

# TRANSCRIPT

HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

*#GreatThingsHappenHere*



**PREPARING  
FOR  
2024-25!**



**BRASCHLER RETURNS  
FOR YEAR 33 IN  
HAMILTON**



**TOM BURTON HIRED  
TO LEAD NEW HVAC  
PROGRAMMING**

**First Day of School  
is August 21!**

## Also Inside...

- Hawkeye Hometown Tailgate & Road Closure Information
- 2024-25 Open House Dates
- Introducing our new Hamilton Middle School secretary
- Bond work continues across the district
- Work Based Learning continues during the summer months
- 233 athletes take part in the H.E.A.T. Summer Athletic Program
- A successful first year for the Hawkeye Kids Program

June & July 2024

# DOUG BRASCHLER RETURNS FOR YEAR 33 & A NEW ROLE AT HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

After nine years away working for Hope College, Doug Braschler is set to return to Hamilton Community Schools in the 2024-25 school year. Despite numerous roles including teacher, coach, Athletic Director, Assistant Principal, and Hamilton High School Principal during his 32 years in the district, Braschler is set to experience something new this fall as he gets behind the wheel of a bus for HCS.

After his first retirement from education and Hamilton in 2015, Braschler decided to continue a career at Hope College as their Director of Accreditation. However, after nine wonderful years there, he says he is ready to return to his hometown district.



“I told my wife, ‘I would love to come back and do something that helps the community and helps the district’, and the thing that kept screaming to me was bus driving and the need for bus drivers, so that’s what I decided I wanted to do,” Braschler explained.

Braschler, a favorite teacher and administrator for many Hamilton graduates and staff members, never wanted to work anywhere but Hamilton.

“In 32 years, I never felt like it was going to work, it’s the people, the community in general, the support for the schools, all those wonderful things made me realize I’m not quite done with this place just yet,” he smiled.

After obtaining his Commercial Drivers License (CDL) in June, Braschler is set to hit the road with a bus full of students in August, and he can’t wait for his new role.

“Every child deserves a great start to their day and a great end to their day and I think I have the skills to allow every kid on my bus to feel loved, to feel honored, and I can’t wait to get started.”

## FOURTH ANNUAL HAWKEYE HOMETOWN TAILGATE

Friday, September 20, 2024 | Hamilton MS & Cultivate Church | 5:00-7:00 PM

Hamilton Community Schools and Cultivate Community Church are excited to host the Fourth Annual Hawkeye Hometown Tailgate on Friday, September 20, 2024 from 5:00-7:00 PM at Hamilton Middle School and Cultivate Church! The Hawkeye varsity football team will take on Wayland at home at 7:00 PM that night! Thank you to our 2024-25 sponsors who have made this event possible yet again this year!

► Please note that just like last year’s Tailgate, 136th Avenue will be closed by the Allegan County Sheriff’s Department between 48th and 50th streets from roughly 4:45 - 7:00 PM. The only way to access the Tailgate during this time will be through the M-40 entrance. We will have dozens of handicap parking spots in front of the Hamilton Football Stadium.



Just like in years past, the event will feature FREE food and family fun for all ages, including a petting zoo, miniature golf, rock climbing wall, inflatables, band and vocal music performances, and so much more! However, please note that there will NOT be a car & tractor show this year due to low interest in prior events. Hawkeye Hometown Tailgate t-shirts will be available for purchase for \$5 per shirts, ranging from youth sizes to 3XL.

Scan the QR code above to access event information and the event map!



