

# TRANSCRIPT

HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

*#GreatThingsHappenHere*



AWARD OF  
MERIT

Hamilton Community Schools

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Transcript Newsletters



## CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2024!



**INTRODUCING THE CLASS  
OF 2024 VALEDICTORIAN &  
SALUTATORIAN**



**NEW PROGRAM HELPS  
TWO HAMILTON SENIORS  
GRADUATE WITH A CDL**

### Also Inside...

- Senior Award Winners
- A look inside the thriving LINKS program at Hamilton Elem.
- The Hawkeyes represent in the Tulip Time Festival
- Fourth Grade Track & Field Day continues
- Bond work begins
- Hamilton shines during State Track Meet
- Mrs. Ferrell welcomes a former student as a job shadow
- Girls tennis wins Regionals
- ..... Plus so much more!

April & May 2024

# FULL LIST OF GRADUATING SENIORS

There are 178 Hamilton seniors who received a diploma this year. They are the following:

- A** Anderson, Avery Tatum  
Anderson, Kandra Jean  
Andrews, Caia Liese  
Arredondo, Jaelene Ann
- B** Balder, Derek James  
Banks, Alaina Dawn  
Barnhill, Sydney Nichole  
Behnke, Bethany Olivia  
Bennett, Avery Nicole  
Berghorst, Brandon Lee  
Beyer, Keegan James  
Blasky Jr, Aaron Michael  
Boehm, Benjamin Thomas  
Boeskool, Joelle Kathleen  
Bouwman, Caleigh Jo  
Brandsen, Benjamin Michael  
Brenner, Solomon Ace  
Brink, Maxwell Edward  
Brinks, Makenzie Nicole  
Brondyke, Larissa Lynn  
Bueschel, Grace Elicia  
Bush, Joshua Steven
- C** Calderon, Emilio Luis  
Carpenter, Abrianna Erin  
Carr, Alexa Noelle  
Clemenshaw, Liberty Rose  
Collier, Noah Michael  
Cook, Elijah Roy  
Cooper, Tre James  
Coughlin, Natalie Grace  
Crandall, Brody James  
Cruz, Martha Anahi  
Damaso-Rodriguez, Brian Daniel
- D** Damber, Autumn Jade  
DeJonge, Erica Marie  
DeKam, Evelyn Jin-a  
Deters, Jordyn McKaye  
DeWeerd, Ella Michelle  
Dirkse, Jacob Ross  
Divish, Ashton Kay  
Dykstra, Zinabu Ezekiel Edward
- E** Eaken, Ashlee Mae  
Eding, Justin Dale  
Eding, McKenzie Lee  
Eding, Savanna Marie
- F** Ferguson, Hoyt Kendall  
Firmiss, Allyse Rose  
Foster, Remington Isaac  
Franck, Alyssa Jo  
Fuzak, Madelyn Rose  
Fyneweaver, Josie Jane
- G** Garvin, Sophia Africa  
Gauthier, Emma-Lynn Jean  
Geiger, Jonah Thomas  
Genzink, Nolan Jerry  
Gilliland, Autumn Ashleigh  
Goodwin, Ethan Wayne  
Grabinski, Addison Jo  
Greydanus, Jessica Lynn  
Grunst, Natalie Sue
- H** Hager, Anevey Marie  
Hagood, Courtney Anne  
Hamlin, Colin Gabriel  
Hart, Nathan Isaac  
Haverdink, Keaton James  
Held, Anna Marie  
Heneveld, Abigail Rose  
Hernandez Lopez, Dave  
Hernandez, Brianna Grace  
Hernandez, Isaac Emmanuel  
Hernandez, Israel Aaron  
Higgins, Kyle Aaron  
Hoekman, Jacob Thomas  
Hoffman, Samuel Robert  
Huysen, Caleb Joshua
- J** Jacobsen, Ava Marie  
Jensen, Ella Mae  
Jeziarski, Thomas W  
Jipping, Brayden Allen  
Johnson, Caroline Joy
- K** Kamps, Ethan Tyler  
Kapenga, Emmaline Joy  
Klein, Josiah Christopher  
Klein, Madelyn Nicole  
Klinger, Roman Allen  
Klomprens, Morgan Faye  
Kloosterman, Hailey Marie  
Koeman, Alexis Jade  
Koets, Jack Stephen  
Koopman, Levi Allen  
Kooyers, Allysia Lynn  
Kragt, Shayna Grace  
Kraker, Evan Michael  
Krueger, Katelyn Jean
- L** Lambers, Jennifer Lynn  
Lange, Logan James  
Langeland, Joshua Andrew  
Lazarock, Adam Wayne  
Lubbers, Caleb Daniel  
Lucas, Lydia Winderbank
- M** Machiele, Jordan Lee  
Mares, Paige Marie  
Mariuz, Shane Donald  
Martin, Jonathan James Alexander  
Martinez, Raquel Camila  
Mast, Gabriel Andrew  
McCormick, Olivia Joy  
McIllwain, Justin Thomas  
McIntire, Carson David  
Medellin, Diego  
Medendorp, Jessica Lynn  
Meyer, Menamo Malachi  
Miller, Jackson Charles  
Mitchell, Jace Logan
- N** Newson, Kayla Marie  
Nyboer, Trey Alan  
Nyhof, Bailey Aiden
- O** O'Connor, Emma Grace  
Olsen, Brandon Noah  
Olsen, Michael James  
Overbeek, Olivia Faith
- P** Palacios, Ian Phillip  
Perkins, Mary-Joe Lee  
Peters, Brennan Lee  
Petoskey, Kendall Corinne  
Pfau, Mehlee Samer  
Pikaart, Nicole Breann  
Poppema, Andrew Ulysses  
Pothoff, Liam James  
Price, Lincoln Gareth  
Prince, Trenton Gerald  
Prins, Terry Hunter
- R** Risedorph, Benjamin Lewis  
Rookus, Colton Robert  
Rouse, Landen Ronald  
Ruggles, Izabelle Mae  
Rynsburger, Aiden Christopher
- S** Sal, Justin Michael  
Sal, Wyatt Alexander  
Schaub, Willard Joseph  
Schmucker, Logan Thomas  
Scholten, Makena Haily  
Schultz, Ayden Jose  
Sharp, Benjamin Jon  
Shelton, Kyrstina Joann  
Sisson, Madison May  
Slagh, Peter Frank  
Smith, Haylee Ann  
Springer, Aliyah Rose  
Stewart, Sierra Alyona
- T** Talsma, Evan Russell  
Taylor, Makylah Jean  
Thompson, Brady Lee James  
Tubergen, Faith Elizabeth  
Tucker, Bryce Jerrold  
Tucker, Grace Hope  
Tummel, Hannah Rae
- V** Valenzuela, Jazmin Nadia Renae  
VanBeukering, Audrey Leilana  
Vanden Berg, Abigail Grace  
VanDerHulst, Leah Ann  
VanderKamp, Austin Kendall  
VanDerMeulen, Avery D  
Vandevusse, Kendra Rose  
VanDyke, Conner G  
VanOrder, Jodi Lee  
Veen, Kacie Jo  
Veenstra, Lucas Scott  
Vigil, Seth Miguel
- W** Walters, Nathan Dale  
Warnock, Isaac James  
Webbert, Finley Amber  
Wieling, Trevor Joel  
Williamson, Kaden Andrew  
Windon, Samuel Thomas  
Wisniewski, Steven Jack  
Wolters, Tanner Elliot
- Z** Zakordonska, Emiliia







