

August 2023



HAMILTON CENTRAL SCHOOL *NEWSLETTER*

Hamilton Central School • A Professional Learning Community

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

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Student Safety

Annual Notifications

Free & Reduced Meal Info. & Application

Tax Levy

Direct Phone Numbers

Dear HCS Community, Teachers, and Students,

Welcome back to another school year filled with excitement and opportunities for growth! As we embark on this new school year together, I am thrilled to extend my warmest greetings to each and every one of you.

To our valued community members, thank you for your continued support and commitment to our schools. Your unwavering dedication and involvement are vital in creating a nurturing environment where students can thrive. Together, we will continue to foster a collaborative community that supports the growth and success of every student, every day.

To our exceptional teachers, your passion and expertise are the backbone of our school district. As you prepare to welcome your new students into your classrooms, I encourage you to embrace innovation, creativity, and inclusivity in your classrooms and content areas.

And to our outstanding students, I want you to know that you are the heart and soul of our school district. Your unique talents and perspectives enrich our classrooms and school community. As you embark on this new academic year, remember that each day is an opportunity to learn, grow, and make a positive impact on your future. Face your challenges with resiliency and embrace your opportunities with confidence.

As we face new challenges and embrace exciting opportunities, I want to assure you that our administrative team and staff are committed to providing the best possible learning environment for our students. We will continue to uphold the highest standards of excellence, emphasizing academic growth, social-emotional development, and the cultivation of an inclusive learning community.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude for your continuous support and dedication to our school district. Together, we will make this academic year one filled with remarkable achievements and memorable moments. Let us work together, celebrating the diversity and strength that our community brings to our District.

Wishing you all a fantastic school year!

Together, we are #HCSstrong!

William Dowsland

William Dowsland • Superintendent
wowsland@hamiltoncentral.org



FROM THE SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

Dear HCS Families,

I want to take a moment to welcome everyone back!

A lot has been going on over the summer to get ready for the 2023-24 school year. Teachers have been planning and working on various curriculum projects that students will be able to see as the year progresses. Mr. Freeman and his team have worked very hard to clean the building, wax the floors, move various classrooms, and get the fields and gymnasiums ready for athletics. We can not thank them enough for all of their work.

This year we will have access to the newly-renovated library and LGI (Large Group Instruction room). These spaces turned out great and we can't wait for students to be able to enjoy them. Make sure you take a minute to check them out at our open house on September 5th. A more detailed communication about open house will be sent through ParentSquare.

With a new school year comes a new start. I want to remind students that HCS is their school, and that they have an influence on the environment we all enter every day. Each day starts with choices. Our attitude, positive or negative, contains an element of choice. Whenever possible, we should choose to be optimistic, curious, and involved. I have personally seen what an engaged student body can do for our school environment, and I believe that our students can keep that tradition going this year.

Students, as you move into the next grade - and for our Seniors, your last grade - I would like you to remember the important lessons you learned in kindergarten about being kind! Also, please talk to your teachers if you find yourself struggling or are not sure about a concept or assignment. Your teachers are more than willing to help you!

Two very important aspects of a successful school experience are home/school communication and student engagement. With that in mind, please read the information below:

Google Classroom and Daily/Weekly Guardian Summaries

I have found that one of the best ways of keeping up to date with Google Classroom for my own children is downloading the app on my phone and having them sign in with their usernames and passwords. The passwords are saved, so you only need to enter them once. After that you can open the app any time

and toggle between your children's accounts. Each child's account will display a number of different classes. By clicking on each class, you can check upcoming assignments, missing work, grades, etc.

Google Classroom also offers an email update called the daily or weekly summary. This allows you to receive an email every afternoon - or once per week - containing upcoming assignments and missing work. If you have any concerns about your child falling behind, I recommend the daily summary. (To change the frequency, scroll to the bottom of any summary email and click Settings.) Please note that summary emails do not contain grades. To check grades, you can use the app as described above.

School-Wide Announcements

HCS will continue using ParentSquare for school-wide announcements. If you have an account, you will receive the morning announcements (Daily Bulletin) and other information.

Please check your notification settings and make sure they are set to your preference. Log into parentsquare.com and choose "My Account" followed by "Notification Settings". You may see up to three groups: ES (Elementary School), JSHS (Jr-Sr High School) and District. For each group, you can choose to receive messages instantly or in an evening digest.

SchoolTool

SchoolTool is the place to find schedules, progress reports, report cards, etc. Parents/guardians should all have an account, and students have their own accounts. If you have trouble logging in, please reach out to our technology director, Mr. Rogers, at crogers@hamiltoncentral.org. Here is a link to SchoolTool: <https://st4.schooltool.com/Hamilton>

Contact Information

Please make sure that your contact information on file at the school is correct. We may send information to families through email, text, automated phone call, or paper mail.

