

Winter 2010



HAMILTON CENTRAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Hamilton Central School • A Professional Learning Community

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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- Matter of Principal,
- English & Counseling News
- Elementary News
- Innovation & Enrichment
- Hall of Honor

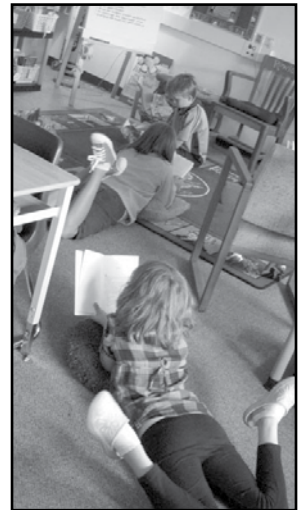


Hamilton Central School District

State of the District 2009-2010 School Year

Recently, the New York State Comptroller, Thomas DiNapoli, published a warning to school districts within New York State regarding the fiscal landscape for the next few years, and he highlighted concerns with the 2011-2012 school year. He went on to explain that the 2011-2012 year will be especially problematic due to the fact that the federal American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA) monies will no longer be available to New York State, and the state will not have the capabilities of closing the gap as the result of the expected deficit. Mr. DiNapoli's caution was the topic of numerous newspaper articles which prompted a number of concerned taxpayers to e-mail questions to my office. I thought it was important to explain the preventative measures that Hamilton Central School has been implementing for the past year to prepare for the next few, difficult years ahead.

Information that has recently been released from Albany speculates that districts will lose three times the amount of this year's mid-year cut (\$166,000), that was recently reimbursed to our district by the Governor's office. The projected loss for the 2010-2011 school year will equate to a 13.5% decrease in total state aid which is equal to about \$544,000. Decreased funding from the state makes it difficult to sustain important programs, offer electives to our students, and make informed decisions. We will approach these difficult times with the same forethought and conservative planning as we have done for the past few years.



Unique Budget Strategies Employed during the 2009-2010 school year

Throughout the past few years, the fiscal surroundings became more problematic and warranted "out of the box" thinking. A number of new strategies were used to lower the tax burden on our community members. Last year was especially challenging with a flat increase in state aid at the same time that our

debt service for the building project came due. Although we had a 5% increase in last year's budget, our operating budget actually went down. The increase that was seen went to offset the cost of the building project, not increase the operational expenses. Last year, we were so financially frugal in our planning that the

district would have actually had more money if the voters voted down the annual budget and Hamilton ran under an austerity budget. These unusual circumstances resulted in new initiatives, shared services with local districts, and minimal cuts in faculty and staff.



Shared Services with Morrisville-Eaton, Madison and Stockbridge Valley

Last year, conversations began with our neighboring districts on the ways that we could share services and save our districts money. The most substantial change occurred in the way our districts offered special education services to Hamilton students placed outside the district. Many of the students that attended outside placements were returned to their home school districts in new educational placements that were developed with specific needs in mind. Hamilton opened its first high needs, special education, 8:1:1 classroom for students in second and third grades. By opening this unique educational setting within our school, we were able to bring back two students from outside placements and provide instruction for two Morrisville-Eaton students, on a tuition basis. The tuition that we received, along with the return of our students, saved the district over \$60,000. Additionally, we tuitioned Hamilton students into new class settings in the Madison and Stockbridge Valley districts, and decreased the cost of outside placements. In some cases we saved \$15,000 per student as compared to their prior setting. Our students are having a great year and it has been a win-win for everyone. We anticipate the potential of opening an additional 8:1:1 classroom next year. Similar benefits will be derived from this educational opportunity.

Within the last couple of years Hamilton has shared transportation services with the Madison School District to limit the number of bus runs we make daily. Moreover, we've shared staff, sports teams and staff development opportunities with neighboring districts. Hamilton joined the Madison-Oneida BOCES Health Consortium for a substantial savings in our health insurance costs, and our staff accepted a new prescription plan that enhanced the savings to the district.

We have already begun conversations regarding similar savings opportunities for the next school year. We anticipate that opportunities will arise.