# 2024-25 OPEN HOUSE DATES!



## **BENTHEIM ELEMENTARY**

Monday, August 19  
5:30 - 6:30 PM

## **BLUE STAR ELEMENTARY**

Thursday, August 15  
5:30 - 6:30 PM

## **HAMILTON ELEMENTARY**

Monday, August 19  
5:30 - 6:30 PM

## **HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

5th & 6th Grade: Monday, August 12  
3:00 - 6:00 PM  
7th & 8th Grade: Tuesday, August 13  
3:00 - 6:00 PM

## **HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL**

Monday, August 12  
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM or 2:00 - 6:00 PM  
Tuesday, August 13  
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

## **HAMILTON VIRTUAL SCHOOL**

Orientation: Friday, August 16  
10:00 AM - 12:30 PM  
at Sandyview Learning Center

## **SHAWNA COZZELLO HIRED AS HAMILTON MIDDLE SCHOOL SECRETARY**

Shawna Cozzello was hired in June 2024 as the new Hamilton Middle School secretary and will serve our families alongside Kris Henrickson and the rest of the outstanding team at HMS! Get to know her with this Q&A below! Welcome, Shawna!



### ► Tell Us About Your Family

"My husband and I have been married for 21 years, we have a daughter who is 18, a son who is 17, and another son who is 10. We moved to Michigan from Indiana in 2022, it's been a crazy route for us to get to Hamilton. My husband accepted a position at Cultivate Church in November, which moved us to the Hamilton area this summer."

### ► What are your initial impressions of Hamilton?

"Since being here and being a part of the community, we have felt such an embrace of community and what it means. We have felt accepted from the very beginning. One thing that really stood out to me right away was going to the website and seeing 'Hamilton Community Schools' and how it's a community. It's a family-oriented place and it feels like one big family."

### ► What is your background and experience in education?

"I worked in education as a paraprofessional previously in both Indiana and Michigan at the elementary level. Working in a middle school is going to be a bit different from what I'm used to but I'm ready for that and excited for that challenge."

### ► How are you feeling about your new role thus far?

"I'm so excited to become a part of this community and have our boys become a part of this community and Hamilton Community Schools. I am excited to work alongside of Kris [Henrickson] and build relationships with students and families. One thing that has really brought an excitement to me is having the opportunity to come in and meet the staff, they have been so welcoming and so kind. Even when I see them out around the town, getting a smile and them remembering who I am means a lot."

### ► What is your goal for your students and families at HMS?

"I have a huge heart and passion for students and families. As soon as they walk in here, my hope is that they know that they are loved, accepted, and valued."

# SUMMER H.E.A.T. CREATES LEADERSHIP, BUILDS ATHLETICISM IN HAWKEYE ATHLETES

“It’s not easy getting up early in the summer and doing uncomfortable work,” said long-time Hamilton coach and teacher, Dan VanHekken. That’s what makes the H.E.A.T. (Hamilton Educational Athletic Training) program so unique. 233 male and female Hamilton athletes grades 6-12 made a commitment to attend 21 total sessions over a seven week period during their “down time” in the summer.

The athletes worked with VanHekken and other Hamilton staff members: Phil Koops, Dylan Decker, Cam Stoel, and Kaitlin Fritzsche to work on exercise technique, speed and power development, conditioning, nutrition, injury reduction, leadership skills, and countless other lessons.

“The kids have embraced the challenge,” VanHekken added. “By the third or fourth week, we really see those consistent kids moving smoother, jumping and running more explosively, and visibly looking stronger. In addition to the physical side, we see the confidence grow. It’s rewarding for us as coaches to see the kids smile, pump their fist, and high five a teammate because they accomplished something they didn’t think they could.”



“We believe the weight room can be the ground floor for building a solid Hamilton athletic culture. We talk about how winning is not easy and competing with themselves to make sure they are putting in the work to outwork their opponent.”

# HAMILTON WORK BASED LEARNING CONTINUES DURING SUMMER MONTHS

This summer, over 50 Hamilton students spent a week or more doing Project Based Learning at a local business.. In this setting, students spend the entire program immersed in business, learning about careers, solving real world problems through design thinking, and presenting their solutions to business professionals. Students have the opportunity to grow in many ways including their employability skills like communication, collaboration, and problem solving.



iChallengeU students at West Michigan Regional Airport with HHS teacher, Mr. Nick Schweitzer.