Curriculum Resource

Please take some time to look at this link, which answers many questions about our middle school and high school: <https://tinyurl.com/HCSSecondaryCurriculumPage>



Here you will find course overviews, graduation requirements, a school supply list, updated bell schedules, etc. To find this in the future, click “Curriculum” at the top of the HCS website.

Extracurricular Activities

I encourage all of our students to join one or more clubs or sports. HCS has a long-standing tradition of an active student body. Our students make HCS a great place to learn, and their involvement in activities is one of the contributing factors. By engaging in extracurriculars, students build better connections with their peers, adults, and the school as a whole. Parents and guardians, please encourage your chil-

dren to get involved. A list of our after-school activities can be found here:

<https://www.hamiltoncentral.org/Page/197>

As always, please reach out if you have any questions or concerns as the year progresses. I look forward to a great year for everyone in our HCS community!

Sincerely,

Mark Arquiett

Mark Arquiett • Secondary Principal
marquiett@hamiltoncentral.org • (315) 824-6320

FROM THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

Dear Hamilton Families and Friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2023-24 school year at Hamilton Elementary School. At HCS, we are committed to providing a nurturing and inspiring learning environment where each child can flourish and reach their highest potential. Our dedicated team of educators is passionate about providing dynamic and engaging instruction that sparks curiosity, fosters creativity, and instills a love for learning in every student. It is our mission to empower them to become confident, compassionate, and resilient individuals.

I’m excited to share with you several curriculum shifts that will be introduced for the upcoming academic year. We are committed to consistently evaluating and improving our curriculum to align with state standards and provide best instructional practices to meet the diverse needs and interests of our students.

In the area of Grades K-2 literacy, we are now implementing the new Units of Study from Columbia Teachers College for Reading and Writing that were recently published. This curriculum now has a stronger emphasis on integrating phonics by providing explicit phonics instruction, phonemic awareness activities, decodable texts, and ongoing assessments. In Grades Pre-K through 3, we also provide additional instruction using the Foundations curriculum. This is a research-based, multi-sensory phonics instruction that assists students in developing an early understanding of letter-sound relationships, spelling rules, and word structure. For students in Grades 3-5, instruction is provided using the Units of Study for Reading and Writing. As with the K-2 Units of Study, it is projected that an updated version of these will be

released in the near future.

After working closely with our HCS teachers and Madison-Oneida BOCES, we made a decision to adopt the Eureka Squared curriculum this year as it best meets the New York State Math Standards in conjunction with incorporating STEAM, hands-on learning, and critical thinking. At its core, Eureka Squared focuses on fostering a strong foundation in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) subjects, encouraging hands-on learning, and critical thinking. Additionally, it has digital resources that will provide students with experience and practice showing their mathematical thinking in a digital format.

As part of the RtI (Response to Intervention) program, we also provide students with supplemental Reading and Math support as needed. Depending on results from an individual student’s literacy assessment, student is provided with a balanced literacy instructional approach which is delivered using the Leveled Literacy Instruction curriculum by Fountas & Pinnell or the Orton-Gillingham method which focuses on direct, systematic multisensory instruction.

In the area of social and emotional learning as an elementary school, we have uniformly adopted the Second Step curriculum, which offers weekly lessons regarding such topics as growth mindset, goal setting, problem solving, and emotion management. New this year, students at all grade levels will receive the additional Bullying Prevention Unit which teaches students how to recognize, report, and refuse bullying. This instruction is coupled with lessons from the character development program, The Positivity Project (P2). P2 is a character education program that empowers our students with the knowledge and skills

continued on page 4



continued from page 3

to build positive relationships, foster resilience, and develop a growth mindset. This program aligns with our school's values of creating an inclusive learning community.

At Hamilton, students are continuously developing their technological proficiency through the utilization of iPads and the SeeSaw platform in Grades PreK-1, while Grades 2-5 employ Chromebooks with Google Classroom. These tools play a crucial role in enriching their learning experiences and facilitating connections with the world, equipping them with essential skills for the 21st century. Additionally, our media class offers an excellent opportunity for students to enhance their keyboarding abilities through the use of the Typing Club program.

We provide a variety of musical performance options, catering to various grade levels: Orchestra is available for Grades 2-5, Chorus for Grades 3-5, and Band specifically for Grades 4 and 5. The winter and spring concerts provide students with an opportunity to showcase their musical growth and knowledge. Furthermore, as an extracurricular activity, students have the option to take part in both the fall and spring theater performances.

Our partnership with Colgate University is a unique aspect of our school community that connects

elementary and college students. Colgate volunteers provide extra support for classroom activities, develop and implement global language experiences for 2nd grade students, offer after-school literacy activities for 1st graders, and provide classroom tutoring. New this year, will be an after-school global language program and mentoring program for our intermediate students.

