

Week of February 5-9, 2024

**Monday,  
February 5, 2024 (A1)**

**Tuesday,  
February 6, 2024 (B1)**

**Wednesday,  
February 7, 2024 (A2)**

Creative Writing Club  
Dance Club  
Gr. 8 A-Team  
Intro the Woods Rehearsal  
Jazz Band  
Let's Learn Merengue  
Math Club  
Mock Trial  
Newspaper/News Club  
Student Council

Thursday,  
February 8, 2024 (B2)

Test of Emergency Communications  
10:00 AM

Staff Meeting (B-60)  
2:50 PM - 3:50 PM

Ski & Snowboard Club Trip  
3:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Friday,  
February 9, 2024 (A3)

Healthy Heroes  
2:50 PM - 5:00 PM

HMS Student Council Movie Night (6-8 PM)

Parents and students can access calendar information on the HMS

A graphic celebrating Black History Month. At the top, the word "CELEBRATING" is written in a red, stylized font. Below it, "Black History Month" is written in large, bold, yellow letters. Underneath, "FEB" and "MAR" are written in white, flanking a large "01-01" which is also in white. The background is black. In the top left corner, there is a partial view of a red and yellow flag. In the top right corner, there is a small crest featuring a shield with a cross and a book. At the bottom, there are several raised fists of different skin tones, symbolizing solidarity and protest.

February marks the beginning of Black History Month, a time dedicated to honoring the rich contributions and legacies of Black Americans throughout history. This month provides us with a valuable opportunity to deepen our understanding of the struggles, triumphs, and enduring impact of Black individuals and communities. We will be hosting various events and learning moments throughout the month to celebrate and honor Black history, culture, and achievements.

Our students have 30 minutes for lunch each day at HMS. They report to the cafeteria and have a choice of eating a packed lunch from home or a purchased lunch from the Whitson's cafeteria. Students always have an opportunity to purchase school meals and snacks. We understand lunch is an important meal, and we will always

help a student get a healthy meal at school.

We are experiencing a new challenge during lunch, and we need parents to help us make a correction. Some students are ordering food from local restaurants using Uber Eats as a means to get the food to school. This practice must stop immediately. Over 850 students attend HMS, and our office staff cannot manage the delivery of food. In addition, it increases the volume of guests arriving at HMS and creates a concern for school safety. Parents are always welcome to deliver lunch to their children before their assigned lunch periods. However, a parent cannot order lunch and send it to school via a food delivery service. **In summary, students and parents should not order lunch to be delivered to HMS by food delivery service, such as Uber Eats, Door Dash, Grub Hub, etc.** Moving forward, if food is delivered to school, it will be held in the main office for parents to pick up at their convenience. If you have any questions, please contact Principal Coogan at [mcoogan@hamden.org](mailto:mcoogan@hamden.org).



**HMS STUDENT COUNCIL  
MOVIE NIGHT: THE PRINCESS &  
THE FROG**

Friday February 9th, 2024  
6 PM to 8PM

Mr. Xavier and our Student Council are hosting a movie night this week. The first 100 students to sign up will be registered for the program. The movie is free and snacks will be available for the following cost:  
\$5 a pizza slice

\$2 a juice box

\$1 a water

\$3 a baked goods

Questions? Please email Mr. Xavier at [gxavier@hamden.org](mailto:gxavier@hamden.org).

**HAMDEN HEROES**

Superintendent Highsmith provides a special opportunity for school administrators to recognize members of the HMS team who make a positive impact on the community. On Tuesday evening, Ms. Coffey, Ms. Coogan, and Mr. Ortiz are going to shine the spotlight on the following heroes.



**Melanie C., Grade 8 Student**

Melanie is an eighth-grade scholar who embraces the philosophy "hard work pays off!" Melanie shared that she dedicates time each day to study and read, and she is a frequent visitor to the Miller Memorial Library. As a result, she consistently earns high honors and actively participates in the National Junior Honor Society. Melanie is artistic; she plays clarinet in our school band and participates in an enrichment art class. She also participates in the Mock Trial Club. Melanie's teachers have great respect for her, and they believe Melanie's strong character is her most admirable trait. She is kind to everyone, and always strives to be helpful. She aspires to be in the medical field as she loves the idea of caring for others. Hamden is fortunate to have Melanie as a member of the community.