## Class of 2024 Top Ten Graduates

From left to right (in no order): Joshua Bush, McKenzie Eding, Evan Talsma, Leah VanDerHulst, Joshua Langeland, Caroline Johnson, Liam Pothoff, Alyssa Franck, Benjamin Risedorph, Nathan Hart.

### VALEDICTORIAN ALYSSA FRANCK



Alyssa Franck, the daughter of Doug and Jackie Franck, is the Valedictorian of the Class of 2024. Alyssa maintains a 4.2 GPA, a 1490 SAT, became an Eagle Scout after building a rain garden behind Blue Star Elementary, and has also been heavily involved in band, theater, tennis, and National Honor Society. After graduation, she plans to attend Michigan Tech for chemical engineering.

“Hamilton High School is a family,” Franck said. “The teachers are amazing and the student body is as well. I know I will be successful because of this community, it’s just a place where we all help each other. It’s a special place because despite being a rural public school system, it offers so many opportunities for students to grow and succeed.”

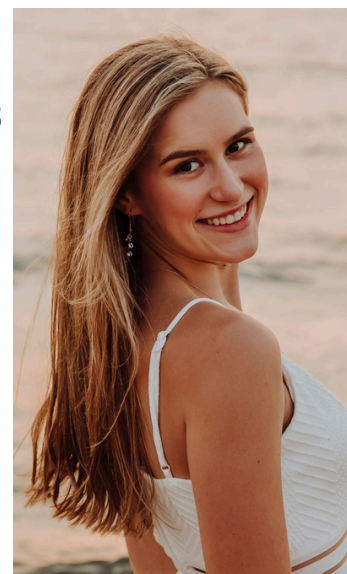
Scan the QR Code to see the video with Alyssa and Leah as they take a look back at their experience at HHS!

SCAN ME



### SALUTATORIAN LEAH VANDERHULST

Leah VanDerHulst, daughter of Dave and Melissa VanDerHulst, maintains a 4.18 GPA and a 1480 SAT. In school, Leah is a part of the National Honor Society and the yearbook class. Outside of school, she does competitive dance in a variety of styles and also assists in teaching dance. In the fall, Leah plans to attend Hope College to study nursing.



“Hamilton has such an amazing community aspect that has been so much fun to be a part of. From Hawkeye Hometown Tailgates to parades and other pop-up events, it feels like Hamilton is about more than just education and cares about bringing the community together. Everyone here wants you to succeed and everyone is willing to help. No matter if you’ve never had a class with a certain teacher or you haven’t talked to someone very much before, they will help you to the best of their ability.”

# CLASS OF 2024 SENIOR AWARDS



Scan this QR Code for a list of all 2024 Senior Award winners!

## Art Award:

Natalie Coughlin

## Athletic Boosters Scholarships:

Jackson Miller

Benjamin Boehm

Abigail Heneveld

Joelle Boeskool

## Athletic Commitment Award:

Bethany Behnke

Carson McIntire

Josiah Klein

Jackson Miller

Jennifer Lambers

## Business Education Award:

Michael Olsen

## CHS Grifhorst-Jordan Award:

Bethany Behnke

## Daughters of American Revolution Good Citizens:

Caroline Johnson

## Drama Award - Musical:

Jordyn Deters

## Drama Award - Pit Orchestra:

Evan Talsma

## Drama Award - Straight Play:

Caroline Johnson

## Hamilton Way Award:

Mehlee Pfau

## Instrumental Music Award:

Caroline Johnson

## Julie Genzink Scholarship for Golf and Tennis:

Natalie Grunst

## Language Arts Award:

Alyssa Franck

## Mathematics Award:

Leah VanDerHulst

## Outstanding Senior Female Athlete:

Bethany Behnke

## Outstanding Senior Male Athlete:

Benjamin Boehm

## Patricia Winchester Vanderbilt Scholarship Award:

Bethany Behnke

## Roger and Louise Brinks Scholarship Award:

Emmaline Kapenga

## Science Award:

Caroline Johnson

## Social Studies Award:

Addison Grabinski

## Spanish Award:

Hannah Tummel

## Vocal Music Award:

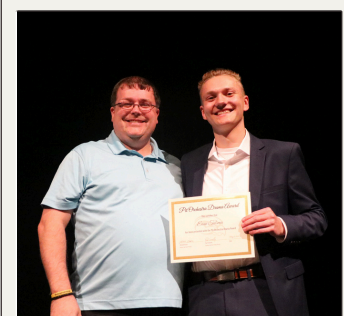
Mehlee Pfau



Art Award winner Natalie Coughlin with teacher, Lisa Riley.