Additionally, there are many extracurricular activities that elementary students can choose from including the following: Art Club, Math Club, Running Club, Ukulele Club, Student Council, Kickball Club, Literacy Magazine, and Lego Club, among others.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support as we embark on the 2023-24 school year. If you have any questions, please contact the elementary school office at (315) 824-6330 or email me at hthomas@hamiltoncentral.org. I look forward to partnering with you to support your child's educational journey this school year.

All the best,

Heather Thomas

Heather Thomas • Hamilton Elementary Principal
hthomas@hamiltoncentral.org • (315) 824-6330

SEPTEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
AUGUST 2023 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 28 29 30 31	OCTOBER 2023 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Tax Collector's Special Hours: 9/1, 9/6 & 9/29 9:00am-3:00pm	Tax Collector's Regular Hours: Tues - 3:00-4:00pm Wed. - 3:00-6:00pm Thur. - 3:00-4:00pm		1	2
3	Labor Day 	Superintendent's Conference Day AIS/RIT Services & Testing Parent Meeting 5:30pm-6:00pm 6 th Grade Orientation 6:00pm Library Information Meeting 6:00pm PK-12 Open house 6:30-7:30pm	Superintendent's Conference Day Fall Play Auditions in Auditorium 3:15-5:15pm	Welcome Back Students! Fall Play Auditions in Auditorium 3:15-5:15pm SAT Registration Deadline	8	9
Grandparents' Day	PATRIOTS DAY	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	School Picture Day 8:00am-2:00pm	Board of Education Meeting 6:00pm	ACT Registration Deadline	First Day of Autumn Mathletics @ Hamilton 8:30am-11:30pm
24	25	26	27	Middle School Musical Audition Workshop in Auditorium 3:00pm SUNY College Fair @ SRC Arena 9:30-11:00am	29	30





FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

Welcome back!

As Director of Pupil Personnel Services, I oversee and support any and all services that are needed beyond what is given in a general education setting. In other words, I support any student that needs to have their education adapted or modified to meet their needs. Some of the services that I am charged with include, but are not limited to: Special Education, Response to Intervention (RtI), Social and Emotional Learning, ENL and ELL students, 504 plans, Homeless Students (McKinney-Vento), all Related Services, Behavior Intervention Plans, and others. If you have questions please reach out to my office at 315-824-6350 or email me at:

kellis@hamiltoncentral.org

Members of the Special Education and Social Emotional Learning Team

Special Education Teachers: *Ashley Sirtoli, Corilynn Coye, Bridget Alexander, Kim Cunningham, Sara Zogby, Vicki Smith*

RtI Support: *Rob Poznar, Ryan Houck, Capri Potter, Jessica Ames*

Speech Language Pathologists: *Robin Dunadee, Caitlin Hertzendorf*

Occupational Therapist: *Jordan Mercer*

Physical Therapist: *Dr. Tim Winchell*

School Counselors: *Sheri Houck, Gina Torre, and Victoria Pustay (formerly Daoust)*

Coordinator of Social and Emotional Learning and Community Engagement: *Renee Merkt*

School Psychologist: *Jared Dart*

Board Certified Behavior Analyst: *Rachel Nassimos*

Madison County Social Worker: *TBD*

Administrative Assistant: *Lynda O'Keeffe*

2023-24 Plans for Growth

One of the main objectives every year is to increase our understanding of the social and emotional needs

of our student community so that we can provide them with the most effective services. This year, we will be spending much of our professional development time learning about the executive functional skills of self-regulation and co-regulation. Over recent years, we have had an increasing number of students that are, at times, "dysregulated." This is when you're unable to manage your emotional responses and are having a difficult time returning to a "normal" state that is conducive to learning. Sometimes the dysregulation is at a very high level and it is difficult to know what to say or do to help. Often, this can cause the supporting staff to become dysregulated themselves. To assist with this, the district is bringing in Dr. Lori Desautels, from Butler University. Dr. Desautels has a long history of supporting schools and communities with tools and strategies for working with students that are emotionally dysregulated. She will also be working directly with students and then again with families in an evening event. She will be here at HCS on October 5th and 6th. The evening event with community members is being planned for the night of October 5th. To learn more about Dr. Desautels and her work, go to her website at:

<https://revelationsineducation.com/about-us/>

As I enter my 17th year as an administrator here at Hamilton Central School, I would like to extend a warm thank you to the entire Hamilton community. It has been a privilege to serve the students, teachers, and families of this wonderful district. I wish you all a successful 2023-24 school year.

Warm regards,

Kevin Ellis

Kevin Ellis • Director of Pupil Personnel Services
kellis@hamiltoncentral.org

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

Head Bus Driver: *Lorna Simchik*, 315-824-6392 or lsimchik@hamiltoncentral.org

Transportation Safety:

The district recognizes its responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of students and staff on school buses. The district will continue to use video cameras to monitor student behavior on the buses. The cameras help the driver focus his/her attention on the road.