Budget Process for the 2010-2011 School Year and Beyond

As we enter the budget process for our next school year and beyond, we understand the enormity of the task ahead of us. We know that the funding to our district will continue to diminish over the next three years, at a minimum. We also understand that our students will only have one opportunity, at each grade level, to experience the educational opportunities that this district provides. The importance of these experiences and the preparation for the future has never been more important. We are producing the leaders of tomorrow. They will need all the resources available to them to help them navigate the turbulent water ahead of them. We will make our upcoming budgetary decisions with all of this in mind.

Why the financial decisions are so difficult to make

At this point, all of our decisions will have an educational impact on our students and the education they receive from Hamilton Central School. We will need your help in the decision-making process. What we do here is important, meaningful and has merit. We have to realize that some educational areas may have greater importance to you and your family, while other areas will be of importance to your neighbor. Nothing will be easy to cut or decrease in scope. They are all important to our students and enhance their lives, both in and out of the classroom.

The Hamilton Central School District has come a long way in the past few years. We have made substantial academic gains in all content areas at all levels. Our teaching and learning has changed and our students are experiencing success in the classroom, the Think Tank, the ball fields and the stage. Last school year over 63% of our students on the secondary level took part in at least one sport during the school year. Many participate in two or three. This year, our numbers are actually stronger. Our spring musical this year has over 40 students in the cast, six instrumental students in the pit and an additional 15 students involved in lighting, sound, and the technical aspects of the show. Jazz band has 24 participants. These extra-curricular activities are invaluable and give our students a productive way to spend



their time beyond their school hours. With 328 students in our secondary school, this is an outstanding percentage of student participation. Very few districts enjoy this type of a ratio.

As we plan and troubleshoot for the future, it is essential that we consider the ripple effects of losing curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. All possible “*out of the box*” solutions need to be designed to meet the requirements of our students. We must realize that education is changing. We cannot continue to provide the same opportunities to our students in the same way. We have to make accommodations to make the future as bright as our past. This is a very tall order.

Many of the changes that we have made at HCS within the past four years have been consistent, pervasive and important. As we watch our instructional practices change slowly, the shift in instructional practices may not be as evident to our families as it is to our HCS community. In order for us to make informed decisions about our future, we need to consider what has changed and what is working for the student body as a whole. If we are to modify these areas, we need to understand the impact of this change. All our decisions will be made in the best interests of our students and their learning.

The information that will follow is a summary of our endeavors to-date, in all educational and financial areas within HCS. The more you understand about our undertakings, the more informed our community’s decisions can be. As we move forward, your support and honesty will be paramount in the creation of a successful conclusion. A divided or divisive approach to these hurdles will only intensify the hard work we have ahead. Our school will become stronger with a positive and productive approach to future obstacles. We thank you, in advance, for your thoughts and your constructive efforts.

Scholastic Achievements

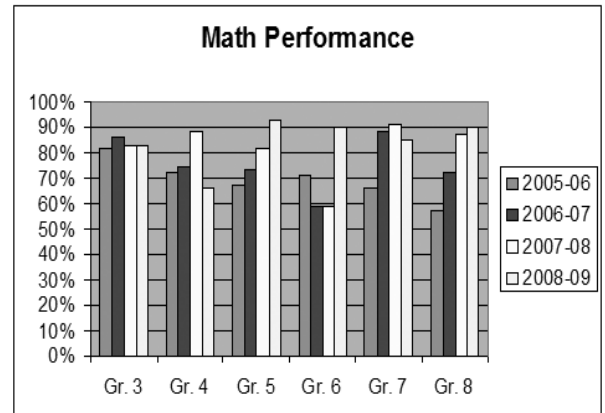
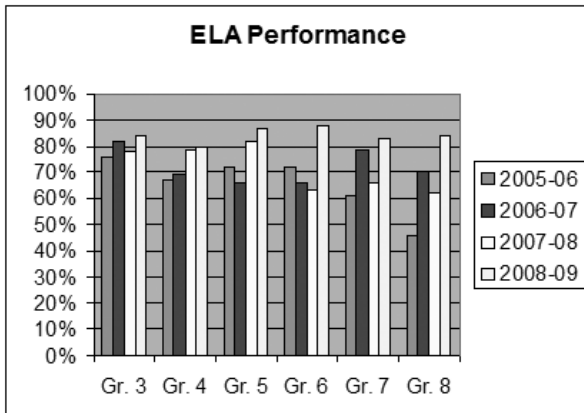
Within the past few years you have heard a lot about the changes we have made to our pedagogy, our concentrated areas of focus and the way in which students learn. We have watched the increase in student achievements in both qualitative and quantitative measures.