**Savion C., Grade 8 Student**

Savion stands out not only for his academics but also for his outstanding character and genuine passion for learning. For the past two years, he has consistently demonstrated a remarkable work ethic, intellectual curiosity, and a strong commitment to personal and academic growth. Savion plays the baritone horn in our school band, and he has developed a love of music. His personality attracts others! He is kind and respectful to everyone, and he has the power to engage his peers and teachers. For instance, Savion enjoys reading, and his grandmother gave him a book about the game, "Dungeons and Dragons" when he was younger. He was instantly hooked, and he worked with his art teacher to host and lead a club at HMS. Savion also visits the Memorial Miller Library to play different games with other kids from our town. Savion has many passions, including running. His commitment to exercise is impressive as he runs almost every day. Savion is a great person, and we feel fortunate to work and learn with him at Hamden Middle School.



### **Officer Vincent DeStefanis, Community Leader**

Officer Vinny is a member of the Hamden Police Department who was assigned to serve as a School Resource Officer at Hamden Middle School in August 2023. Officer Vinny's transition to our team was seamless; with little time, it feels as though he has always been here. Teachers, students, and families depend on his support and guidance, and they seek him out in times of need. Of course, Officer Vinny has a keen focus on school safety. He assists with all emergency drills and offers suggestions for improvement. He is dutiful and strives to do his best each day. However, we notice some of the things Office Vinny does above and beyond the call of duty. Officer Vinny volunteered to coach our boys soccer team this fall. "Coach" Vinny was fantastic, and his players quickly gained an appreciation for his enthusiasm. The team had a "winning" season, especially because they had the opportunity to get to know Officer Vinny better. Officer Vinny has outstanding interpersonal skills, and he quickly forms positive relationships with students. We always see him talking with students and helping them to make positive choices. School Resource Officers play an important role in schools, and Officer Vinny has proven to be a natural leader in our community.



### **Mr. Bill Gunn, Music Teacher**

Bill Gunn is a cherished music teacher at HMS. He is currently the most senior member of our team, as he has taught the longest at HMS. It is a pleasure to work with Mr. Gunn for many reasons. He loves music, and his passion is contagious. Mr. Gunn brings invaluable knowledge of how our music classes function and what contributes to their success. Some might say music is in Mr. Gunn's DNA. He followed in his mother's footsteps, a former music teacher in Hamden. Mr. Gunn grew up in Hamden and attended Hamden Public Schools. As a student at HHS, he was a star of the musical stage. In addition to the work Mr. Gunn does each day at HMS, he is a professional musician in his own right. He plays guitar and sings with a local band, The Sabbs Brothers. During the Christmas season, he still sings with the Royal Court Singers at the Griswold Inn in Essex. We are grateful for the opportunity to thank Mr. Gunn for his ongoing support of our community.



### **Mr. Nick Ugolik, Social Studies Teacher**

Mr. Ugolik is a life-long dragon who attended Hamden schools, including Helen Street and Hamden Middle School. He currently serves as a social studies teacher and has worked at HMS for 16 years. Over time, Mr. U has taught both 7th and 8th grade students and served as a coach for baseball, basketball, soccer, and intramural offerings at HMS. Mr. U has many superpowers, but his most impressive skill is his ability to form positive relationships with students. At HMS, we often ask students to identify an adult who they could seek out in times of need, and students most often identify Mr. U as their go to person. Recently, Mr. U has served as a team leader and has expanded his positive impact beyond the classroom. Yes, he loves to teach his content and inspires students to care about the connections between ancient civilizations and our current world -- but he mostly values teaching the whole student. We are grateful to have Mr. Ugolik on Team HMS.





### VALENTINE BEARS & PENCIL SALE SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

The NJHS will begin selling Valentine Bears (\$3.00) and Pencils (\$1.00) on Monday, February 5 and the sales will run until Feb 13. Students can make a purchase during their lunch periods in the cafeteria. The proceeds will be used to celebrate the Hamden Police Department.