Drop-off Procedures:

1) The cut-out area in front of the playground is designated as a drop-off zone for all students. During the arrival and dismissal times, it should not be used as a parking area. Students will be dropped off on the side of the building. NOTE: Please allow buses the right of way to enter & exit the circle freely.

Students should plan to arrive at school each day between 7:45 – 7:50 a.m. We advise parents to avoid dropping off students from 7:55 – 8:00 a.m. as it becomes more congested with buses returning to the bus garage at this time.

Late Bus:

Please note that the late bus will run Monday through Thursday @ 3:45 p.m. Students must sign up no later than 1:30 p.m. for the late bus.

Grades PreK-2 require visual contact of an adult when dropping off a student.

Grades 3-5 require written permission from parent/guardian to drop off without visual contact.

Parents of elementary students will receive copies of the form in September. Additional copies may be obtained, if needed.

If changes in transportation plans need to be made, please call the attendance office at 315-824-6300 or 6301 no later than 12:00 Noon.



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY

Dear Hamilton Community,

I hope this letter finds you all well and looking forward to the upcoming school year! As the Director of Technology, I am excited to extend a warm welcome back to school for students, parents, and staff.

In our commitment to providing cutting-edge educational experiences, I am pleased to share some of the exciting technology initiatives happening in our district. This year we will have a fully staffed maker space, where students will have the opportunity to engage in hands-on, innovative projects that encourage creativity and critical thinking. This space will serve as a hub for exploration, experimentation, and collaborative problem-solving, fostering a spirit of curiosity and ingenuity among our students.

Additionally, we are proud to continue our 1:1 device program, providing each student with their own personal device to enhance learning both in and outside the classroom. This initiative ensures that our students have seamless access to digital resources, empowering them to take ownership of their education and explore a wealth of information at their fingertips.

Our dedication to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education remains strong, with a wide array of STEM offerings available for our students. We believe that cultivating a passion for these disciplines will prepare our students for the ever-evolving demands of the 21st-century workforce.

As we move forward, I will be actively collaborating with our talented team of educators to adopt the New York State Computer Science and Digital Fluency Learning Standards. This commitment aligns with our vision to provide a comprehensive and forward-thinking curriculum that equips students with the digital skills necessary for success in the modern world.

Together, we embark on a new academic year filled with promise, innovation, and growth. Our technology initiatives, coupled with the dedication of our exceptional educators, ensure that your children will receive a first-class education that prepares them to thrive in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

Thank you for your continued support, and I eagerly anticipate the remarkable achievements that await our school community this year. Together, we will empower our students to reach new heights and unlock their full potential.

Here's to an outstanding and enriching school year ahead!

Sincerely,

Christopher Rogers

Christopher Rogers • Director of Technology
crogers@hamiltoncentral.org

Hamilton Central School District Open House

September 5, 2023 at 6:30 PM

As we prepare for an exciting and enriching school year ahead, we are delighted to announce that our annual HCS District Open House will take place on September 5, 2023, starting at 6:30 PM.

The Open House is an excellent opportunity for you to meet your child's teachers, explore their classrooms, and gain insight into the curriculum and classroom expectations. Our faculty members are thrilled to welcome you and discuss how we can work together to ensure your child's success.

Before the Open House, we have a series of informative and engaging activities lined up for you, courtesy of our supportive Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). Here's the schedule:

Family Get-Together on the Front Lawn (Sponsored by PTO):
Time: 4:30 PM

AIS/RtI and Testing Meeting in the Auditorium: Time: 5:30 PM

Library Meeting in the Auditorium: Time: 6:00 PM

Open House: Time: 6:30-7:30 PM





NOTIFICATION OF TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

In accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act, parents are entitled to information regarding the professional qualification of their child's classroom teacher. You may receive information by contacting the district office. The information will include:

- whether the teacher has met NYS certification requirements for the grade levels and subject areas in which he/she provides instruction;
- whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional conditions by which NYS certification requirements have been waived;
- the baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree; and
- whether the child is provided services by teacher assistants and, if so, their qualifications.

DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

The Dignity for All Students act, or DASA, was enacted by the New York State Assembly and went into effect in 2012. It protects students in New York public schools from harassment, discrimination and bullying by other students or school employees. It provided that no student shall be subjected to discrimination based on his or her actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, weight, sexual orientation, sexual identity, or sex. DASA was amended in July 2013 to include Cyberbullying, which is defined as harassment or bullying by any form of electronic communication, and includes incidents occurring off school property that create, or would foreseeably create, a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment. DASA explicitly states that bullying, taunting, and intimidation on these protected grounds are all forms of harassment.

Dignity Act Coordinators: Mr. Christopher Rogers as the District-wide, Mr. Mark Arquiett, Mr. Kevin Ellis and Ms. Heather Thomas as the Building-wide DASA Coordinators.

