

TRANSCRIPT



HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

#HTOWNSTRONG

HEAT PROGRAM SUCCEEDS DESPITE PHYSICAL DISTANCING



DIPLOMA PICKUP EVENT

Honors Class of 2020



FOOD SERVICE PROVIDES OVER 47,000 MEALS

to Hamilton Community

JULY 2020

RETURNING TO SCHOOL IN THE FALL, VOTING ON AUG. 4

By: Dave Tebo

Dear Families, Staff, and Community Partners,

I want to take a moment to let you know how proud I am of all of you in stepping up for our kids over the past few months. Our teachers and staff met the global pandemic head on and did all they could to support our students and families. In turn, our families showed us the grace and understanding we needed to balance delivering instruction while working remotely. Thank you to the Hamilton community for stepping up across the board.

This summer we are working hard to make sure that we are ready for any educational situation we may be faced with in August as we return to school.

In April we formed a committee, made up of teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, board of education members and outside experts, to start to think about and plan for the start of the 2020-21 school year. The “Futures Task Force” has been and continues to work hard behind the scenes on a plan to address what we see as the three possible scenarios for a return to school.

Those three scenarios are:

- **A full return to school** as we have traditionally done school with adjustments to meet the needs and expectations for proper cleaning and interaction protocols to ensure student, staff, and community safety.
- **A blended return** with a limited number of students face-to-face on specific days and remote learning to accompany the face-to-face learning days.
- **A fully remote plan** built to address the shortcomings of our “Continuity of Learning Plan” that we used to end the year.

We prefer and hope we are allowed to use Option 1 and have students back in our classrooms and hallways with our teachers everyday. It is also important to note that there are still too many variables right now for us to share a more specific plan. We will share our plans as we move into early August so families can plan accordingly.

It is also important to share that while we removed the bond ask from the May 5, 2020 ballot we moved it to the August 4, 2020 ballot at the board meeting in May. As we have worked through all of the uncertainty of our school closure and how we are going to work with students and support our community in the future it was clear that we need to continue to work on ensuring that we have the right spaces and ongoing building maintenance plans to meet the needs of our students so **#EACHWILLTHRIVE**.

DIPLOMA PICKUP DAY 2020 Photo by Jess Rockhold, Class of 2019



“On May 21st Hamilton Community Schools and the Hamilton community truly made the best of a challenging situation,” said Ben Bandfield, Hamilton High School principal. “Many people came together to honor our seniors in a new way with a drive-through diploma pickup. It was a day we all needed to safely see the members of our school and community family that we have missed so much during this time. It was surely different, but it was great to see our graduates and families celebrated and all of the much-needed smiles throughout the day.”

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FOOD SERVICE PROVIDES OVER 47,000 MEALS TO COMMUNITY DURING COVID-19

By: Paul Keene

Immediately after the shutdown of our schools, Hamilton’s Food Service Department quickly changed gears in how we served our students. The department established food pickup sites at Hamilton High School, Bentheim Elementary, and Blue Star Elementary. They distributed multiple days of meals every Tuesday and Friday.

A special “thanks” to the Hamilton Transportation Department for setting up three routes delivering meals to various families in the district.

Since March 17, food service has distributed **23,879** breakfasts and **23,879** lunches, totaling **47,758** meals.



OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF REMOTE LEARNING

By: Sue Nykamp

Kindergarten during a COVID crisis? How do I teach that? I am sure my students also thought, “How do I learn this way?”

Well, that’s where the challenge became reality. My students needed to experience school in a way that, although we were apart, we could still have some fun experiences just as we would have at school.



The beginning of our time apart was very difficult for me. I missed interacting with my students. They all had unique personalities and interests. I missed talking to them about these special things. My colleagues and I discussed this one day and decided we would send letters to our students. I was so surprised by my student response. They wrote me back!

