hurdles
- Lincoln Phillips - 110 M Hurdles, 300 M Hurdles
- Gabe Schrottenboer - 4x200, 4x400
- Zach Stoel - 4x200
- Noel Vigil - 4x100

All-State Honors:

- 2nd Team All-State Honors: Logan Eding in discus and the 4x100 M Relay Team of Cy Berens, Noel Vigil, AJ Friedrichsen, and Jeren Bronkhorst
- All-State Honorable Mention Honors were Bella Tamminga in Pole Vault and the 4x200 M Relay Team of Gabe Schrottenboer, Zach Stoel, AJ Friedrichsen, and Jeren Bronkhorst
- Academic All-State Honors: Bella Tamminga, Gabe Schrottenboer, and Noel Vigil



Thank you to Mr. Eric Talsma and all of our wonderful event volunteers that make Hamilton such a perfect place to host these state finals! It is a heavy lift that involves nearly 300 volunteers, but one that brings thousands of people to Hamilton for a special day!



Congratulations to senior Logan Eding, who set a new school record in May with a discus throw of 170'2"! The previous record had stood for 20 years and was held by Hamilton High School principal, Mitch Bosch.

Hamilton Softball wins another District Championship!



Hamilton Baseball took on Fruitport at LMCU Ballpark, home of the West Michigan Whitecaps, on May 14!



Scan the QR Code to view the video of this experience!

GET INVOLVED IN THE HAMILTON ATHLETIC BOOSTERS!

Scan the QR code for additional information to sign up!



Want to support Hamilton Athletics? The Hamilton Athletic Boosters (HAB) urgently need board members, trustees, and volunteers to keep programs running strong. Without help, concessions and the annual banquet—major fundraisers—may be scaled back or canceled, putting the fundraising burden on individual teams. HAB recently distributed over \$44,000 to athletic programs and is streamlining roles to make volunteering easier than ever. Get involved today by emailing hcsathleticboosters@hamiltonschools.us



EXCITEMENT BUILDS FOR THE NEW WING AT HAMILTON ELEMENTARY



Scan the QR Code to take a look and listen to the Replacement Wing Open House and the historical knowledge provided by Mr. Loren Joostberns!

Photo taken on May 8, 2025



It was a day full of excitement in early May as students at Hamilton Elementary were given their very first look at the school's brand-new wing—set to officially open this fall for the 2025-26 school year. Made possible through the community support of the May 2023 bond proposal, this impressive new space will soon house the school's 2nd grade, STEM, and Special Education classrooms. For many students, touring the wing wasn't just a chance to see their future classrooms—it was an unforgettable experience filled with awe and appreciation.

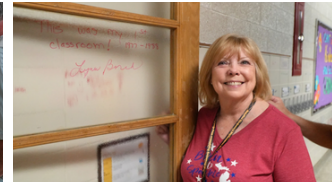
"When I walked in, it seemed ginormous and new," one student shared with a smile. "I think this will be quite a good classroom. It's very wide and very cool." Another student added, "This is like modern-modern stuff. It's great!"

The tour wasn't just about seeing the new classrooms. Thanks to OAK Construction and Parkway Electrical, students also got a hands-on learning opportunity. Crews on site shared with students the behind-the-scenes planning, construction, and even the science of the building process. From learning about the size of wires to understanding how the new wing will better serve students, the visit was both educational and inspiring.

"The community cares about us a lot," a student reflected. "They're willing to give us the stuff we need so we can have new environmental things to experience and have fun with."

Hamilton Elementary Replacement Wing Open House!

Hamilton Elementary hosted an open house on June 3 to allow community members to take one last walk down the hallways of the old wing, originally built in 1953. The night also featured the ribbon cutting and opening of the new wing, approved through the 2023 school bond proposal and brief speeches from Superintendent Lusk and Mr. Loren Joostberns. Thank you to our community for your continued support of HCS!