FERPA: ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

Release of Student Directory Information: This notice is to inform parents or eligible students of their right to refuse the release of student directory information and indicates a time period for their response. Following such public notice and a reasonable response period, the District may release such information to an outside group without individual consent. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) defines student directory information as the following: name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height (if members of athletic teams), degrees and awards received, and the name of the educational agency or institution previously attended by the student. If any parent would like to request such directory information NOT be released for the child, such request shall be filed, in writing, with the principal of the school having the record with a copy sent to the superintendent.

CONSENT FOR USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOS

Throughout the school year, photographs or videos may be taken of students for use in district-produced publications, videos, websites and Facebook or by the news media. If you do not wish to have your child photographed or videotaped, please indicate this, in writing, to the principal of the school having the record with a copy sent to the superintendent. (Names of students in videos or photographs are not published within district publications.)

DISTRICT POLICIES

All district policies can be found on the district website but these are required policies that are to be noted in a mailing. Please take a minute to view them on the website.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| #0030 – Drug Free Workplace | #1014 – Code of Conduct |
| #4330 – Investments | #4510 – Purchasing |
| #5400 – Internet Safety | #5430 – Data Security Breach |
| #5662 – School Food Service Program & Meal Charge | |

ACCOMMODATION OF HEARING-IMPAIRED PARENTS

The District provides parents of, and persons in parental relation, District-enrolled students many opportunities to participate in their child's educational program. If the parent, or person in parental relation, is hearing impaired, the District provides interpreter services (American

Sign Language) to facilitate that person's participation in school-initiated meetings or activities specific to the academic or disciplinary aspects of the student's educational program. This service is provided at no cost to the parent, or person in parental relation. If an interpreter is not available, the District will make other reasonable accommodation of the hearing impairment, such as written communication, transcripts, decoder, or Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD), also at no cost to the parent or person in parental relation.

PESTICIDE NOTIFICATION

New York State law requires that schools and BOCES maintain a list of staff and parents who wish to receive written notice 48 hours prior to a pesticide application at our facility. If you wish to be included on the School District Notification List, please contact the Business Office at 824-6372. You will then receive advance notification of an application of a pesticide product covered by notification requirements, except in the event of an emergency application in response to a threat to public health.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Hamilton Central School District is committed to providing a safe and orderly learning environment in which students may receive quality educational services without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, teachers, personnel, parents and other visitors is essential to achieving this goal.

The Board of Education has adopted a district Code of Conduct. The code applies to all students, school personnel, parents and other visitors when on Hamilton Central School District property or attending a school function. The Code of Conduct policy can be found on our website at www.hamiltoncentral.org.

RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION TO MILITARY RECRUITERS

Pursuant to the federal No Child Left Behind Act, the school district must disclose to military recruiters and institutions of higher learning, upon request, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of our high school students. However, the district must also notify parents of their rights and the rights of their children to request, in writing, that the district NOT release such information if it is requested.

Parents, or students who are at least 18 years old, wishing to exercise their option to withhold their consent to the release of the above information to military recruiters and institutions of higher learning, must submit their request, in writing, to the secondary principal's office.

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Organizations who hope to use the facilities of the school district may obtain a Building Use Form from the main office. Depending on the nature of activity, a certificate of insurance may be required. A custodian must be on duty when the facilities are used. Groups may be charged a fee for the use, depending on the date, time and nature of the event. Please make plans and complete an application well in advance of the date your group may wish to use the facilities.

The building is not available for use on holidays, snow days, Sundays or other special days.

EARLY SCHOOL CLOSING

If it should be necessary to close school before the usual time, it is important for your child to know what to do. This is especially important if both parents work and there is no one to look after your child if there is an early dismissal. Please discuss this possibility with your child. All after-school activities are canceled when school is dismissed early. Please be sure that your contact information is up-to-date.

SNOW DAYS

In the event of inclement weather or mechanical breakdown, school may be closed or delayed. Notice of such changes shall be carried over the radio, television and our Global Connect phone call system. Be sure that your contact information is current with the District. Other district information/policies can be found on our website: www.hamiltoncentral.org

ASBESTOS PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

In accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986, all buildings of the Hamilton Central School District have been inspected for asbestos containing building materials (ACBM). The original inspection and the 2023 triennial reinspection report that identify the location of ACBM, the management plan detailing how the district is managing the asbestos materials and the semi annual surveillance reports are available in the business office. If you have any questions, please contact our Head of Buildings and Grounds at 315-824-6342.