### SAVE THE DATE: IXTAPA DINNER FUNDRAISER

On **Thursday, February 15th**, the HMS community is encouraged to have dinner at a local Mexican restaurant, Ixtapa. They will donate 20% of all meals purchased at the restaurant or take out. *(It does not include meals ordered through food delivery apps, like Uber orders, Grub Hub, or DoorDash.)* We hope members of the HMS community will join us. It is a great night to tell your family that you are having a treat for dinner! And, who celebrates

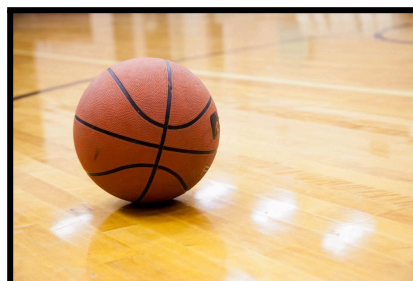
Valentines on 2/14? Smart families wait until the next day! 😊

### DRAGON PRIDE

Ask your children about our Dragon PRIDE (Present and Prepared, Respect Everyone, Insist on Safety, Determined to be your best, Engaged in the community) reward programs. Students earn PRIDE tickets by getting 'caught being good', or a system of positive reinforcement for prosocial behavior and shared values. We have recently introduced month field trips for 100 PRIDE tickets. Encourage your child to earn PRIDE tickets and save them up! All prizes can be reserved by joining our [Dragon Pride Google Classroom](#).



Hamden Public Schools will conduct community engagement sessions on February 7th and 8th at Hamden Middle School from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM. During these community engagement sessions, you will have an opportunity to provide input as it relates to our efforts to ensure that our elementary schools are racially balanced. We would also like to learn more about your experiences with the district as well as your thoughts regarding the strengths and challenges the district should consider when drafting any future plans.



### 2024 HMS BASKETBALL SEASON

We are proud of our student athletes, and we congratulate them on their outstanding achievements. Coach Kim Mallard and Coach Charles Neal are most proud of their teams. Read on to learn more...

#### *HMS Boys Basketball Team Season Review*

Coach Neal wants to highlight the honor it was to coach this group of boys in his first season as Head Coach. The 7<sup>th</sup> graders stepped up and showed their talent, while the 8<sup>th</sup> graders finished their last season at the middle school strong. Coach Neal and Coach KB planned competitive, skills-based practices that the team translated to the court in games. They showed great development, teamwork, dedication, and communication with each other and Coach Neal and Coach KB continue to build character into these young men. Coaches will continue development in the off season with conditioning and lifting in the weight room and look forward to the 2025 basketball season!

#### *HMS Girls Basketball Team Season Review*

Coach Kim would like to thank all the girls basketball players for an incredible 2024 season. A special shoutout goes to the team captains and managers for being the glue to the team. Team captains modeled great sportsmanship, leadership and support throughout the season. Managers provided snacks, encouraging words, and kept track of statistics so the team could improve. The team's dedication and hard work paid off during practice and they stuck through the season even when challenges presented themselves. Coach Kim wants to thank the team and the parents for believing in his vision and giving him one of the best seasons yet. He will cherish the 2024 girls basketball team for years to



come and he is so excited to see what next year brings.

### SPRING SPORTS 2024

**HMS Baseball Team,**

*Coach Rick DeMatties*

**HMS Softball Team,**

*Coach Kim Mallard*

Attention Student Athletes and Families: It is time to register for spring sports, including baseball and softball. Students must complete the registration process and be in good standing with their school work to be eligible for tryouts.

Here is the link:

<https://www.finalforms.com/>

Students and parents/guardians will need to BOTH register. If they have an account already from a different sport, they will still need to login in and select Spring sports- softball or baseball, and make sure everything is up to date.

An up-to-date physical is required to try out.

Students need to have a ride after practice and games (practices end at 4:30, games depend on home or away but anywhere between 5:30-6:30 is expected).

Students must be in good standing as a student athlete. They must be successfully passing their classes, and they cannot have more than 2 Fs from the second marking period.

Ms. Bergstrom, HMS Athletic Coordinator, has created a Google Classroom to support parents and students with the registration process. The code is [shxzfyp](#).