- **Hamilton Summer PBL:** In June, nearly 40 rising 9th and 10th grade students spent a week in a group with other students and an educator working at one of our five business partners. A big thank you to Big Dutchman, Fleetwood, Tennant Company, Tiara Yachts, and West Michigan Regional Airport for hosting Hamilton students and engaging them in your operations for a week filled with learning.
- **FuturePREP’d iChallengeU:** In June, six Hamilton High School students participated in the Careerline Tech Center FuturePREP’d iChallengeU program working at a business for two weeks.
- **FuturePREP’d iChallengeUth:** Similarly, six Hamilton Middle School students participated in FuturePREP’d iChallengeUth in July by partnering with a local business for one week.

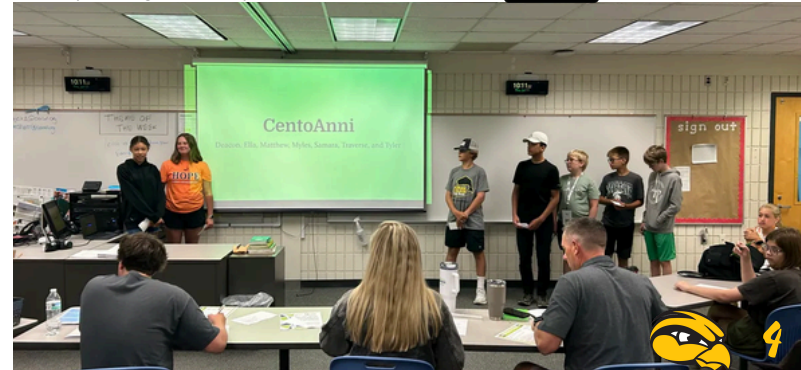
FuturePREP’d offers many great opportunities during the school year as well. If your student is interested in participating in FuturePREP’d, check out their website for more details by scanning the following QR code!

## Careerline Tech Center Career Camp:

In June 33 Hamilton students attended the popular Careerline Tech Center Career Camp. Students were able to choose different program areas to explore. In addition, some students even did an “extended session” to take a deeper dive and spend more time with professionals learning about the World of Work.

We are proud of our students for participating in opportunities related to Work Based Learning in the summer at the Careerline Tech Center!

iChallengeUth students at Cento Anni in Holland, presenting to business professionals.



# HAMILTON STARTS HVAC CLASS AT HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL AS PART OF ITS COMMITMENT TO WORK BASED LEARNING

## Local business owner Tom Burton hired to oversee and teach new program

Hamilton High School is excited to kick off the 2024/25 school year with a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning). With so many of our students going to the Careerline Tech Center in their junior and senior year, many students are placed on a waiting list and ultimately unable to attend because of the limited number of spots. Hamilton Community Schools wants to create other CTE opportunities for our students right on our campus. Already, Hamilton has one CTE program at HHS, Business Development, which is also growing from one section to three this coming school year.



HVAC will be taught by longtime Hamilton coach and business owner, Tom Burton. Mr. Burton brings over 30 years of HVAC experience as owner of Burton Heating and Cooling. He is also a Hamilton graduate and has been a proud community member engaged in Hamilton Schools with nearly 50 combined years of coaching football and baseball. His passion for our district and his lifelong career is evident, which makes him a perfect leader for the start of this program at Hamilton High School.

“I’ve been telling people that we need to do something in our schools for HVAC because we simply don’t have the pipeline of kids anymore,” Burton explained. “Over the past year, it’s been a lot of work from everybody involved. I was retiring from the business after 35 years anyway to let my son run it and my wife wants to work a few more years, so I thought it’d be a perfect opportunity to teach the program.”

