



OUR COMMUNITY SCHOOL REFLECTION

FEBRUARY 2026

Celebrate Success!

Share What We Learn!

Updates on Projects!

BLACK HISTORY MONTH STATIONS

Hamilton proudly hosted our **second annual Black History Month stations** to honor and celebrate the important contributions **African Americans** have made throughout history. Students rotated through engaging stations where they learned about **influential artists, athletes, and dancers** who have shaped our culture and inspired generations.



One station featured the powerful book "**We March**" by **Shane W. Evans**, helping students understand the bravery and unity of the Civil Rights Movement in an age-appropriate way. Through **discussion, art activities, and movement**, students connected history to the world around them today.



We were also honored to welcome our **Mayor, Shaundel Washington-Spivey**, who visited during the stations and shared in the learning. It was a meaningful day of reflection, celebration, and appreciation for the lasting impact of **Black leaders past and present**.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH COLORING BOOKS



We are grateful to the **La Crosse County Historical Society** for donating **"Women's Movement in American 19th Century: Connections to Wisconsin"** coloring books for all of our Kindergarten through 5th grade students. Each student received a copy to take home, giving families an opportunity to continue conversations and learning about Black history and the **important contributions of women connected to Wisconsin.**



BATTLE OF THE BOOKS & FOR THE LOVE OF MATH



The **School District of La Crosse, HPL** hosted another year of the **Battle of the Books!** BOB encourages students to read various thought-provoking books by outstanding children's and adolescent literature authors. Each year the list consists of books from many different genres. Books on historical fiction, humor, sci-fi, adventure, mystery, fantasy, and realistic fiction are included. Teams from Hamilton and SOTA I **read the ten books** then answered questions about the books, culminating with two teams from each school attending a district wide competition at UW-L celebrating the books, reading and our students.

Not only did teams of **4th and 5th grade students** represent both Hamilton and SOTA I at our La Crosse District Battle of the Books Competition, but also For the Love of Math Event at UW-L.

We are excited to share that 10 of our 4th and 5th grade Hamilton/SOTA I students joined elementary students from the School District of La Crosse and the School District of Holmen **"For the Love of Math"** event on Tuesday, February 17th at UW-La Crosse. Participating students took **individual tests and then group tests** with many math jokes interspersed throughout the morning.



DELTA KAPPA GAMMA: ALPHA OMEGA CHAPTER BOOK DONATION

Delta Kappa Gamma is an international organization of women educators and the **Alpha Omega Chapter** is made up of La Crosse area members who've taught in many area districts. They visited our kindergarten classes and **gifted them with new Elephant and Piggie books** to take home to grow their home library. Thank you for partnering with Hamilton!



SCHOOL COUNSELOR WEEK

We are so thankful for our **school counselor, Hannah Bertram**, especially during School Counselor Week. She helps students feel seen, supported, and capable of overcoming challenges. Whether listening, guiding, or helping problem-solve, our counselor makes our school a kinder and more supportive place for everyone. We appreciate all the ways Ms. B **encourages students to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.**



♥ Thank you for guiding our trail to success! ♥



♥ You Make wellness fun! ♥



♥ Thanks for raisin our spirits! ♥





NORSKEDALEN



Hamilton recently spent a beautiful winter day at **Norskedalen Nature and Heritage Center**, exploring both the natural environment and the rich cultural heritage of **Norwegian immigrants** in the **Coon Valley area**. With fresh snow on the ground and sunshine overhead, students embraced every moment of outdoor adventure, from **sledding and free play in the snow** to **hiking the scenic trails**.



FIELD TRIP



Inside, students experienced hands-on learning through **rosemaling**, **music activities**, and **exploring the historic old homestead buildings**. The visit brought history to life as students learned about the traditions, daily life, and resilience of early Norwegian settlers. A heartfelt thank you goes out to the **generous community members Jourdan and Karla Stacey**, and to Ms. Schneider who made this unforgettable experience possible for all of our Hamilton Students!