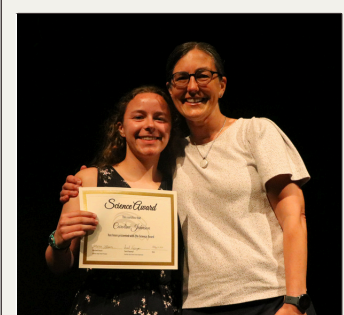
Julie Genzink Scholarship for Golf and Tennis recipient Natalie Grunst with Coach Steve Lubbers.



Evan Talsma, winner of the Pit Orchestra Drama Award with teacher, Paul Connelly.



Athletic Commitment award given to athletes who have received 12 varsity letters during their high school career.



Science Award winner Caroline Johnson with teacher Sarah Kapenga.



# MEHLEE PFAU WINS 'HAMILTON WAY' AWARD

**Award recognizes a graduate who exemplifies integrity, compassion, selflessness, and perseverance in the face of difficulty.**

Mehlee Pfau has been heavily involved in extra-curriculars throughout her four years at Hamilton High School. Pfau has been in women's chorale, National Honors Society, and on the girls tennis team all while being on the HHS Honor Roll consistently. Despite all of her involvement and accolades, it has taken a lot of work to overcome some of the adolescent struggles she has experienced. Mehlee was officially diagnosed in 2022 during her sophomore year of high school, though her parents noticed tics as early as 3rd grade. The tics made school difficult for her socially and academically. While it was a lot to go through, she learned how to handle it all with a smile, a positive mindset, and with the assistance from her friends and staff members at Hamilton.



“ I’ve learned that instead of letting Tourette Syndrome define me, I started defining it for others and teaching others about it. I’m always happy to be a shoulder for others and help build strength and a community for others who have it. Overcoming it is something that is very meaningful to me.”

While announcing the award, Hamilton High School principal Mitch Bosch says Pfau has been “confident, optimistic, and courageous approach at every obstacle.” The award is selected by staff members at HHS. Bosch says they made an outstanding decision.

“Every adult that was asked about this person said they are kind, compassionate, and always willing to help others in need. She has gone through so much adversity but does it with positivity and selflessness,” Bosch added at Senior Awards Night on Tuesday, May 21.

After her recent graduation, Pfau says her hope is to become a dog groomer as she gets set to enroll at a trade school in Lansing.

“I really hope that in the future, people are kind and loving to one another, no matter what they’re going through,” Pfau smiled. “Even through my battle with Tourette’s, I’ve had to look at the positive side, this is me and I hope people can find that inner part about themselves and be a bright light for those around them and for Hamilton.”

Scan the QR code for the video interview and spotlight on Mehlee!



SCAN ME

## HHS SENIORS SURPRISED WITH LETTERS FROM YEARS AGO

The Hamilton High School Class of 2024 was surprised on Monday, May 6 with letters that they had written to themselves years ago. One by one, HHS teacher Katie Jarvis called up seniors to receive their letters that were kept by middle school teacher Katie Lillmars and high school teacher Tyler Robinson.

As the students opened up their envelopes or packet, there were a lot of smiles, laughs, and some serious moments. For many, it was something they had completely forgotten about.

“This is the letter I wrote to myself during freshman year and it’s really funny, I said ‘I know college is expensive so I put twenty dollars in this envelope for you to spend as you wish, \*cough\* \*cough\* college,’” laughed senior Jessica Medendorp holding a \$20 bill.

For fellow senior Remington Foster, one of his laughs came when he read what video games were popular when he was in sixth grade, with a mention of Fortnite season 4 in his letter.

Others mentioned their favorite teachers, wrote about the crazy times of COVID, their friends, and much more.

“I put a list of my friends down from sixth grade and some of them are still my friends today, so I thought that was pretty cool,” said senior Michael Olsen. “My friend Seth, one of my best friends now, apparently I was friends with him in sixth grade and I don’t remember being super close with him, that’s pretty cool.”



# HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL NAMED ONE OF THE TOP HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE NATION BY U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT!



Hamilton High School has once again been named one of the top high schools in the country by the U.S. News & World Report. The rankings take into account students who take at least one AP exam, passed an AP exam, mathematics, reading, and science proficiency, and graduation rate.

"This is an outstanding accomplishment that recognizes the hard work of our students, staff, and families," said Hamilton High School principal, Mitch Bosch. "Continuing to improve our student readiness for college, graduation rate, and local standing is an incredible honor. It reflects our student's dedication, great teaching abilities, and community support for education."

## SANDYVIEW ELEMENTARY HELPS SUPPORT STUDENTS IN THEIR PREPARATION FOR THE MSTEP TEST

Scan the QR code for a look into the MSTEP Prep Day!



For the second consecutive year, the teachers at Sandyview Elementary are getting creative to help prepare their students for what can be an intimidating MSTEP (Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress).

However, the prep day put on by Mrs. Kim Gluper and Mrs. Lisa Schreur is created to help calm the nerves of the students while making it more of a fun challenge. This year's theme was an Aloha Luau with leis and other decorations in the classroom as well as soft Hawaiian music. Third and fourth grade students were partnered together to solve different work sheets focusing on math and ELA.