THE TRADITION LIVES ON: FOURTH GRADE TRACK & FIELD DAY!



All fourth grade students from Hamilton's three elementary schools came together again on May 16 for Track & Field Day at the Hamilton football stadium! A big thank you to the 60+ parent W.I.S.H. volunteers who stepped up to make this day possible!

"This is a way to get all of the kids together from all three elementary buildings for a big celebration before they enter middle school," said Megan Petersen, physical education teacher and event co-organizer. Congratulations to Mr. Lancaster's class at Bentheim Elementary for winning the overall day for a second straight year!

“

The class did a fantastic job of working together as a team," said Lancaster. "Everyone did their part and encouraged each other. It was great to see all the students compete and be successful. What a fun day!"

2015 HAMILTON GRADUATE GRANT WOLFRAM MAKES MAJOR LEAGUE DEBUT WITH THE BALTIMORE ORIOLES

For 2015 Hamilton High School graduate Grant Wolfram, Saturday, April 26 was a dream years in the making — and one that came full circle in a way he could have never scripted.

Wolfram, a left-handed pitcher for the Baltimore Orioles, after being traded from the Milwaukee Brewers just weeks prior, made his Major League Baseball debut at Comerica Park against the Detroit Tigers — the very team he grew up rooting for, and the organization that originally drafted him out of high school in 2015.

"It was funny, my parents were joking about it, like my dad said, 'Oh, we'll see you in Detroit this weekend,'" Wolfram laughed. "It's just crazy how you're literally a phone call away."

The call came unexpectedly after seven long years in the minor leagues.

"I haven't been pitching the best, so I wasn't expecting it, but it comes when you least expect it," he said. "They called me up and I was like, oh my goodness, they're in Detroit. It's a crazy world we live in."

Making the moment even more special for Wolfram was the chance to step onto the mound at Comerica Park — a place where he had cheered on his childhood heroes and made memories, including being in the stands for Miguel Cabrera's 300th career home run.

"It was an awesome experience to be able to debut in Comerica Park," he said. "It was a full-circle moment for me because they drafted me out of high school, I grew up a Tigers fan, and to finally pitch in the majors — and it just happened to be in Detroit — it made that even more special, for sure."

The special connections didn't stop there. Working the centerfield camera for the broadcast that day was another Hamilton High School graduate: Michael Berens, a 1991 alum.

"I didn't know that until afterward, and when I saw it, I was like wow, what are the odds of that?" Wolfram said. "It was really cool and an amazing experience. It was a blur for me, I had so much going on."

Both Wolfram and Berens share another unique link — they were students of longtime Hamilton Elementary teacher Lynn Bosch, who taught them in first grade.

"Everybody is so excited for Grant and that he's made his dream come true," said Bosch during an interview with WZZM News. "He's been patient and working hard and I think the same thing, pretty much for Michael. I mean, I think it's a dream come true for him, too, to be so involved in all of that. So everybody's excited in our community. They're all pumped."

Reflecting on his journey, Wolfram is quick to credit the community that raised him, many of which were in the stands on that Saturday night to watch him make his debut.

"I wouldn't be there if it wasn't for my coaches, teachers, and mentors," he said. "I love all of the support. I will need some more going forward. The journey is just beginning at the major league level."

Growing up in a tight-knit town like Hamilton, Wolfram knows firsthand the strength of small-town support.

"Coming from Hamilton, it's a small town and word travels fast," he said. "It's a great support system and a connected family. It's a great place to raise a family, for sure. I had a lot of people reach out — it was a great place to grow up."

Now, with his first major league outing under his belt and his dreams just beginning to unfold, Grant Wolfram carries his Hawkeye pride — and the support of an entire community — with him on the biggest stage in baseball.



Take a look at the full story on Grant's debut from WZZM!