ATTENDANCE AWARDS

To celebrate weekly attendance, we use an online spinner with all the names of students who have had amazing attendance for the week. The spinner chooses 5 students from each school to **pick a prize from the prize case**. Our students look forward to **Friday mornings** when the winners are announced.



Birthday Baking

Each month at Hamilton, students come together for **Birthday Baking**, a special tradition where we bake and celebrate all the birthdays of the month. This fun and hands-on activity fosters a sense of community while allowing students to **practice teamwork, measuring, and kitchen skills**—all while enjoying a homemade treat!



VALENTINES DAY

We celebrated Valentine's Day at school with **kindness, friendship, and fun activities.** Students exchanged cards, enjoyed special classroom celebrations, and took time to appreciate the people around them. It was a joyful day focused on caring for one another and spreading positivity.



GLOBAL PLAY DAY



Global Play Day celebrates the power of **unstructured play** as a way for students to explore creativity and **develop important skills**. Students may have come home and felt like they "did nothing but play," but play is powerful learning.



Through play, students practice collaboration, creativity, and problem solving in ways that support lifelong learning.





- ✓ Making posters develops creativity and communication



- ✓ Playdoh strengthens fine motor skills and spatial awareness



- ✓ Puppet shows encourage storytelling and public speaking



- ✓ Box fort building fosters engineering and problem-solving



- ✓ Playing games teaches turn-taking and strategy



- ✓ Knitting builds patience and hand-eye coordination



- ✓ Puzzles support critical thinking



- ✓ Train tracks inspire planning and sequencing



- ✓ Making robots sparks imagination and refines design skills

DAN DAY

We had a wonderful Dan Day **celebrating our building engineer's dedication and hard work**. Dan has been covering extra duties and long hours while teammates are on medical leave. He makes sure our building stays clean, bathrooms are stocked, and snow is removed.

Students and staff showed their appreciation by **dressing like Dan, coloring pictures, and decorating his ride-on floor cleaner**. We are grateful for his commitment and the care he puts into keeping our school a safe and welcoming place for everyone.

100TH DAY OF SCHOOL

We celebrated the 100th day of school, marking a milestone of learning and growth together. Students enjoyed activities centered around the **number 100**, including **counting collections** and **creative projects**. It was a fun opportunity to reflect on all we have accomplished so far this year and look forward to what comes next.



RIVOLI FAMILY NIGHT

We had a fun February family night watching “Lilo & Stitch” together as a community. Thank you to the volunteers who served pizza and helped make the evening welcoming and enjoyable for families. It was a great opportunity to connect, relax, and share time together.



ICE SKATING

Our whole school ice skating experience is always a highlight of the winter season! It is so special to watch students return each year with more confidence and skill, proudly gliding across the ice and then turning around to **encourage classmates** who are lacing up skates for the very first time. Seeing experienced skaters help others “get their skates under their feet” is a true example of **teamwork and kindness in action**. No matter how long we’re there, it never seems like we have quite enough time on the ice!



Of course, one of the biggest highlights of the trip is watching the **Zamboni smooth the ice**—students are always fascinated as it makes the rink look brand new again. This year felt extra special, with many students even more excited about skating thanks to all the talk about hockey and figure skating during the Olympic Games. It was a wonderful day of perseverance, laughter, and memories made together on the ice!





Thank you to Green Island Ice Arena & River City Youth Hockey for hosting our ice skating field trips and giving each kindergarten through fifth-grade student the opportunity to skate with their peers. We appreciate your partnership in creating joyful, active learning experiences that students will remember.

PBIS ASSEMBLY

Hamilton kicked off Global Play Day and our Olympic festivities with an energetic PBIS assembly full of fun and school spirit! Students from every grade level were represented in our exciting **torch relay**, symbolizing teamwork and unity across our school. Three teams worked together to keep the “torch” lit – which actually meant balancing a beach ball on a plunger as they raced across the gym! There were lots of laughs, moments of perseverance, and incredible encouragement from classmates cheering from the sidelines.

To wrap up the assembly, Mrs. Fernholz recognized several students with **Moment Maker awards**, celebrating those who consistently show leadership, positivity, and responsibility. It was the perfect way to launch a day focused on play, teamwork, and the values we practice every day at Hamilton!