"We're doing this as an undercover MSTEP prep," said Mrs. Glupker, "The students were partnered up to help each other in their problem solving. It's a really fun way to lessen the stress for next week's test."

Sandyview Elementary staff members and parent volunteers also came together to provide a hot breakfast the morning of the testing!



## HAMILTON RESIDENT JIM VENLET GIVES BACK AS A HAWKEYE KIDS STAFF MEMBER

Hamilton resident Jim Venlet has always been supportive of his local Hamilton Community School district but he has recently taken that support to the next level. After retiring from the manufacturing industry after 45 years, Venlet started to brainstorm ways he could give something back to his community. In early May, Venlet began working for the Hawkeye Kids Before & After School Childcare program at Hamilton Elementary.

"I think I can help be a positive influence on some of these kids," Venlet explained. "It has been awesome, I've been a popular guy. I feel blessed that the kids have already taken to me so much."

Between playing with cars, doing crafts, planting helping with the indoor garden and playing gaga ball outdoors with the kids, Mr. Jim is a busy guy every morning.

"This makes me feel so thankful that the kids have accepted me like this," he added. "It looks like my goal of giving something back is going to work out, not just for me, but for the kids."



Scan the QR code to watch the video on Mr. Jim!



# HMS SECRETARY KELLI KLINGENBERG RETIRES AFTER 25 YEARS OF SERVICE



“ Ms. Kelli always has a smile on her face and helps keep the school organized, she always makes my day and several students’ days better. We will miss her but I hope she has a great retirement.”

The decision to disconnect from the phone, plug in her walkie talkie, and sail off into retirement from Hamilton Community Schools is an emotional one for Hamilton Middle School icon and secretary Ms. Kelli Klingenberg. After all, Hamilton Community Schools are in her blood.

After graduating from Hamilton High School, Klingenberg quickly returned to the district as a secretary at Blue Star Elementary in 1999. On top of working in the district, ‘Ms. Kelli’ also married her high school sweetheart and also began raising their family in Hamilton.

After 17 years at Blue Star, Klingenberg transferred to Hamilton Middle School, the building she had attended from seventh to twelfth grade.

“It was like coming home,” Klingenberg recalled. “The culture here hasn’t changed and the staff here is amazing, we’re like a family. Everyone here cares about one another. As a community, we are truly blessed to have the best teachers right here in Hamilton.”

That family feeling paired with the feeling of assisting students every day is what makes the decision to retire so difficult for Klingenberg. Every day is something new – from medical emergencies, assigning substitute teachers, navigating pickups and bus transportation, and everything in between, there’s no such thing as a slow day for Kelli and her partner in crime, Kris Henrickson.

“If you’ve ever ventured into the middle school, you know it’s a popping place. Kris and I are always laughing and having fun while working,” Klingenberg added. “I will miss laughing with Kris. I will miss doing the daily announcements with Kris too. We are so close that we often finish each other’s sentences during announcements - we make a great team! I will miss her so much!”

The usual upbeat and smiling Klingenberg couldn’t help but tear up while talking about retirement after her 25 years in the district.

“I’m getting emotional,” she said with tears in her eyes. “I love giving students high fives, I’m going to miss that. We have high school students that come back to see us too.”

Hamilton Middle School 8th grade student Silas VanderZwaag was one of the several students who were caught off guard and saddened by the news of the retirement.

“Ms. Kelli always has a smile on her face and helps keep the school organized, she always makes my day and several students’ days better. We will miss her but I hope she has a great retirement,” Silas added.

As for what’s next, she isn’t sure but she’s looking forward to family time and not being on a specific schedule every day during the school year.

“I’m going to take a leap of faith and I’m going to go out there and start something new. Whatever my next chapter is, I know it’s going to be great.”

Scan the QR code for Kelli Klingenberg’s retirement video!



## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2024 RETIREES!



**Jane Schutter**

28 Years

MTSS  
Paraprofessional  
(Bentheim Elementary)

**Krista Walters**

26 Years

Speech Pathologist

**Clausene Carlson**

30 Years

Resource Room  
(Hamilton Elementary)

**Lori Lohman**

22 Years

Executive Asst.  
to the  
Superintendent

**Kelli Klingenberg**

17 Years

Hamilton  
Middle School  
Secretary

**Ken Couturier**

12 Years

Hamilton High School  
Custodian & Bus Driver

**Lori VanDussen**

17 Years

Hamilton  
Transportation  
Dispatcher

**Patricia Joostberns**

13 Years

Custodian  
(Blue Star Elementary)

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



# AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH: HAMILTON ELEMENTARY LINKS PROGRAM REACHES NEW HEIGHTS



A LINKS group of Avery H., Rylan P., Cole S., and Annie S., with Ms. Amy Bufka.

The Hamilton Elementary LINKS (Learning, Involvement, Networking, Kindness, Support) program is in its third year and has become a popular opportunity for students. What initially started with a lack of student peers years ago has now turned into an overabundance of LINKS looking to assist their friends with autism.

"We only had a couple students that would sign up to be a LINK when we started the program because nobody really knew what it was," said ASD teacher and LINKS coordinator, Amy Bufka. "Now, we have whole classrooms that are signing up, it's remarkable."

The program's growth has spread far beyond the few monthly scheduled meetings between the ASD student and their LINKS. These friendships are now growing on the playground, in classrooms, in the lunchroom, and outside of school.

"It's so important because the kids with autism just want friends like everybody else, and they want to be included, they just don't always know or have the capabilities to ask to join in on activities," Bufka added.

4th grade student Annie Slagh has loved being a part of the program and assisting the ASD students. On Tuesday, her and two other LINKS joined their classmate Cole for a half an hour scheduled meeting where they learned more about what they have in common and played games together.