Tryouts will take place on the following dates:

March 25th: Grade 8

March 26th: Grade 7

March 27th: Callbacks

### HHS HECA PROGRAM

The purpose of this communication is to give our families and students an update as it relates to the Hamden Engineering Careers Academy (HECA) program that would be effective at the start of next school year. Specifically, Gateway Community College has notified us that the Connecticut State Community College system has made significant changes to the academic requirements for the students in the program. As such, effective at the start of next school year, our continued participation in the Associate of Science in Manufacturing Engineering Technology degree program is no longer tenable. Administration has established an alternative plan for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders that we believe is better aligned with the needs of our students, and more aptly addresses needs in the Connecticut job market and U.S. economy. We will be offering students a myriad of related electives that align with career pathways and ultimately industry certifications. Interested incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students may consider Exploration of STEAM, Green Construction & Technology, Introduction to Computer Technology, Introduction to Engineering, Introduction to Drafting & CAD, Intermediate Drafting & CAD and Manufacturing Processes. More definitive information will be presented to the curriculum committee as well as the full Board of Education.

### DUE NEXT WEEK!

### HMS 2024 YEARBOOK COVER DESIGN CONTEST

The club's first project is the

**Yearbook Cover Design Contest.**

Student artists are invited to design our yearbook covers. Students can design a cover and submit it to Ms. Santiago by Thursday, February 15th.

The winning entries will be proudly displayed as the front cover and back covers of the 2024 HMS Yearbook.

### Requirements for the Cover

#### Designs:

- 1.) Brainstorm ideas. How would you represent Hamden Middle School, including the teachers, students, and families. Don't forget our mascot the Dragon!
- 2.) Use a 8 ½ X 11 white sheet of paper.
- 3.) Leave a ½ inch border around the edge of the paper.
- 4.) Draw your artwork VERTICALLY, not horizontally.
- 5.) Keep your artwork flat and clean.
- 6.) Include our school name (Hamden Middle School) and the year (2023-2024) in your design.
- 7.) Write your first and last name on the reverse side in pencil.
- 8.) Submit your artwork to Ms. Santiago on or before Thursday, February 15th by 9 a.m. (This deadline is firm.)

Yearbook Cover Contest  
Deadline: Thursday, February 15, 2023

All student artists are invited to design our yearbook cover. We are looking for both a FRONT cover and a BACK cover. Therefore, students can submit one design to be considered for either the front or back, or they can submit a specific design for the front or back. (We are counting on your creativity!)

Requirements for the Cover Designs:

- 1.) Brainstorm ideas. How would you represent Hamden Middle School, including the teachers, students, and families. Don't forget our mascot the DRAGON!
- 2.) Use a 8 ½ X 11 white sheet of paper.
- 3.) Leave a ½ inch border around the edge of the paper.
- 4.) Draw your artwork VERTICALLY, not horizontally.
- 5.) Keep your artwork flat and clean.
- 6.) Include our school name (Hamden Middle School) and the year (2023-2024) in your design.
- 7.) Write your first and last name on the opposite side in pencil.
- 8.) Submit your artwork to Ms. Santiago, room 158, World Language-House 5, on or before Thursday, February 15 by 2:30 p.m. (This deadline is firm.)



## NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP) TESTING

Hamden Middle School will participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) on February 12, 2024. NAEP is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students know and can do in various subjects. It is different from our state and local assessments because it is a common measure of achievement across the country. The assessment is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics, within the U.S Department of Education. The results are released as The Nation's Report Card, which provides information about student achievement to educators, parents, policymakers and the public. If your child has been chosen to take part in this assessment you will be receiving an email this week.

The assessment takes approximately 2 hours for most students, which includes transition time, directions and completion of survey questions. The information is used for statistical purposes only and your child's grades will not be affected. A brochure that explains what participation in NAEP means is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/p>

<df/parents/2012469.pdf>. If you have questions please contact Ms. Coffey at [jcoffey@hamden.org](mailto:jcoffey@hamden.org).

## HAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS VIRTUAL BULLETIN BOARDS

Parents are invited to check out the district website. It is the virtual space for community fliers. It is a great way to see what is going on in our beautiful town.

<https://www.hamden.org/families/vbb>

## DAILY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Please review this updated Daily Health Assessment, available in [English](#) or [Spanish](#), with your child every day. This is an important first line of defense in both ensuring the health and wellness of your children and also protecting our entire school community from the risk of infection.



Interested in purchasing HMS Swag?

Check out this website: <https://hamdenspiritwear.com/>