Qualitatively, we have seen differences in the way teachers approach teaching and learning. The conversations within the classrooms have changed to include more of our students’ thinking. Students are developing ways to become more independent in their learning by infusing learning strategies into their daily work. The inclusion of these strategies gives students tools to fall back on when they are encountering difficulties without their teacher there to help. By using these strategies within the classroom, with the teachers at arm’s length, they build the confidence to deal with similar issues when they are learning independently. We are also seeing differences with student engagement. Students are reading more, inquiring more and solving problems differently in mathematics. As we end our formal relationship with the PEBC and our staff development focus on reading, we embark on the next stage of our pedagogical development as we begin to train in the Writing Workshop. (It is important to note that the funding for our staff development efforts come from donations from Colgate, shared services and outside sources such as the Emerald Foundation.) You will hear more about this in the years to come.

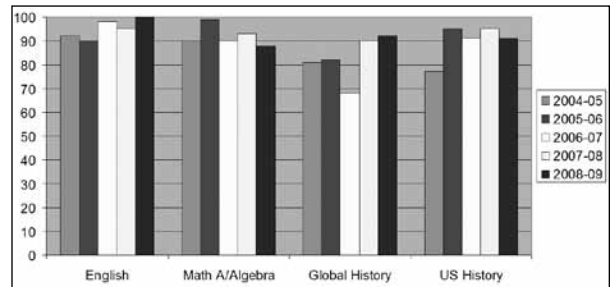
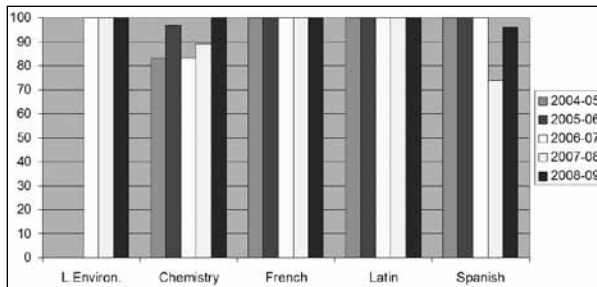
Quantitatively, we have made great strides. Please find the statistical measure of our students’ success. Our students in grades 3-8 have made progress in their NYS test scores in the English Language Arts and Mathematics as we have modified our practices. We anticipate continued growth as Tom Lutsic and Kevin Ellis continue to set high expectations for student achievement. Our Regents scores are strong with increased emphasis on the areas on math and science. This year, our students were offered AP Statistics in addition to AP Calculus, in preparation for a new science research course that will be offered at HCS next year. Please find a comparative analysis of our test scores over the last four-to-five years for our grades 3-8 State Examinations and Regents Exams on the following page.



Grades 3-8 State Examination in ELA & Math



Grades 9-12 Regents Examination Results



Teaching, Co-teaching, Differentiation of Instruction and the Workshop Model

The physical structures within our classrooms have changed. If you enter an elementary classroom, a middle level and many high school classrooms, they look different. Today, in most classrooms, we have tables, clusters of desks or horseshoes, extensive classroom libraries, meeting areas, cozy reading spots, and a learning area that centers around a Smartboard.

Within the elementary classroom, it is common to have a reading specialist, math specialist, or special educator pushing into (as opposed to pulling students out of) the mainstream setting to offer help and differentiate instruction based on our students' needs. It is possible to see a social worker, speech pathologist, school- psychologist and/or guidance counselor in this co-teaching role as well. Lessons dealing with social skills training, cyber-safety and social emotional issues related to the pre-teen and teen years are routine in many subjects. It is important to note that the number of educators servicing these roles has not increased. The way we are using our teachers has been modified to use them to the best of our abilities. We are also offering intensive reading classes at all three levels. This intervention is new to HCS at the middle and high school levels and will increase the likelihood of student success.