“They're not much different than us,” Slagh added. “I can share my interests with them because we like the same things, and neither of us like the loud cafeterias and things like that.”

With eight students in Amy Bufka's ASD program this year, and a few fourth graders as well, they're excited to grow upon their friendships at Hamilton Middle School and beyond.

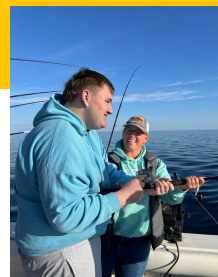
"It's really important because we need to know how to interact with each other," said Slagh, "If you learn how to interact at a young age, we will know how to communicate when we're adults."

Throughout April, Hamilton Elementary is celebrating Autism Awareness Month and bringing recognition to the ASD students. In the hallways, students have enjoyed reading 'Fact/Myth' cards about autism and learning how to be inclusive of everybody at their school.

## MS. WESTRA, MR. STIELSTRA'S CLASSES LEARN LIFE SKILLS FISHING ON LAKE MICHIGAN

On April 8 and 10, students from Mr. Stielstra and Ms. Westra's classes at Hamilton High School went fishing on Lake Michigan, courtesy of Powderhorn Sportfishing Charters and Safari Club International's Michigan Chapter! The students hit the lake bright and early and learned about the different strategies to find fish, what the fish eat, what the predator/ prey chain is like, and a lot of other valuable life lessons. The students all had a blast!

Thank you for the invite, Captain Tim and First Mate Rosie!





# 'PREP4SUCCESS DAY' TEACHES HHS STUDENTS EMPLOYABILITY & WORK PLACE SKILLS



Scan the QR code for a video inside 'Prep4Success Day'



All Hamilton High School freshmen and sophomore students experienced 'Prep4Success' day in April. The day focuses on employability skills for all students and how to get a job, keep a job, and be the best employee possible.

“Students worked on things like job interviews, applications, and active listening skills but they also learned how to have tough conversations with bosses and teamwork,” added HCS Work Based Learning coordinator, Ashley Meyer.

30-plus local business professionals helped make the day possible, including Hamilton parent and Haworth employee Carolyn Reuschel.

"I was so excited to be a part of the Prep4Success Day at Hamilton today because I think it's so awesome what Ashley and Hamilton Community Schools are doing to prepare students for the real world after high school and how it's different for everybody," Reuschel said.

The students were split into 30 groups, each with at least one business professional to help guide them through the day, but also place their own specific advice and mentorship onto the students.

"My message is to be prepared for your interview and your application and take the time to practice for those moments," added Jessica Wallace-Uckele from Zeigler Auto Group. "We want the students to put their best foot forward."

While some students have had jobs, or currently have them, the day also added to their skills about communicating with their bosses and supervisors and being a leader in the workplace.

"My group had two professionals working with us today," explained sophomore Emery Andrews, "One was an interviewer and one was in the military, and it was really interesting to hear from them about their jobs and what goes into them."

## HAMILTON TRACK & FIELD PROGRAM RAISES THE STANDARD

The Hamilton boys track and field varsity team spent time atop the state rankings in Division 2 this spring. The Hawkeyes, led by 14 senior boys had a lot of success from winning the conference title, to finishing second at regionals, and third at MITCA team state. Individually, both the boys and girls track and field programs have worked hard to raise the standard in Hamilton. Three Hamilton High School records have been broken this year, including Aliyah Springer's girls discus record at 138'1", Ben Boehm's 21.7 in the 200 meter dash, and Abatu Dykstra with a 1:56.8 in the 800 meter.

"Our seniors have lead the way to a very successful seasons with leadership, sportsmanship and great work ethic," said boys track and field coach, Kevin Spotts. "We lean on them to keep our spirits up and provide examples of how to be student athletes. I am very proud to be associated with these men."

This spring also saw a school record for state qualifiers with 16 Hawkeyes making the state meet! Better yet, those state finalists had a chance to represent their hometown at that Division 2 MHSAA state meet which Hamilton hosted on Saturday, June 1, with 1,160 athletes from all over the state competing in front of a packed Hamilton Stadium. Aliyah Springer would finish fifth in the state in discus, Abatu Dykstra finished 8th in the 800 meter, and the 4x100 meter relay finished sixth! The big moment of the day for Hawkeyes was in the boys 4x400 relay of Ben Boehm, Abatu Dykstra, Gabe Schrottenboer, and Josh Langeland also won the state championship with a 3:23.40!

Meanwhile, the Hamilton Middle School boys track and field team also set seven school records this spring! A very successful spring for the Hawkeye track and field teams! What an impressive spring for the Hawkeyes. A big thank you to Coach Kevin Spotts, who is retiring after 26 years of coaching track!

### GIRLS STATE QUALIFIERS

Springer, Aliyah: Discus, Shot Put  
Tamminga, Bella: Pole Vault



Scan the QR Code for the full story & All-State listing!