Over the summer, an area of Hamilton High School has been renovated to accommodate the new course. In addition to the renovations, many community partners have generously donated tools, equipment, and funds to support the program start up. Thank you to the following businesses for their support and donations: Buhler Young, Buist Electric, Burton Heating and Cooling, DHE Plumbing and Mechanical, Godwin Plumbing, Perrigo, Quality Air Heating and Cooling, Trane, VanDyken Mechanical, and Williams Distributing.

Throughout the summer, Burton has been putting in countless hours of work to prepare for the course this fall, one that he hopes will continue to grow over the years and even expand into other trades.

“For this to start at the school level, I think this is just going to snowball and get bigger and bigger every year. If this goes well, which I think it will, maybe there will be opportunity for other trades and more classes in the future in plumbing, electrical, things like that,” Burton added.

This new program has been spearheaded internally by Work Based Learning Coordinator Ashley Meyer and Mat Rehkopf, who is now the Director of Career, College & Innovative Programs at HCS to help expand unique opportunities like these for our students.

“We hope the HVAC program is one of many new “hands-on” Career Technical Education (CTE) electives we add in the very near future,” said Rehkopf. “We are thankful for the hard work Mr. Burton has put into helping make this program a reality. His passion for HVAC is dwarfed by his passion for the Hamilton Community and his desire to serve the students of Hamilton High School.”

**JOIN THE HAWKEYE FAMILY!**  
Work for Hamilton Community Schools!



Explore opportunities by scanning the QR code or online: [HamiltonSchools.us](https://HamiltonSchools.us)



# A MESSAGE FROM DR. LUSK

Hello everyone,

I hope this Transcript finds you well and enjoying the beautiful summer weather. This edition of the Transcript is always an interesting one as it comes towards the end of summer, yet full of excitement for another school year. While we never wish away the summer break, the excitement of another school year is building among the staff.

If you have followed our social media sites, you are aware of the great things going on during the summer. Many of the stories are in this edition and I hope you will enjoy them. What stood out to me is the recurring theme of community! Having former employees, coaches, staff, students, etc. come back to work, learn, and grow in Hamilton is truly amazing. The awards won by the buildings and district are not done in a vacuum, but rather built on the foundation of a community who supports our students and staff. Thank you!

While we have many great things going on, HCS is not exempt from mistakes. I personally apologize on behalf of HCS to AI's Excavating for not being included as a monetary sponsor of the CDL program. We strive to do our best, but we do make mistakes on occasion. Owning the mistake and correcting it is what we want to model for our students. Thank you AI's Excavating for all the support over the years and we apologize for the error in our previous Transcript newsletter.

The bond work is progressing nicely, athletic teams are preparing for the fall, and many of our teaching staff have spent time training/preparing to make 2024/2025 another memorable year for our students, staff, and community. Many of our buildings will have improvements to help individuals perform better on a daily basis. Our new faces to the district are ready to help make Hamilton the best district possible.

As July turns to August and another school year is upon us, HCS is excited to begin the educational journey with a new set of faces, while enjoying seeing/hearing about all the great things our recent graduates have accomplished. As we do, HCS looks to honor the past and prepare students to define the future.

Take in the remainder of summer and I hope it has been all what you wanted it to be. I look forward to seeing everyone soon as the school year begins! Take care, make it a great day, and as always #GoHawkeyes

Dr. Bradford Lusk, Proud Superintendent, Hamilton Community Schools



## Upcoming 'Scoop with the Supt.' Dates:

'Scoop with the Supt.' community forums return on August 22! This is 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).

Thurs., August 22 | 9:00-10:00 AM  
Thurs., September 5 | 9:00-10:00 AM  
Thurs., September 26 | 9:00-10:00 AM

Dr. Lusk is also happy to schedule another afternoon session of 'Scoop with the Supt.' on Tuesday, September 24 from 5:00 PM at Hawk's Nest Restaurant. We want to give working families a chance to meet, interact, and ask questions and will do our best to offer these sessions as much as we can.