13 ON YOUR SIDE



SPARKING HIS FUTURE! SENIOR DYLAN LOEW WELDING HIS WAY TO SUCCESS

Hamilton High School junior Dylan Loew is forging a path toward a promising career in welding through the Welding program at the Careerline Tech Center, a hands-on opportunity made possible by Hamilton Community Schools' partnership with the Ottawa Area ISD.

Loew, who has been interested in welding for several years, was excited to be accepted into the program, which allows students to gain real-world experience in skilled trades while still in high school.

"It's really cool to be able to do this type of trade at a young age," Loew said. "You learn skills that not many people are able to learn, and it leads to a lot of good career paths."

Through the program, Loew has developed expertise in various welding techniques, including arc welding, MIG welding, TIG welding, plasma arc cutting, oxy-fuel cutting, and grinding. With hands-on training, he has gained confidence in his abilities and recognizes the value of learning a high-demand skill.

"I feel very confident. I think it's a great place to learn," Loew said. "They teach you a lot of things, they teach very well, and you're able to work on things for a while and get really good at them."

The Careerline Tech Center provides students like Loew with opportunities to explore careers that go beyond traditional classroom learning. For those considering a skilled trade, he highly recommends the program.

"I'd say it's a great choice to go to Careerline Tech Center," he added. "You can learn anything you want that you can't learn in school, and it leads to a lot of good opportunities."



HAMILTON STUDENTS RECOGNIZED AT THE CAREERLINE TECH CENTER

Dylan Loew was one of 20 Hamilton High School students recognized for their hard work and achievement at the Careerline Tech Center. Those students are:

Adler Jager (Automotive Technology), Kuno Chico (Business Management), Lauren Van Ommen (Certified Nurse Aide), Evelyn Boeve (Construction), Olivea Lewis (Cosmetology), Taylor Oosterink (Cosmetology), Connor Driesenga (Diesel/Heavy Equipment), Joseph Oppenhuizen (Engineering Design), Kasey Thomas (Engineering Design), Benjamin Aalderink (Entrepreneurship & Global Business), Griffin Bolhuis (Entrepreneurship & Global Business), Chase TenBrink (Graphic Design A), Gavyn Rowder (IT: Network & Security), Allison Lezman (Media Communications), Kelsey Mersman (Patient Care Tech), Avery Overbeek (Public Safety), Shawn Staines (Public Safety), William Newson (Software & Game Development), Dylan Loew (Welding), Olivia Hambley (Welding).



SENIOR COLIE BREUKER NAMED FINALIST IN CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION

Congratulations to Hamilton High School senior Colie Breuker, who was named one of the top ten finalists in Michigan's Fourth Congressional District for the 2025 Congressional Art Competition in late April!

"Colie is an intrinsically motivated artist who pours her heart into every piece," said art teacher Caylie Riess. "Her creativity, craftsmanship, and positive spirit have made a lasting impact in our art room."

Way to go, Colie—we're proud of your talent and the way you represent Hamilton Community Schools!



Save the Date for the Fifth Annual Hawkeye Hometown Tailgate on Friday, September 19, 2025!

**HAWKEYE
HOMETOWN
TAILGATE**



Hamilton Community Schools and Cultivate Community Church are excited to host the Fifth Annual Hawkeye Hometown Tailgate on Friday, September 19, 2025 at Hamilton Middle School and Cultivate Church! The Hawkeye varsity football team will take on West Catholic at 7:00 PM that night!

The event will once again be held from 5:00-7:00 PM with FREE food and family fun for all ages! Stay tuned for more details.



DESIGN THE TAILGATE
WATER BOTTLE
STICKER! SCAN THE
QR CODE TO ENTER!