THE BIG BAD BULLYSAURUS

We are so thankful to **La Crosse Community Theater** for bringing their **touring show** to our school for this fun and meaningful performance of “The Big Bad Bullysaurus”.

“When Paleontologist Mark learns that his niece, Natalie, is being harassed by a local bully, he tells her the story of Ryan Rex Jr., a little dinosaur with a big bully problem of his own. With the help of his closest companions, Terry Pterodactyl and Bronnie Brontosaurus, Ryan and Natalie both learn a lesson about friendship and the importance of forgiveness.”





KEY STAFF AWARD



The **winter key staff award nominees** highlight the incredible dedication of staff in the School District of La Crosse who help students dream, believe, and achieve. While we had several deserving nominees this season, we are proud to recognize **Jordan Young** as the winter award winner at our school.

This program **celebrates staff** who go above and beyond to create environments where **students feel valued, supported, and inspired to reach their potential**. Every nominee deserves appreciation for the positive difference they make in students' lives each day.



Winner: Jordan Young

Other Nominees:

- Anna Jordan
- Erica Baus
- Hannah Bertram
- Jessica Johanson
- Jon Zinniel
- Kara Aylsworth
- Katherine Erickson
- Leah Fread
- Margit Speckeen
- Shelley Staehly
- Ryan King



Potato Olympics

Mrs. Blakstad, one of our Title 1 teachers, brought learning to life by organizing an exciting Potato Olympics for our **4th and 5th graders**! Students selected countries to represent, researched interesting facts, designed detailed flags, named their potatoes, and even created athlete profiles highlighting their spud's special talents. The competition events included a lively **Dance Off**, where potatoes were timed to see how long they could spin, and a **Roll Off**, where students measured how far their potato athletes could travel.

There were cheers, teamwork, and plenty of laughter as students encouraged one another throughout the events. Along the way, students strengthened their understanding of the Olympics, **explored world geography**, and practiced important **math skills** through timing and measuring. It was a creative and engaging way to combine learning, school spirit, and a whole lot of potato-powered fun!

In Ms. Tester's class Gold went to Pyper, Silver to Terri and the bronze went to Asia. In Ms. Ross's class, the gold went to Juanita, the silver to E'mani and the bronze, after a tie breaker, went to Cloie.



DANCE ARTIST IN RESIDENCE FROM SIDE STREET STUDIOS

Self Xplanatory Crew members Nick and Peanut were the visiting artists in February. The artist in residency through Side Street Studio Arts gave students an opportunity to gain new understandings of culture through movement. This residency engaged students with all abilities where they were and allowed each child to find their own way of **dancing and expressing themselves**.



AUTHOR VISIT

We were excited to welcome award-winning author and illustrator **Angela Dominguez** during her districtwide tour of the School District of La Crosse. She shared with Hamilton and SOTA 1 students how her ideas become books and encouraged them to embrace creativity and mistakes as part of the process. Thanks to a generous **grant from the La Crosse Community Foundation**, every Hamilton family has received a copy of one of her books to take home—helping inspire a love of reading and storytelling long after her visit. Angela's visit was a lovely culmination of activities including January family night and One School, One Book read of **"Stella Diaz Has Something to Say"**.



MOMENT MAKERS: CHARACTER COUNTS



Look who was
recognized for being
extra safe, respectful,
and responsible in
February!



thank you Donors

- TANDA Foundation- \$1000
- DKG International- books for students
- Linda Lee- pet food for pantry
- Toyota of La Crosse- food pantry groceries



HAMILTON & SOTA | FAMILY NIGHT

ART & BOOK MADNESS

FEATURING 

Thursday, March 26th
5:30-7:00pm

Join us for our annual Art Show as well as fun
activities brought to you by PBS Kids!



Fun Literacy
Activities



Student
Art Show

Your Voice Matters

We want to hear from you!

If you would like to learn more, ask questions, share your insights, or volunteer please
contact Jon Zinniel, Hamilton Community Schools Coordinator at 608-789-5092 or
jzinniel@lacrossesd.org