LETTER TO PARENTS FOR SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Hamilton Central School** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **\$1.50**; lunch costs **\$2.75/3.00**. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. **Students in New York State that are approved for reduced price meals will receive breakfast and lunch meals and snacks served through the Afterschool Snack Program at no charge. Below are common questions and answers to help you with the application process.**

1. **DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD?** No. Complete one Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk to apply for free or reduced price meals for all students in your household attending this School Food Authority. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information as indicated on the application and application instructions. **Return the completed application to: [Andrea Cass, 47 W. Kendrick Ave Hamilton NY 13346.**
2. **WHO CAN GET FREE MEALS?**
 - All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), are eligible for free meals. Categorical eligibility for free meal benefits is extended to all children in a household when the application lists an Assistance Program's case number for any household member.
 - Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
 - Children participating in their school's Head Start Program are eligible for free meals.
 - Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals. Households with children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway or migrant should contact the SFA for assistance in receiving benefits.
 - Children may receive free meals if your household's gross income is within the free or reduced price limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Students in New York State that are approved for reduced price meals will receive breakfast and lunch meals and snacks served through the Afterschool Snack Program at no charge.
 - Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart:

2023-2024 REDUCED PRICE INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

<i>Total Household Size</i>	<i>Annual</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Twice per Month</i>	<i>Every Two Weeks</i>	<i>Weekly</i>
1	\$ 26,973	\$ 2,248	\$ 1,124	\$ 1,038	\$ 519
2	\$ 36,482	\$ 3,041	\$ 1,521	\$ 1,404	\$ 702
3	\$ 45,991	\$ 3,833	\$ 1,917	\$ 1,769	\$ 885
4	\$ 55,500	\$ 4,625	\$ 2,313	\$ 2,135	\$ 1,068
5	\$ 65,009	\$ 5,418	\$ 2,709	\$ 2,501	\$ 1,251
6	\$ 74,518	\$ 6,210	\$ 3,105	\$ 2,867	\$ 1,434
7	\$ 84,027	\$ 7,003	\$ 3,502	\$ 3,232	\$ 1,616
8	\$ 93,536	\$ 7,795	\$ 3,898	\$ 3,598	\$ 1,799
*Each add'l person, add	\$ 9,509	\$ 793	\$ 397	\$ 366	\$ 183

3. **CAN FOSTER CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS?** Yes, foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are eligible for free meals. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income. Foster children may also be included as a member of the foster family if the foster family chooses to also apply for benefits for other children. Including children in foster care as household members may help other children in the household qualify for benefits. If non-foster children in a foster family are not eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits, an eligible foster child will still receive free benefits.
4. **CAN HOMELESS, RUNAWAY, AND MIGRANT CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS?** Yes, children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant qualify for free meals. If you haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail [Kevin Ellis, kellis@hamiltoncentral.org to see if they qualify.
5. **SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS?** Please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. Call the school at [phone number] if you have questions.
6. **MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT ANOTHER ONE?** Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and carried over for the first 30 operating days of this school year (or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first). You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. If you do not send in a new application that is approved by the school or you have not been notified that your child is eligible for free meals, your child will be charged the full price for meals.
7. **I GET WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC) BENEFITS. CAN MY CHILD(REN) GET FREE MEALS?** Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please fill out an Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk.
8. **WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?** Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
9. **IF I DON'T QUALIFY NOW, MAY I APPLY LATER?** Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year. For example, children with a parent or guardian who becomes unemployed or who experiences financial hardship mid-year may become eligible for free and reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
10. **WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION?** You should talk to school officials. **You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: [name, address, phone number, e-mail].**



11. **MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN?** Yes. You, your child(ren), or other household members do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
12. **WHO SHOULD I INCLUDE AS MEMBERS OF MY HOUSEHOLD?** You must include all people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends) who share income and expenses. You must include yourself and all children living with you. If you live with other people who are economically independent (for example, people who you do not support, who do not share income with you or your children, and who pay a pro-rated share of expenses), do not include them.
13. **WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME?** List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime sometimes. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.
14. **WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY?** Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. If you get any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, clothing, it must also be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.
15. **MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR?** To find out how to apply for SNAP or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-800-342-3009.

How to Apply: To get free or reduced price meals for your children, carefully complete one Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk, following the instructions on the form, for your household and return it to the designated office listed on the application. All household members and children should be listed on one application.

- If you receive SNAP or TANF benefits or participate in the FDPIR, the application must include the children's names, the household SNAP, TANF or FDPIR case number and the signature of an adult household member.
 - Contact your local Department of Social Services for your SNAP or TANF case number, if necessary.
 - No application is necessary if the household was notified by the School Food Authority that their children have been directly certified based on Assistance Program participation. If the household is not sure if their children have been directly certified, the household should contact the school.
- If you do not list a SNAP, TANF or FDPIR case number for any household member, the application must include the names of everyone in the household, the amount of income for each household member, how often it is received and where it comes from. It must include the signature of an adult household member and the last four digits of that adult's social security number or check the box if the adult does not have a social security number.
- **An application for free and reduced price benefits cannot be approved unless complete eligibility information is submitted, as indicated on the application and in the instructions. We will let you know when your application is approved or denied.**

Reporting Changes: The benefits that you are approved for at the time of application are effective for the entire school year and up to 30 operating days into the new school year (or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first). You no longer need to report changes for an increase in income or decrease in household size, or if you no longer receive SNAP.