TRANSCRIPT

HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



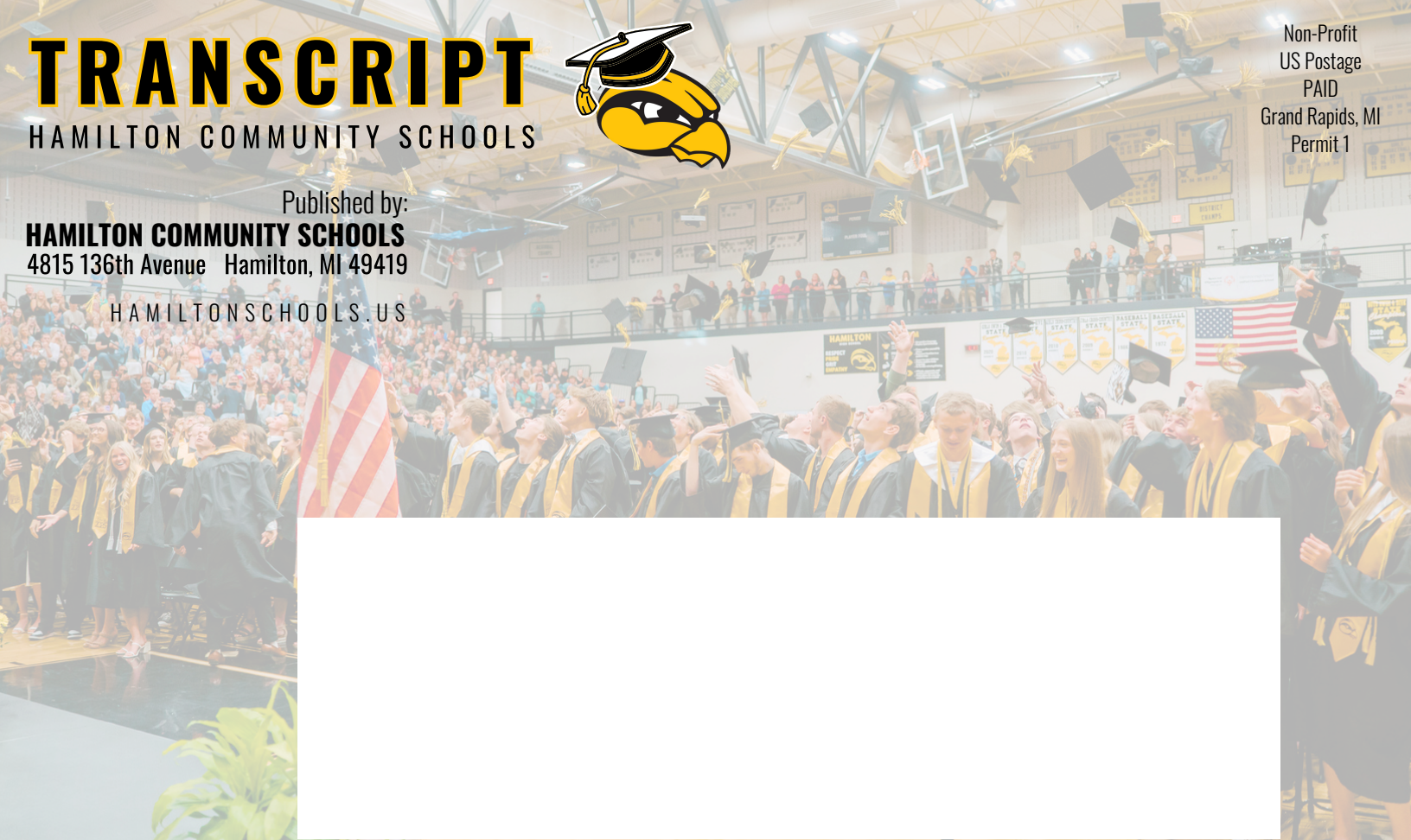
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A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE



Scan the QR Code to watch the
Hamilton Elementary senior
walk!

Hamilton High School graduates take one final trip to their elementary schools!



Just hours before walking across the stage at graduation, Hamilton High School seniors visited their elementary schools, visiting with former teachers and receiving an ovation from the current students there. Another great moment and memory for the Class of 2025!