### BOYS STATE QUALIFIERS

Boehm, Ben: 100 M Dash, 4x200, 4x100, 200 M Dash  
Bronkhorst, Jeren: 4x200, 4x400  
Calderon, Mo: 4x100  
Dykstra, Abatu: 4x800, 800 M Run, 4x400  
Dykstra, Ben: 4x800  
Hawkins, Brooks: 4x100  
Hulst, Hudson: 110 M Hurdles  
Langeland, Josh: 4x800, 400 M Dash, 4x400  
McIntire, Carson: 4x800  
Schrottenboer, Gabe: 4x200, 4x400  
VanderKamp, Austin: 4x200, 4x100

Substitutions:  
Crandall, Brody: 4x800 for Abatu Dykstra  
Friedrichsen, AJ: 4x200 for Gabe Schrottenboer  
Kraker, Evan: 4x800 for Josh Langeland

### MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS TRACK & FIELD RECORDS

800 M Relay	1:40.1	K. Tamminga, Z. Kluting, G. Hulst, G. Tidd
100 M Dash	:11.4	Grayson Tidd
400 M Dash	:51.5	Grayson Tidd
3200 M Relay	9:38.5	E. Tubergen, Z. Bain, C. Morrison, N. Hunderman
70 M Dash	:08.3	Grayson Tidd
200 M Dash	:23.0	Grayson Tidd
400 M Relay	:48.3	A. Newcomer, H. Basler, G. Tidd, K. Bild



# NEW PILOT PROGRAM HELPS HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS TO GRADUATE WITH A CDL



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



**Gabe Mast (left) and Max Brink (right) graduated with not only their high school diploma, but a CDL as well.**

Two Hamilton High School seniors are getting prepared for life through a brand new pilot program, believed to be the first of its kind in West Michigan. In April and early May, Max Brink and Gabe Mast attended daily classes at FCG Truck Driving School in Byron Center, learning everything from the shift pattern, proper safety inspection, parts on the trucks, angles of the trailer, and of course, getting experience on the roadways.

“After numerous conversations with local business partners, the need for workers with a Commercial Drivers License became very apparent in our community,” said Hamilton Community Schools Work Based Learning coordinator, Ashley Meyer. “Upon completion of truck driving school and passing their road tests, these students graduated with not only a Hamilton High School diploma, but also their CDL. We really believe in getting our students hands-on experiences in what they want to do next in their lives.”

Bill Baareman, owner and president of FCG Truck Driving School says in his 24 years of experience in the industry, he hasn’t seen high school students get this opportunity.

“It is very rare to have two seniors still in school obtain their CDL prior to graduation,” Baareman added. “Most of our students don’t get to us until they’re at least 19 years of age because they find their career first and then realize they need to get their CDL and have to miss work to do that.”

Instead, this Hamilton Community Schools pilot program took two students who knew they were going right into the workforce and needed a CDL and afforded them the opportunity to get it done during the school day.

“I think this is really unique,” Brink said, “To get the opportunity to actually work towards our career while we’re still in high school is awesome.”

Baareman says not only did the two students succeed, the instructors had conversations with each of them about testing out early. After completing their 160 hours of drive time, various other trainings, and passing their road test on May 7, Brink and Mast are now ready to get to work and drive for their employers, Mast at Andy Mast Greenhouses and Brink at Bayside Concrete.

“This is a big help and it’s definitely nice to have this done with getting out of high school,” Mast said, “We’re working towards our careers now instead of taking a month off of work after graduation. In our community, there are some kids who aren’t interested in college or can’t go to college. The Work Based Learning program allows us to work and do the things we love, I think that’s great for the community and the students enjoy that.”

Thank you to all of our community partners for helping with this program: K&R Truck Sales, Generation III Excavating, Greenmark Equipment, Heasley Seeds and FCG Truck Driving School for making this awesome opportunity possible!





# A MESSAGE FROM DR. LUSK

Hello everyone,

I hope this Transcript finds you well and enjoying the start of summer! As we concluded another exceptional school year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on our many accomplishments and express my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your unwavering support and commitment.

This year has been marked by numerous achievements across our district. Our students have excelled academically, artistically, and athletically; showcasing their talents and hard work. We celebrated many successes in our classrooms, on our stages, and on our fields, demonstrating the well-rounded education our district is proud to offer. With our continued success, it provides a platform for us to build upon for the future. With improved facilities, new curriculums, and new offerings for our students, Hamilton will continue to reach new heights!

One of the most significant highlights of this year has been the tremendous bond work that has been accomplished. Thanks to the overwhelming support from our community, we have made substantial progress on several key projects that will enhance our educational facilities and provide our students with an even better learning environment. The improvements we have seen so far are just the beginning, as we have more exciting projects lined up for this summer. These enhancements will continue to benefit our students and staff for years to come.

The sense of community in Hamilton is truly remarkable. Your involvement and support have been crucial in making this bond work possible. From attending meetings and voting to volunteering your time and resources, your contributions have had a profound impact. Together, we are building a brighter future for our children. With increased support for numerous district activities, we look to improve our Hawkeye Hometown Series, expand our career experience offerings, and continue improvements aimed at making HCS the best school district in West Michigan.

As a culminating celebration, this year's graduation ceremony was a testament to the hard work and dedication of our students, staff, and families. It was a joyous occasion, filled with pride and hope for the future. Watching our graduates walk across the stage, ready to embark on the next chapter of their lives, was a moment of immense pride for all of us. These young adults have shown resilience, perseverance, and a commitment to excellence that will undoubtedly carry them far. They embodied the Hawkeye Way!

As we look forward to the summer and the upcoming school year, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our parents and community members. Your continued support and involvement are what make Hamilton Community Schools a truly special place. Together, we have created another memorable school year, and I am excited about what the future holds for our district.

Thank you once again for your dedication and support. Have a wonderful, memorable, and restful summer. I look forward to seeing you in the fall. Take care, enjoy summer, and as always #GoHawkeyes

**Dr. Bradford Lusk | Proud Superintendent, Hamilton Community Schools**

## FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT GETS A JUMP START FROM HHS

Class of 2024 Hamilton High School graduate Michael Olsen recalls his mindset just three years ago thinking that college was out of reach.

“Freshman and sophomore year, I didn’t think college was something I could even consider,” he admitted.

Olsen, a first generation college student along with his twin brother and fellow recent HHS graduate Brandon knew with the cost of college today, he would need some help to chase his dream of pursuing a degree in marketing. However, soon thereafter, Olsen discovered all of the opportunities that Hamilton High School provides to get him to that next step.