Meal Service to Children with Disabilities: Federal regulations require schools and institutions to serve meals at no extra charge to children with a disability which may restrict their diet. A student with a disability is defined in 7CFR Part 15b.3 of Federal regulations, as one who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual, a record of such an impairment or being regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include but are not limited to: functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working. You must request meal modifications from the school and provide the school with medical statement from a State licensed healthcare professional. **If you believe your child needs substitutions because of a disability, please get in touch with us for further information, as there is specific information that the medical statement must contain.**

Confidentiality: The United States Department of Agriculture has approved the release of students names and eligibility status, without parent/guardian consent, to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of federal education programs such as Title I and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which are United States Department of Education programs used to determine areas such as the allocation of funds to schools, to evaluate socioeconomic status of the school's attendance area, and to assess educational progress. Information may also be released to State health or State education programs administered by the State agency or local education agency, provided the State or local education agency administers the program, and federal State or local nutrition programs similar to the National School Lunch Program. Additionally, all information contained in the free and reduced price application may be released to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of programs authorized under the National School Lunch Act (NSLA) or Child Nutrition Act (CNA); including the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, the Special Milk Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC); the Comptroller General of the United States for audit purposes, and federal, State or local law enforcement officials investigating alleged violation of the programs under the NSLA or CNA. The disclosure of eligibility information not specifically authorized by the NSLA requires a written consent statement from the parent/guardian.

In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, disability or limited English proficiency.

If you have other questions or need help, call Andrea Cass, 315-824 -6382.

Thank you, Andrea Cass

Nondiscrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf> from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: 833-256-1665 or 202-690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov





Date Withdrew _____

F _____ R _____ D _____

2023-2024 Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk

To apply for free and reduced price meals for your children, read the instructions on the back, complete **only one** form for your household, sign your name and **return it to the address listed below**. Call **(315) 824-6382**, if you need help. Additional names may be listed on a separate paper.

Return Completed Applications to:
Hamilton Central School
47 W. Kendrick Ave
Hamilton, NY, 13346

1. List all children in your household who attend school:

Student Name	School	Grade/Teacher	Foster Child	Homeless Migrant, Runaway
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. SNAP/TANF/FDPIR Benefits:

If anyone in your household receives either SNAP, TANF or FDPIR benefits, list their name and CASE # here. **Skip to Part 4 and sign the application.**

Name: _____ CASE #: _____

3. Report all income for ALL Household Members (Skip this step if you completed step 2)

All Household Members (including yourself and all children that have income).

List all Household members not listed in Step 1 (including yourself) **even if they do not receive income**. For each Household Member listed, if they do receive income, report total income for each source in whole dollars only. If they do not receive income from any other source, write '0'. If you enter '0' or leave any fields blank, you are certifying (promising) that there is no income to report.

Name of household member	Earnings from work before deductions <i>Amount / How Often</i>	Child Support, Alimony <i>Amount / How Often</i>	Pensions, Retirement Payments <i>Amount / How Often</i>	Other Income, Social Security <i>Amount / How Often</i>	No Income
	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	\$ _____ / _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Total Household Members (Children and Adults)

*Last Four Digits of Social Security Number: XXX-XX-__ __ __ __

I do not have a SS#

*When completing section 3, an adult household member must provide the last four digits of their Social Security Number (SS#) or mark the "I do not have a SS# box" before the application can be approved.

4. Signature: An adult household member must sign this application before it can be approved.

I certify (promise) that all the information on this application is true and that all income is reported. I understand that the information is being given so the school will get federal funds; the school officials may verify the information and if I purposely give false information, I may be prosecuted under applicable State and federal laws, and my children may lose meal benefits.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Email Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Home Address: _____

5. Ethnicity and Race are optional; responding to this section does not affect your children's eligibility for free or reduced price meals.

Ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino Not Hispanic or LatinoRace (Check one or more): American Indian or Alaskan Native Asian Black or African American Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island White**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE – FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY**

Annual Income Conversion (Only convert when multiple income frequencies are reported on application)
 Weekly X 52; Every Two Weeks (bi-weekly) X 26; Twice Per Month X 24; Monthly X 12

- SNAP/TANF/Foster
 Income Household: Total Household Income/How Often: _____ / _____ Household Size: _____
 Free Meals Reduced Price Meals Denied/Paid
 Signature of Reviewing Official _____ Date Notice Sent: _____

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

To apply for free and reduced price meals, complete only one application for your household using the instructions below. Sign the application and return the application to Hamilton Central School. If you have a foster child in your household, you may include them on your application. A separate application is not needed. Call the school if you need help: (315)824-6382. Ensure that all information is provided. Failure to do so may result in denial of benefits for your child or unnecessary delay in approving your application.