Also, as a class we were practicing the most important kindergarten standards. One of these was the idea of 100. So, I created the 100 challenge. Students were challenged to find a way to show they knew what 100 was. They could count while moving in some way, they could use objects, they could find out what weighs 100, or whatever they could think of! WOW! My students had fun with this! I had someone do 100 flips on a trampoline, jump 100 times, run 100 steps, make 10 rows of 10 items, write to 100, and even figure out what items in their house would make 100 pounds. We celebrated during our weekly Zoom meeting where a slideshow of our 100 was shared and Mrs. Petersen popped in to help us do 100 exercise moves.

Learning seemed like it would be difficult during our distance learning time away, but the little chances to make learning fun were the highlights for me. I feel my students did an excellent job learning and trying their best while we were apart from one another. Thank you parents for supporting them along the way. Together we can and we DID!

PIONEER TECH GRADS DISPLAY COURAGE OF A LION

By: Joy Zomer

Courage is something that, as a community, we have had a good deal of over the course of the past few months. Yet, when I think of courage during this time of pandemic, I also think of the courage L. Frank Baum, author of the Oz series, speaks of through his character Oz in the first book, The Wizard of Oz. Pioneer Tech has a number of graduates this spring who have shown great ability to dig deep to live this courage that Oz speaks of. Here are a few of their stories:

FRANCIS CASARES began attending Pioneer Tech in the fall of 2018. From the beginning, Francis was challenged by the reality of the work facing her as well as the anxiety that was part of her. Over the course of her first year, Francis completed only ½ of a normal courseload, but during the 2019-2020 school year, went on to complete more than a typical senior’s courseload to reach graduation. Francis earns the distinction of being the first Pioneer Tech senior to earn her diploma during the pandemic.

BREANNA HUTCHESON came to PT in the fall of 2019 and earned the honor of completing the most courses for a Pioneer Tech student over the course of the 2019-2020 school year. Her willingness to face the “danger” of failure allowed her to have the courage to push past the doubt that could have derailed her plans. Ultimately, her confidence in simply believing in herself earned her high school graduation in 2020.

CARLIE VASQUEZ came to PT in the fall of 2019 with the goal of earning her high school diploma in one school year. A teen mom, she knew the challenges that might face her in completing more than a typical senior’s schedule to reach graduation. She had survived over a year of homelessness as a young teen, and struggled to remain in school during that time. In the end, her courage came through and she graduated with the class of 2019-2020.



HAMILTON FLEX OFFERS FULL-TIME VIRTUAL, BLENDED LEARNING OPTIONS

By: Kristie Noguera

With choice at its core, Hamilton Flex combines the best elements of Hamilton Virtual School and Pioneer Tech into one school to offer more educational options for K-12 students and support online learning in the traditional setting.

FULL-TIME VIRTUAL: Students are self paced and do the majority of their learning at home with their learning coach. Teacher support is offered on campus every Thursday and electives are offered every Tuesday and Wednesday.

BLENDED:: Blended students are self paced and have the opportunity to attend school 3 days per week to work with teachers. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, blended students continue their learning online at home.

In addition to the two models, high school and middle school online students taking online classes in the traditional setting will now have access to Flex teachers to support them with online learning.

AUG. 4 BOND PROPOSAL FOCUSES ON KIDS, COMMUNITY, AND FUTURE

By: Jeremy Gonsior



WHAT IS A BOND PROPOSAL AND HOW CAN FUNDS FROM A BOND BE SPENT?

A bond proposal is how a community authorizes a school district to borrow money for capital expenditures. Voter-approved bond funds can be spent on new construction, additions, remodeling, site improvements, athletic facilities, playgrounds, buses, furnishings, equipment and technology.

Funds raised through the sale of bonds cannot be used on operational expenses such as employee salaries and benefits, school supplies or textbooks. Bond funds must be kept separate from operating funds and must be audited by an independent auditing firm.

HOW MUCH MONEY WOULD THE BOND PROPOSAL GENERATE?

If approved, the proposal would generate \$65,625,000 and is expected to be issued in three series to fund capital improvements over six years.