One of those opportunities was Dan Meiste’s Business Development class, which Olsen took all three semesters of his senior year earning him 12 college credits transferable to Davenport University. To pair with those 12 credits to Davenport, Michael also received four total credit hours that transfer to any university, thanks to Meiste’s accreditation. Along with various other classes through articulation credit and dual enrollment, Michael Olsen graduated high school with 45 credits transferring this fall. That’s essentially a year and a half of college classes covered without paying a dime.

“Being a first generation college student, you look at how much it’s going to cost but having a year and a half already completed for free, it’s already so much off my plate. With this help, college is going to be much easier and much more feasible for me.”

As Olsen gets set to study marketing in college, the experience gained in Meiste’s class has already been applied to his every day life. Olsen owns a small business and says the skills learned at Hamilton High School have already been useful.

“Michael is going to be setup for success,” Meiste said, “He’s going to get through college quickly, leave with a skill set and hopefully limited to no debt.”



### 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 2024-25 school year below! These are all held at Hawk’s Nest Restaurant:

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



**District Facebook**



**District Website**



**Bond Updates**



Michael Olsen being awarded the Business Education Award from Mr. Dan Meiste at Senior Awards Night.



Scan the QR code to watch Michael’s story!





# HAMILTON STUDENTS REPRESENT WELL AT TULIP TIME FESTIVAL

Our Hamilton Community Schools students were very active yet again at the annual Tulip Time Festival. Between the Hamilton High School and Middle School bands as well as Dutch Dance, the Hawkeyes were well represented.

Despite the rain during the Kinderparade, band teacher Joe Herrick says the students thoroughly enjoyed their experience, especially students from Hamilton Middle School.

"We had a blast despite the wet weather," Herrick said. "For the middle schoolers, it is always exciting for them to do the Tulip Time parades, especially for our 7th graders who are doing it for the first time."

As for the Hamilton High School band, their experience and success over the past few years is now on full display at events like this.

"The High School Band is a group of seasoned professionals," added Herrick. "We knew they'd be great, rain or shine, and they didn't disappoint."

Meanwhile, Hamilton saw a nice uptick in involvement for Dutch Dance in 2024. Now in her 28th year of instructing Dutch Dance, Cheryl Bleeker has seen it all.

"This year, we had 17 high school dancers, which is good since numbers have been down since COVID," Bleeker said. "This year, we have students that are involved in tennis, wrestlers, showing animals, cheerleading, theater, and band. It's so fun watching them come from such interests and learn the dance and perform together."

Jennifer TenPas (pictured right) has also been involved in Dutch Dance for decades dating back to her time as a student. The kinder/middel Dutch Dance also featured a nice turnout of Hamilton students. Well done to all!



# THE FINAL DONUTS AT DAWN BRINGS SANDYVIEW ELEMENTARY PARENTS, STUDENTS & STAFF TOGETHER

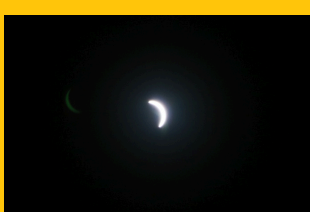
The end of the school year events at Sandyview Elementary meant much more to end the 2023-24 year ahead of the repurposing of the building next fall. On Friday, May 17, the Sandyview PTO put on another outstanding 'Donuts at Dawn' event which brought together parents, students, and staff for some breakfast, smiles, and fun on the playground.





# ECLIPSE VIEWING PARTY AT BENTHEIM ELEMENTARY!

Students around the United States were 'ooing' and 'ahing' on April 8 as the solar eclipse became visible in the afternoon. At Bentheim Elementary, all students and staff went outdoors and with their eclipse glasses on, took in the sights of roughly 94% totality. The students won't forget this awesome experience, especially since the next total solar eclipse isn't expected to occur in Michigan until the year 2099.



# MRS. ZWEERING READS AT THE WHITE HOUSE!



Hamilton Elementary kindergarten teacher Jana Zweering had a unique experience over spring break! Her husband, Tim, is currently serving on the American Egg Board, a national organization that helps coordinate the Easter Egg Roll Event at the White House.

Jana had the opportunity to serve as a guest reader during this event, alongside a few other readers including, The First Lady, Al Roker, an astronaut and a handful of familiar children's authors. She ended up reading 'The Good Egg' by Jory John & Pete Oswald. Mrs. Z spoke about her family's egg farm and then went into full Kindergarten mode while covering tricky words like "dozen." After the read aloud, Tim joined her on stage to answer egg related questions. Mrs. Z said she's incredibly grateful for the opportunity to represent educators and egg farmers!

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



All fourth grade students from Hamilton's four elementary schools came together again on May 10 for Track & Field Day at the Hamilton football stadium! A big thank you to the 40+ parent W.I.S.H. volunteers who stepped up to make this day possible!

"This a way to get all of the kids together from all four 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!

“ I was really impressed and pleased with my class' desire and want to do as well as we could for track and field day,” said Lancaster. “We talked about what a team means and that sometimes means maybe running or doing an event that wouldn't be your first choice. My group was all in. The class was determined and focused to do well. I'm very proud of all of them for their effort and wanting to push themselves.”



# TEN YEARS AFTER HAVING HER AS A STUDENT, JODIE FERRELL WELCOMES BAILEY KAY BACK TO HER CLASSROOM

Ten years since being in her classroom as a student, Hamilton High School junior Bailey Kay is once again learning from her former teacher Jodie Ferrell and her 34 years of experience. Ferrell, a first grade teacher at Hamilton Elementary, says Kay reached out to her seeking a two month placement in her classroom through her Teacher Academy program at the Careerline Tech Center.