The Workshop Model is a new instructional format that allows for multiple modalities of instruction to be used within a lesson. The workshop includes a mini-lesson where direct, linked instruction is delivered to the entire class, followed by a period of small group or independent time for writing, reading, math calculations or inquiry, and independent practice. The independent portion of the lesson allows the teacher to offer targeted, individualized instruction to a student or a small group of students with the same needs. Careful notes are taken to allow the teacher to track an individual's growth. The class ends with a full-class share to clarify any concerns, questions or confusion, extend the mini-lesson



...Teaching, Co-teaching, continued from Page 4

or to highlight success and understanding. The lesson from one day is linked to the next to allow for coordinated instruction. The workshop model can be seen at all levels of instruction but is most readily seen at the elementary and middle levels.

Within the Reading Workshop, the independent reading time is organized to allow students to read independently at their specific reading level. Students choose books based on a number of criteria to ensure they are reading material that is “just right” for them, at that time. Students are “benchmarked” over time to ensure growth in both fluency and comprehension. Mini-lessons are created to teach into areas that need to be developed over time. This method allows the lessons to be tailor-made to meet the classes’ needs.

Next Steps

The first budget run was sent from the Governor’s Office on January 20th. Although we have been in the budget development process for some time, this is the start of the ‘official budget’ season, as we will now have tentative numbers to work from. Since we are now at the point where we have something definitive to operate from, we would like to invite you in to share your thoughts and suggestions during the budget meetings listed below.

Budget Calendar

- February 23: Public Meeting - Discussion on the Arts @ 6:00 p.m.
Board of Education - Regular Meeting
Preliminary Budget Review - 7:00 p.m.

- March 8: Board of Education – Budget Workshop - 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

- April 7: Preliminary Budget Hearing - 7:00 p.m.

- May 12: Public Budget Hearing - 7:00 p.m.

- May 18: Budget Vote & School Board Elections 12:00 Noon - 8:00 p.m.

- May 18: Board of Education - Regular Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

Diana Bowers

Diana Bowers, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools

Tools For Schools

If you shop at Price Chopper, and have an AdvantEdge card, you can help! By signing up to participate in the Price Chopper Tools for Schools program, you can help the District earn points that can be redeemed for school supplies. All eligible purchases made will be credited to Hamilton. To sign up, all you will need is your 10-digit AdvantEdge card number and the School District Code. Please use the following link, click “sign up” and enter the required information. Thank you!

<http://www2.pricechopper.com/toolsforschools>





Counseling Office:

SENIORS:

Congratulations to those seniors who have been accepted to colleges and universities!!!!

-Please see Mrs. Barnum if you still need some help looking into colleges or filling out applications. Mrs. Barnum is also available if you need information about a Gap Year, the military, or seeking employment after high school.

In the next few weeks you will begin to receive financial aid award letters. If you need any help understanding your awards, don't hesitate to come see me!



SENIOR PARENTS:

Be sure that you have requested your FAFSA PIN as well as one for your son/daughter so that you can complete the FAFSA online.

JUNIORS:

In December juniors received their PSAT score reports. Each student who took the exam should have a copy of his/her score report. Please contact Mrs. Barnum if you have any questions.

FRESHMAN:

Congratulations! You've made it through the first half of your freshman year. Keep up the hard work!

Let's Get Ready (SAT preparation):

This year's Let's Get Ready program (offered through Colgate University) will begin on January 24th and runs through April 25th. The program meets two times per week. Classes are scheduled on Thursday evenings from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm and Sundays from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

BOCES:

Sophomores and juniors recently attended BOCES presentations to learn about one and two year programs available to students. In the next few weeks, interested students will have the opportunity to sign up in the Counseling Office for BOCES visits to their programs of interest. See Mrs. Barnum with questions.

Schedules/Course Selections:

The 2009-2010 course selection process will begin soon. Please begin speaking with your son/daughter about course selections for next year.