PART 1 ALL HOUSEHOLDS MUST COMPLETE STUDENT INFORMATION. DO NOT FILL OUT MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION FOR YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

- (1) Print the names of the children, including foster children, for whom you are applying on one application.
- (2) List their grade and school.
- (3) Check the box to indicate a foster child living in your household, or if you believe any child meets the description for homeless, migrant, runaway (a school staff will confirm this eligibility).

PART 2 HOUSEHOLDS GETTING SNAP, TANF OR FDPIR SHOULD COMPLETE PART 2 AND SIGN PART 4.

- (1) List a current SNAP, TANF or FDPIR (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations) case number of anyone living in your household. The case number is provided on your benefit letter.
- (2) An adult household member must sign the application in PART 4. SKIP PART 3. Do not list names of household members or income if you list a SNAP case number, TANF or FDPIR number.

PART 3 ALL OTHER HOUSEHOLDS MUST COMPLETE THESE PARTS AND ALL OF PART 4.

- (1) Write the names of everyone in your household, whether or not they get income. Include yourself, the children you are applying for, all other children, your spouse, grandparents, and other related and unrelated people in your household. Use another piece of paper if you need more space.
- (2) Write the amount of current income each household member receives, before taxes or anything else is taken out, and indicate where it came from, such as earnings, welfare, pensions and other income. If the current income was more or less than usual, write that person's usual income. Specify how often this income amount is received: weekly, every other week (bi-weekly), 2 x per month, monthly. If no income, check the box. The value of any child care provided or arranged, or any amount received as payment for such child care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care under the Child Care and Development Block Grant, TANF and At Risk Child Care Programs should not be considered as income for this program.
- (3) Enter the total number of household members in the box provided. This number should include all adults and children in the household and should reflect the members listed in PART 1 and PART 3.
- (4) The application must include the last four digits only of the social security number of the adult who signs PART 4 if Part 3 is completed. If the adult does not have a social security number, check the box. If you listed a SNAP, TANF or FDPIR number, a social security number is not needed.
- (5) An adult household member must sign the application in PART 4.

OTHER BENEFITS: Your child may be eligible for benefits such as Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). To determine if your child is eligible, program officials need information from your free and reduced price meal application. Your written consent is required before any information may be released. Please refer to the attached parent Disclosure Letter and Consent Statement for information about other benefits.

USE OF INFORMATION STATEMENT

Use of Information Statement: The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not submit all needed information, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the primary wage earner or other adult household member who signs the application. The social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals, and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs.

We may share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules.

DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: 833-256-1665 or 202-690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Hamilton Central School

47 West Kendrick Avenue
Hamilton, NY 13346

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SCHOOL OPENS FOR STUDENTS ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH

TAX LEVY

At the July Board of Education meeting, the tax levy in the amount of **\$8,369,696** was approved for 2023-2024. This amount was the same as projected last spring in the proposed budget, and subsequently approved by the voters. It represents a **3.98%** increase over last year's levy. The tax rates for individual district residents will vary depending upon any changes in assessments or equalization rates, within a particular township.

School tax bills will be mailed at the end of August. If you do not receive your tax bill by the second week of September, **please call (315) 824-6315** or access the website noted below.

AGAIN THIS YEAR: You can now access your tax bill at www.infotaxonline.com. Click on Hamilton and input your last name. Or go to www.hamiltoncentral.org, click on the District tab, click on Tax Info, and click on Access Your Tax Info. You will be able to print, view and see when your payment has been posted.

DIRECT PHONE NUMBERS:

Provided below are direct phone numbers to assist you in contacting the person to whom you wish to speak.

Superintendent/District Office	824-6310	Athletic Director	824-6320
Secondary Principal/Main Office/Purchasing .	824-6320	Transportation Department	824-6392
Elementary Office	824-6330	Maintenance Department	824-6342
Business Manager	824-6372	Special Education Department	824-6350
District Treasurer	824-6370	Cafeteria	824-6382
Technology Department	824-6388	Receptionist/Attendance/Main Entrance.	824-6300
HS/MS Counseling Office	824-6327	Tax Collector	824-6315
School Nurse	824-6340		

2023-24 SCHOOL TAX BILL COLLECTION

Please note that the phone number, location and in-person collection hours have changed as follows:

Phone Number: 315-824-6315

Email Address: dkirley@hamiltoncentral.org

Location: HCS Entrance Lobby

In-person Collection Hours: Tuesday & Wednesday 9:00 a.m. to 12 Noon; Thursday 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.

NO IN-PERSON COLLECTION HOURS ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH

Special hours for in-person collection will be held on Monday, October 2nd (last day to pay without penalty) and Tuesday, October 31st (last day to pay with 2% penalty) from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The above information will also be noted on your tax bills.