## 2023 BOND WORK CONTINUES ACROSS THE DISTRICT

Series 1 of the 2023 bond is well underway as many of you have seen. If you have not driven by Hamilton Elementary, the exterior of the new wing is almost complete, with the goal of all the exterior work being completed by the end of the calendar year. The inside of Hamilton Elementary is currently having a lot of plumbing and electrical work done, as well as casework being done in several classrooms. When students return to school, many will be met with renovated classrooms to prepare them to be at their best every day. The current 2nd grade wing will still be used this school year, with the goal of it being demolished after the 2024/2025 school year.



Sandyview Elementary has now been repurposed as the Sandyview Learning Center (SVLC). The ECSC program has moved over to SVLC so that all of the district's preschool programs are now on one campus. We have also added a third preschool classroom for the district. Our Hamilton Virtual School is also now housed at SVLC and will utilize the classrooms to provide the best educational experience possible for our virtual students. SVLC is currently experiencing a fair amount of plumbing and electrical upgrades, while seeing flooring replaced in many locations.

Hamilton Middle School has had the dehumidification unit lowered into the mechanical room above the community pool, with all the hookups being done now. This is quite a project as the large crane lifted and set the huge unit into the building by way of the roof. The roofing company was able to get an early start on fixing the roof, which allows for them to have more time to ensure all is done well. While this was an inconvenience for the swimming program, the goal is to have this all done in time for the swimming program to have enough time to properly train and compete this season.

We appreciate your patience and support as this bond work is being done. This could not have been done without your support. HCS wants to ensure that everyone knows that the scope of the bond is being done in its entirety and all work proposed is being done as promised.

We look forward to seeing the finished product of each bond project as we know each will be great for the students and staff. If you have any questions about the bond projects, please feel free to view the updates on our district website or email HCS Superintendent, Dr. Bradford Lusk: [blusk@hamiltonschools.us](mailto:blusk@hamiltonschools.us)



2023 Bond Updates can be found at any time on our district website [HamiltonSchools.us](https://HamiltonSchools.us) under 'Our District' or by scanning the QR code!

# DOZENS OF HAMILTON EDUCATORS COME TOGETHER FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER MONTHS

In education, summer months for students, staff, and parents alike are typically quiet and focused on recharging and catching your breath. However, Hamilton educators continued to come together throughout their time off to ensure they're ready for the 2024-25 school year, and beyond.

All Young 5s - 5th grade teachers and staff (administrators, interventionists, paraprofessionals) joined together to attend professional learning around literacy for four days to begin a two-part summer series. This summer's topics were phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, & vocabulary. Teachers are completing a book study and review of the Literacy Essentials along with having time to collaborate on how to best serve the students in their classrooms.



Bentheim Elementary 4th grade teacher, Melinda Bronkhorst.

Hamilton Elementary kindergarten teacher, Sue Nykamp.

Bentheim Elementary 1st grade teacher, Hannah Stokes.

“ This is a great opportunity to review the new science around reading and continue to improve on our practice to best meet all students' needs,” said Hamilton Community Schools Director of Teaching & Learning, Laura Zeinstra. “Hamilton teachers are amazingly talented and are continually working to enhance their teaching strategies and practices. I am so impressed with the staff here and their dedication to student learning.”



## VICTORY DAY RETURNS!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 AT 3:00 PM  
HAMILTON FOOTBALL STADIUM

Hamilton Community Schools Victory Day returns on Saturday, September 28, 2024 at 3:00 PM at the Hamilton Football Stadium! This outstanding day gives our students with cognitive or physical impairments the opportunity to score a touchdown in front of their family, friends, and community members with a gameday atmosphere! We invite all to come and be a part of this special day cheering on these fantastic athletes!