College Fairs:

The annual Syracuse National College Fair at the OnCenter (Syracuse, NY) will be held on Sunday, March 21st and Monday, March 22nd. For more information, please visit the following website: <http://www.nacacnet.org/EventsTraining/CollegeFairs/ncf/Spring/Pages/SyracuseNCF.aspx>

Tutors:

If you would to sign up for a Colgate tutor, please do so in the Counseling Office.





Elementary News

By: Kevin Ellis, Elementary Principal

Dear Parents & Community Members:

I wanted to begin by thanking all of you that take time to be involved with your children's education. Whether reading together at home, walking with them to school, communicating with your child's teacher, volunteering in the classroom, or just asking them about their day, all that you do means so much to their education. The Hamilton community is a place filled with parent participation in the lives of their children and a wonderful place for children to grow up.

If you have been paying attention to the news out of Albany, you understand the financial crisis New York State is under. Unfortunately, the Governor is intending for local schools to help make up a large part of the deficit. We are anticipating substantial cuts in state aid next year and are currently building our 2010-11 budgets with this in mind. If you would like to learn more about this, Superintendent Dr. Diana Bowers will be presenting two "**Budget Coffees**" on January 25th at 9:30 a.m. and January 27th at 7:00 p.m. The events are open to the entire community and are a great opportunity to learn more about the budget challenges for the upcoming year. It is also a chance to learn how the 2010-11 budget may affect the elementary school. Both events will be held in the HCS auditorium.

The Hamilton Elementary School Team met again on January 4th. Our goal this year is to help improve the communication between our school and the community. We discussed avenues in which information could be shared with the community that have not yet been explored. Suggestions included using the Mid-

York weekly to reach neighbors that do not have children in the district, yet are still taxpayers. We also discussed topics that we felt required more communication. It was decided that parents could benefit from a testing information evening in March. At this meeting we will speak with parents about the April/May State testing in Math and ELA. Parents will learn about what students are doing in school to prepare for the testing and how they can help at home. Additionally, parents will learn how we as a district have scored on these tests, how our scores compare to other districts, and what it means when children score a 1, 2, 3, or 4. Parents will be notified of the exact time and date as the event draws nearer. This will be posted on our website calendar and more information will be coming home with students next month.

On January 14th, students in first and second grades were treated to a "**Puppet Workshop**" by a group from "**KidSpeak**." They presented an interactive puppet workshop designed to foster understanding and acceptance of children with Autism and Asperger's syndrome. The program was developed by professionals at the Margaret L. Williams Developmental Evaluation Center in Syracuse. We are currently exploring the idea of opening a Kindergarten classroom next year, using the "Co-Teaching" method, for students with high needs. By opening a classroom that will meet their needs, we feel we will be able to save a considerable amount of money to the district. More importantly, we can allow these children to stay in their home district where we can be sure they receive the best services. Over the past month, visitations were made to schools

where some of these children are presently attending to learn more about their needs and to begin a relationship with our students.

I continue to work to meet my goals outlined in for the 2009-10 school year. The RtI process has been a key focus as we prepare to meet the state and federal goals outlined for the 2011-12 school year. We have worked with outside experts to help develop what we feel will be the best Pre-k through 12 plan for our students. As I talk with leaders from other districts, I feel strongly that our plan is as comprehensive as any I have heard. It is exciting to be a part of a district that is developing such a progressive system to meet the needs of every child and have steps in place to identify, diagnose, treat, monitor, and remediate symptoms that have caused children to not be successful in the past. This process and our eventual plan is truly "ground breaking."

Lastly, I would like to assure you that we have an amazing faculty of teachers and support staff here at Hamilton. Over the past three years, they have worked tirelessly to improve the quality of services for your children. They have been involved in countless hours of staff development, made fundamental changes to their practices, worked many hours past contract, formed support teams, researched and developed best practices for instruction, and have done so under the stress of continual shrinking budgets. HCS is truly doing everything to make sure all of our children receive the best education possible. None of this would be possible without the dedication and intelligence of our teachers and support staff. I am proud to be the principal of such an outstanding team of educators.



UPK News

This winter the prek students have been focusing on winter weather, hibernation, holiday celebrations and much more.