KIDS

The bond proposal would provide updated or new educational spaces and resources for students by right-sizing school communities and restructuring buildings with new grade levels. (K-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12 buildings):

- Deconstruct the oldest wing of Hamilton Elementary, built in the 1950s, and add new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and Special Education classrooms
- Building a new 7-8 building adjacent to the high school
 - » Alleviates crowding in the middle school
 - » Provides new opportunities and spaces for career and technical education, exposing students to learning and work opportunities beyond high school, preparing them to be work-ready, future-ready and life-ready.

- » Provides for 7-8 and 9-12 student/staff crossover
- Improve elementary and middle school learning environments by adding climate control
- Update educational technology
- Replace aging school buses

COMMUNITY

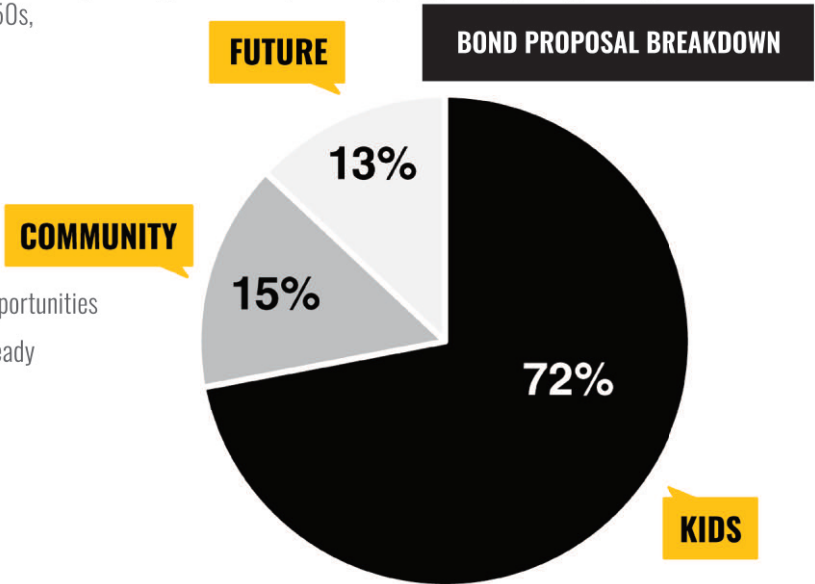
The bond proposal would develop community resources:

- Adding a new Community Center on the Hamilton Middle School campus
 - » Renovate the west gym mezzanine for physical fitness and group fitness
 - » Add a community multi-purpose classroom
 - » Improve community access to resources
- Add outdoor pickleball courts
- Add additional outdoor tennis courts

FUTURE

The bond proposal would update district infrastructure:

- Continuing to be good stewards of our resources by identifying and planning for replacement of aging infrastructure
- Address aging building systems, as necessary (interior finishes, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, playgrounds, paving, roofing)



HAMILTON STAFF EXPLAINS DISTRICT BOND THROUGH ZOOM VIDEOS

To see all the videos, visit <https://www.hamiltonschools.us/our-district/aug-4-2020-bond-proposal/>. Visit [Michigan.gov/vote](https://michigan.gov/vote) to register to vote, view a sample ballot, learn about absentee voting, and more.



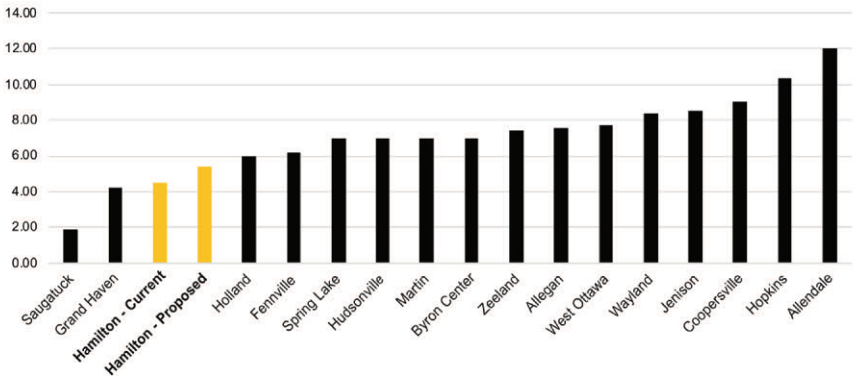
ALLISON HOSKINS
HIGH SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

HOW WILL OUR KIDS BE IMPACTED BY A RENOVATED MEDIA CENTER?