For four hours per day, three days per week, Kay dedicated herself to shadowing Ferrell and assisting anywhere she could. Her experience turned into a mutually beneficial one, benefiting both her future and the current 1st graders in Ferrell's classroom.

"Bailey was adored by myself and all of the students here," Ferrell explained. "When her time with us came to an end, there were some major hugs and even a few tears from the kids."

Kay says her bond with Ferrell ten years ago as a student is something she still thinks back to frequently. It was that bond that made her want to return to Hamilton Elementary and learn from her yet again. In fact, Kay recalls struggling with reading in first grade and not enjoying it at all. However, Ferrell not only assisted her, she motivated her using ice cream as a reward. Since that moment, Kay has always thrived in reading and learned to enjoy it.

"I still remember that experience ten years ago," explained Kay, "That experience helped me realize I wanted to teach because of how much that impacted me and made me think about the impact I can have on other kids as well."

The valuable experience to return to Hamilton Elementary and learn from one of the best educators you'll find is something Kay doesn't take for granted, and it helped reassure her that she is picking the correct career field.

"My time with Mrs. Ferrell's class was an experience I am very thankful for," Kay said. "I learned about classroom management, day to day class activities, and teaching methods. Throughout my eight weeks, working along side her I was reminded how much I want to be a teacher because of how I can help kids grow and the memories I can make with them. It makes me so happy to see how much the kids grew even in the little time I was working with them."

# WELCOME LAURA ZEINSTRAS AS DIRECTOR OF TEACHING & LEARNING, MAT REHKOPF TAKES OVER NEW ROLE

To help further our district's commitment to academic and career readiness, Hamilton Community Schools is excited to share the following roles in our district, effective July 1.

Welcome Laura Zeinstra as our new Director of Teaching & Learning! Laura comes to us from Byron Center Public Schools, where she has spent the previous 7 years in a similar role. She has over 25 years of experience in education and is excited to join the Hawkeye Family!

Due to growth in career and college readiness and community support in these areas, Mat Rehkopf will now be leading a new role in our district as the Director of Career, College & Innovative Programs. Mat has been with Hamilton Community Schools for 21 years and is excited to help all graduates know their next step in life after graduation.

"Hamilton Community Schools has continued to provide the best options and supports for students regardless of their life path after high school. To best prepare staff and students for the options after high school, HCS has invested in our students' future by having two positions led by highly skilled and knowledgeable people. Mat and Laura bring years of experience and deep knowledge of each focus area to our district and will provide guidance to our district which will offer unique and unmatched options/preparation for our staff and students," said Hamilton Community Schools superintendent, Dr. Bradford Lusk.





# TEAM BALANCE HELPS GUIDE HAMILTON GIRLS TENNIS TO FIRST-EVER REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

2024 was a historic spring for the Hamilton girls tennis program. On May 16, the Hawkeyes scored 24 points to beat Otsego and the rest of the field to win the Division 3 regional title, led by No. 1 doubles regional champions Joelle Boeskool and Haylie Peterman. At No. 2 doubles, Dani Wedeven and Drew VanHouten also claimed the regional trophy after winning the conference at their flight as well. Other regional champions were Sophia Blauwkamp and Abigail Atwood at No. 3 doubles and Lydia Lucas and Emmaline Kapenga at No. 4 doubles to sweep the day. It was a tremendous achievement for not only this group of girls, but the program as a whole.

“The girls did a lot of work in the offseason and we have been coming along each year and developing,” Coach Steve Lubbers told the Holland Sentinel afterwards, “We don’t have a light’s out player, but a completely balanced team. It is big for our program to know that this is possible. Success breeds success.”

As Coach Lubbers states, the balance on the team was incredibly balanced. However, at No. 1 doubles, Boeskool and Peterman proved to be an incredible combination. The pair finished the year with a 25-4 overall record, winning one match at state.

“This season has been incredible,” said senior captain Natalie Grunst. “We had an amazing record as a team and individually and I’m very proud of the progress all of us have made. I loved being on a team with all of these girls and they made my final season a special one!”

The Hawkeyes finished the state finals 19th overall in Division 3 as the program looks to build upon this success next year and into the future! Way to go, ladies!



The Hawkeyes pose with the regional trophy on Thursday, May 16 at Allegan.

# BLUE STAR ELEMENTARY TEACHES STUDENTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF MEMORIAL DAY & THE AMERICAN FLAG

On Friday, May 24, just days before Memorial Day, Blue Star Elementary principal Kari Huckaby and their staff held an assembly to discuss the importance of Memorial Day, our American Flag, and National Anthem. School Resource Officer Deputy Joe Knapp, an Air Force veteran, took time to chat with the students about honoring those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice serving our country.

“The flag means a lot to me and all Military people, there are a lot of people that died defending that flag, okay?” Mentioned Deputy Knapp, “Memorial Day is we celebrate and remember all those who died fighting for our country. A lot of people get Veterans Day and Memorial Day mixed up, Memorial Day is not our day, it’s a day to remember the fallen.”

Music teacher Becca Weller also discussed the National Anthem and the importance of stopping what you’re doing and placing your hand over your heart to respect the flag. All Blue Star students then took the time to rise, place their hand on their heart, and sang the Star Spangled Banner together. Fourth grade teacher Ms. Jess played a video of her brother and other veterans addressing the students as well. Way to go, Blue Star!



## Save the Date for the Fourth Annual Hawkeye Hometown Tailgate on Friday, September 20, 2024!



Hamilton Community Schools and Cultivate Community Church are excited to host the Fourth Annual Hawkeye Hometown Tailgate on Friday, September 20, 2024 at Hamilton Middle School and Cultivate Church! The Hawkeye varsity football team will take on Wayland at home 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.





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**\*\*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**

## A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

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 2024!