We took a walk down to the Colgate Bookstore to visit with Santa. We also came together to have a winter fun fest day that included snowman building and snow sculptures. While learning about how animals prepare for winter, we enjoyed a teddy bear picnic with our favorite bear friends from home. We have had fun exploring magnets and have been learning all about opposites. In December, the prek students presented an iMovie on Kindness to the elementary students during our character education assembly. We have been enjoying working with our buddies from first, second, and third grade. Some activities we have done together include holiday projects,

smart board lessons, math lessons, making latkes, writing celebrations, and reading. We look forward to continuing these friendships throughout the rest of the year.

First Grade News

For our study of our community, the students brainstormed businesses/places they wanted to know more about in Hamilton. Students developed questions and then went out to each place and interviewed the owners and managers. Students then returned to HCS and listened to the interview and wrote a news story about each place. The end result was a 20 minute video about six places in Hamilton. These included CNS, the Colgate Pool, Starr Rink, Maxwells, Tractor Supply and the movie theater. Chuck Fox, the manager of the movie theater, suggested we premiere our movie at the theater, and we did so, along with parents, on Wednesday, January 13th. The movie is also available for viewing on the HCS website.

People as Reading Partners

In the month of March, families across the New York State celebrate reading. PARP (People as Reading Partners) begins Monday, March 1st, with a kick off assembly at 1:30 PM. The Elementary School bulletin board will illustrate the reading progress of each grade during the month. The goal for students is to read 15 minutes per day, with a parent, friend, or grandparent. Students will keep track of minutes read outside of school. The PARP Program will also involve parents, members of the community and Hamilton “celebrities” visiting the classrooms and reading to the students during the month. Information about the PARP Program will be sent home with your children on Friday, February 26th. The program will run for four weeks. The theme this year is “*Splash into Reading at the Library*”. Happy Reading!





4th Grade News

Fourth Graders began a pilot program this year learning to use iPod Touches. Each 4th Grader has been assigned an iPod Touch that is used to enhance all curricular areas and to differentiate to meet their individual needs. For starters, to date, students are



using applications (apps) for a dictionary, word work and vocabulary, to practice math facts, locate maps, use latitude and longitude, view the night sky, and read books on their iPod touches, to name a few activities. All fourth graders agree that they are very lucky and are excited and motivated by this incredible technology and learning opportunity.

Music News

The Fine Arts Department has been very busy with student concerts and showcases. Musical groups are coming fresh off impressive Winter Concert performances in December and are already hard at work preparing for upcoming performances. Next up the HCS Jazz Band will travel to the annual Oneida Jazz Festival on March 5th, followed by the HCS Musical on March 26th and 27th. The pit orchestra for the musical will include both professionals as well as some of our talented student musicians.

A special congratulation goes out to those students accepted into the January All-County Festival. Kesslie Nolen, who is coming off an outstanding performance with the All-State Symphonic Band, will be performing on tenor saxophone with the All-County Band. Talented HCS singers Mallory Haskins, Dominique Prete, Steven Dunckel, and Isadora Schaller will join the All-County 5th and 6th Grade Chorus.

The Elementary Chorus and Drama Club are joining together once again this year to present an elementary musical production. This year's presentation will be a musical adaptation of the Mark Twain classic, "*Tom Sawyer*" by Mary Donnelly and George L. O. Strid. This delightful musical is set in the late 1800's and showcases the humorous antics of Tom and his friends. This production will be presented May 20th at 6:30 p.m. in the school auditorium.

Select HCS middle school and high school students have submitted artwork to this year's CNY Scholastic Art Award Competition. This annual, ju-



ried art show is sponsored nationally by Scholastic, Inc., the global children's publishing, education and media company. It is a very competitive show, with schools throughout CNY submitting artwork. Judging criteria are, "originality, technical skill, and personal vision." All 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional media is eligible, plus digital art, film and animation, and new this year, video gaming design. Hamilton students have submitted a total of 22 pieces of work, all in traditional art media. Judging took place the week of January 11th, with the exhibition opening January 22nd, and running though February 26th, at Onondaga Community College in Syracuse. At press time, students are anxiously waiting for notification of acceptance. Select art students are scheduled for a field trip to OCC on January 27th to view the exhibit.