“A renovated media center gives our students and our teachers a more flexible space for some of their 21st century skill building,” Hoskins said. “It allows teachers to do more team teaching. It brings in a tech-rich environment for our students and allows them to practice different types of group work as well.”



DEAN KRAMER
HAMILTON ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL



DAVE TEBO
SUPERINTENDENT

WILL THIS INCREASE TAXES?

“Yes, this will be a tax increase,” Tebo said. “I think it’s important for us to note that we currently levy 4.5 mills. That’s the lowest mill rate around us outside of Saugatuck. This would be 9/10 of a mill increase. We needed that to generate enough revenue to add another physical building. The district hasn’t added a building in a considerable amount of time.”



MAT REHKOPF
DIRECTOR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

WHY BUILD A NEW 7/8 BUILDING INSTEAD OF ADDING TO EXISTING SPACES?

“As we move into the future of education, we know that banding our students will be ever more important. And we know that having 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students will be good in their self-contained classroom models...” Rehkopf said. “So being able to have a new 7/8th grade building where we can share staff and share classes with the high school, but also having that building be allowed to have the hands-on, flexible learning spaces is very advantageous.”

NEARLY 300 HEAT ATHLETES THRIVE ‘BY ANY MEANS’

By: Jeremy Gonsior

HEAT Coach Brian Palmer looks serious as he walks by nearly 100 athletes gathered on the Hamilton football field. It’s a warm, sunny morning in June. He’s wearing a black HEAT shirt, sunglasses, and a backwards hat.

Palmer pauses. “Toughness is a skill. You’re not born with it!” he shouts, his voice echoing throughout the stadium. “...The hard road is the right road!”

The students respond. There’s a contagious energy on the field as the athletes push each other to persevere. They perform jumping somersaults. Pushups. Lunges. At the end, they cheer with excitement.

This powerful scene is a completely new experience for the annual summer HEAT program, organized by the Hamilton Athletic Department. Due to COVID-19 and the governor’s executive orders, the department was forced to adapt or die.

“In the past, we would have run HEAT in the weight room, wrestling room, and gym,” Athletic Director Jordan Bandstra said. “We had access to all kinds of weight and training equipment that we now cannot use.”

Coaches Brian Palmer and Nick Kronmeyer pivoted to create a program that emphasizes quality athletic movement, speed and conditioning while students remained physically distanced. In other words, provide nearly 300 kids across three sessions a safe, quality workout three days a week.

Trainer Van Miller oversees a health screening that includes a temperature check for every coach and athlete. Hand sanitizer is available before and after the workout. No shared equipment. Bring your own water bottle.

“There is something special about a group of people doing something difficult together and every day we witness each group do just that,” Bandstra said. “It isn’t the ideal situation, but you wouldn’t be able to tell that by the attitudes of our kids and coaches. It has been special to watch.”

This year’s HEAT mindset and message? By Any Means.

“The world can be a chaotic place, but we will always find a way to thrive ‘By Any Means,’” Palmer said.



**“It has been special to watch.”
-Athletic Director Jordan Bandstra**

REGISTER FOR HAMILTON YOUNG FIVES AND KINDERGARTEN TODAY

By: Dan Scoville

Parents, if you have children who will be five years old on or before, September 1, 2020, please register your child for school.

If your child will be five years old between September 2 and December 1, 2020, you may also register your child for school, but you will need to complete a waiver. The school will provide that waiver for you.

We were unable to hold our traditional, Kindergarten Roundup and screening this spring, so decisions regarding Kindergarten vs. Young Fives placements will be based on age and discussions with parents.

In the meantime, please register your child online using the following link: <https://www.hamiltonschools.us/for-parents/student-enrollment/>

Please contact Lori Lohman at (269) 751-5148 if you need assistance or have any questions.