## HOW YOU CAN STEP UP TO BECOME A WISH VOLUNTEER AND FILL A BIG ROLE

The importance of volunteers in education cannot be overstated. At Hamilton Community Schools, we are very fortunate to have approximately 3,200 current volunteers comprised of district parents, grandparents, relatives of students, community members, and business partners. In the 2023-24 school year, over 15,500 volunteer hours were logged for things like concession stands at sporting events, fine arts chaperones and ushers, elementary classroom helpers, and field trip chaperones, just to name a few. District Coordinator of Volunteers Tara Weber has done a tremendous job getting volunteers signed up and assisting in our buildings, but says we are still in need of more help.



“ Volunteering in the schools benefits everyone! It encourages communication between volunteers, teachers, staff, and other parents,” Weber said. “It is a great way to meet the other students that your child spends the day with and it's fun to see the excitement when their parent arrives to volunteer! Volunteering for athletic events, fundraisers, PTO activities, etc. are equally as important - it shows students of all ages that as adults, we are committed to their education, their success and to the community. On top of all of that, volunteering takes some things off the plate of the teachers to give them more time for what they love - educating our children!”

Of course, safety and security of the students and staff is the top priority of Hamilton Community Schools and our WISH program. Every single volunteer must be approved through an online application process and background check.

“Volunteers definitely make a world of difference! We are so appreciative of everyone that steps up to fill volunteer needs,” Weber added.

If you have already completed the process, you do not need to re-apply! However, if you have yet to begin the steps to become a WISH volunteer or are a new parent in the district, our WISH program would love to have you! Scan the QR code or visit [HamiltonSchools.us](https://HamiltonSchools.us) and click on 'Volunteer (WISH) Program' under the 'For Parents' tab to learn more.



WISH Volunteer Program  
online application.



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## A "SUPER SUCCESSFUL" FIRST YEAR FOR THE HAWKEYE KIDS BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL CHILDCARE PROGRAM

By: Heather Curtis & Morgan Koops

When the Hawkeye Kids Before/After School Program began, we dove head first into unknown territory. Throughout the school year, we learned more and more by trial and error, asking a lot of questions from other programs around our area and reading a lot of material on licensing and various activities for school programs. We grew so much in our own positions and added more kids to the program than we ever expected.

The Summer Program has proved to be in the same situation and we couldn't be more excited. We have exceeded our expectations in weekly attendance, grown a community garden together that we have gotten to eat from and share with some of the community, multiple field trips, and got the opportunity to work with kids from all four elementary schools, which has been such an awesome experience for our staff.

We accept CDC payments! Check with your DHS specialist to see if you qualify for CDC subsidies for childcare! More information can be found by scanning the QR code or on [newmbridges.michigan.gov](http://newmbridges.michigan.gov).

Look for information on our 'Hawkeye Kids' Facebook page and at your Elementary Open House in the fall. Enrollment is currently open online for the 2024-2025 school year!

You can also email Whitney Hobbs at [whobbs@hamiltonschools.us](mailto:whobbs@hamiltonschools.us) or Heather Curtis at [hcurtis@hamiltonschools.us](mailto:hcurtis@hamiltonschools.us) with questions!



SCAN ME



SCAN ME

## 2024-25 IMPORTANT DATES



← AUGUST → <b>21</b> First Day of School	← AUGUST → <b>30</b> No School	← SEPTEMBER → <b>2</b> No School
← SEPTEMBER → <b>20</b> No School & Hometown Tailgate!	← OCTOBER → <b>11</b> Half Day	← OCTOBER → <b>24 &amp; 25</b> No School
← NOVEMBER → <b>8</b> Half Day	← NOVEMBER → <b>27-29</b> Thanksgiving Break	← DEC. & JAN. → <b>23-3</b> Holiday Break
← JANUARY → <b>24</b> No School	← FEBRUARY → <b>10</b> Mid Winter Break	← MARCH → <b>7</b> No School
← APRIL → <b>4-11</b> Spring Break	← MAY → <b>8</b> Half Day	← MAY → <b>26</b> Memorial Day
		← JUNE → <b>6</b> Half Day & Last Day