Innovation and Enrichment

HCS is home to some of the most innovative students and teachers! Ask any teacher how they are incorporating technology into their curriculum, and they will likely have some unique ways in which they are using new technology to engage students.

This year has brought a lot of new technology into the district, and students across all grade levels are using it in innovative ways that they will remember

forever. Let's highlight some of these learning experiences: HCS third graders collaborated with their peers in Osaka, Japan at the Tako Elementary School last month. Each school shared information about traditions, community, and lives through a face-to-face, real time video conference. We learned a lot about the Japanese culture through this global interaction. The first connection set a foundation for other interactions throughout the school year!

Some students have been busy producing public service announcements and commercials across many grade levels for very different projects. Fifth graders are in the planning stages of creating a PSA about oil spills and to persuade local hair salons to donate their hair clippings to be turned into oil spills hair mats. These hair mats are used to clean waterways after an oil spill occurs.

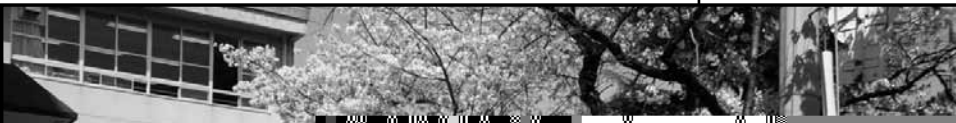
In addition to oil spill PSAs, Ms. Monty's chemistry students created PSAs about the dangers of poisons. Students did a great job balancing humor and research to educate their audience. Lastly, Ms. Moren's students are currently creating commercials involving propaganda. It is great to watch the creativity that students invest in their media.

A sincere "congratulations" goes out to Mrs. Roy's ninth graders, including Ed Heath, Dylan Baker, and Phil Kane. They were selected to present their innovative project at Utica College on January 13th for the Madison Oneida BOCES Model Schools Symposium. After reading *Facing the Lion*, these three guys used the Think Tank to create Wordles and Voice Threads to reflect on their thinking about the book. They even volunteered to come into school during a scheduled two-hour delay to present their projects to their teachers. They were a huge hit! Please check out Mrs. Roy's website to view their great work.

Operation iPod Integration is well underway as well. Mrs. Rowland, Mrs. Follett, and Ms. Macholl all have been busy integrating iPods Touches into their classrooms and daily instruction. Students are using their iPods to access applications, books, and a variety of content-related resources. They will soon be Internet accessible for classroom use and

we are hoping students will soon be able to use them at home to access books and applications as well. It is amazing how engaged students are with their iPods. Check out the iPod Touch link on my website for some great articles about iPods in the classroom.

Please ask your students how they are using technology in their learning. These examples barely scratch the surface of the innovative learning and teaching taking place at HCS.



Tako Elementary School

Hamilton Central School

West Kendrick Avenue
Hamilton, NY 13346

"A Professional Learning Community"

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Hamilton, NY
13346

PLEASE NOTE
TRANSPORTATION
INFORMATION

Or Current Resident

Effective February 1, 2010, there
will no longer be a late bus run.



HCS Welcomes Nominees for Hall of Honor

After a very successful inaugural year for the Hamilton Central School Hall of Honor the committee is encouraging all to get their nominations in for the 2010 class. With the induction to take place in July, the timeline is short for getting all the nominees evaluated and voted on. Please visit the HCS website to access the proper forms and honor someone you feel fits the criteria. Nominees should fit most of the listed characteristics, but necessarily all of them. Coaches, musicians, scholars, and achievers are all eligible to be nominated.

Criteria

- Good standing academically
- Good character/sportsmanship
- Graduate - 5 years or more out of HCS
- Varsity athlete/athletic achievement
 - ✓ Awards
 - ✓ Captainship
 - ✓ Records
- Theatrically or musically talented
 - ✓ NYSMA
 - ✓ NYSTEA
- Outstanding Scholastic Achievement
 - ✓ Scholarship programs
 - ✓ Scholarships awarded
- Participation in extra-curricular clubs and activities
- College
- Career
- Civic contributions/leadership

Please take the time to consider qualified and deserving candidates and visit the website (www.hamiltoncentral.org) to make your feelings known. The committee would really appreciate the input.