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People First - Former Cadets Earn Their Place in Hall of Fame

Six outstanding athletes were enshrined into the Athletic Hall of Fame on January 3rd, individuals whose performances helped elevate the standard of Hilton sports to new levels of excellence.

Nigel Walker-Track, Soccer (Class of 2012)

Mr. Walker was a standout member of the track program, winning the 2011 Section V title in the 400-meter hurdles, and a State title in the 2012 Intersectional Relay. He earned numerous All-County and All-League honors and helped the Cadets to the 2012 Section V team championship.

Nigel was also a three-year member of the varsity soccer team and was a captain his senior season.

After his high school career, Nigel went on to the University of Connecticut where he was a member of the track team from 2013-2015, finishing in the top three at several college events in the 400-meter hurdles.

Nigel currently works as an enterprise software sales leader. He was unable to attend the ceremony because his job required him to be in Brazil at the time of the event.

Anai (Flanagan) Schrader-Bowling, Lacrosse (Class of 2013)

Anai's varsity career began in seventh grade when she joined the bowling team, and over the next six years she became one of the top players in the state. A two-year captain, she was named Bowler of the Year in 2009, also earning a spot on the state composite team in 2011.

A four-time All-County selection, she was also named All-Greater Rochester in 2013, the first year AGR recognized bowling. That same season she also rolled a perfect game.

She was also a member of four league championship teams and one sectional winning team which went on to place second in the state tournament.

Anai's lacrosse resume is equally impressive. A four-year member of the varsity team, she was named to the All-County squad three times and helped the Cadets to back-to-back league titles in 2012 and 2013.



After Hilton, Anai attended St. Francis University in Pennsylvania where she played three years of lacrosse following an injury that sidelined her during her freshman season. She was very active in the Student Athlete Mentors program and the Student Athletic Advisory Committee while in college. In 2017, she was awarded the SAAC Student-Athlete of the Year for her outstanding service to the program.

Anai has returned to Hilton and is currently a special education teacher at Northwood as well as a coach for the Unified and Varsity bowling teams.

Austin Hertel-Wrestling (Class of 2017)

Austin was an integral part of the Cadet wrestling program when the team won four consecutive NYSPHSAA tournament championships. His record during that time was 195-39, winning two Monroe County titles and three Section V Championships. He also placed three times in the state tournament, including a runner-up finish his senior year. He was an All-Greater Rochester selection multiple times during his career.

His success on the mat continued in college at Gannon University, posting a 61-36 record. He was a team captain for the squad which won a pair of Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference titles. He finished out his college career with an NCAA Super Regional Championship and was a two-time NCAA Championship qualifier.

Austin is currently putting his experience to work as a volunteer coach for the wrestling team at Central Catholic High School in Pittsburgh.



Dear Hilton Learning Community,

Even though the weather for most of the winter has been brutal, our staff and students have been doing some amazing things. From our induction ceremony for the Athletic Hall of Fame, to the many concerts and theatrical performances taking place, our students and staff have been staying busy with all types of events.

In just a few weeks the weather will break (I hope) and our focus will turn to spring and all that comes with. A new sports season, moving up ceremonies and of course graduation, in addition to so much more.

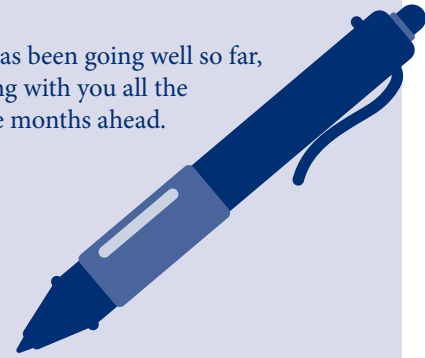
Also remember that our annual budget vote and school board election will be held on Tuesday, May 19 at the Parma Town

Hall from 6 a.m.-9 p.m. There will be more information and details about the budget in an upcoming edition of **The Insight**.

We hope the school year has been going well so far, and look forward to sharing with you all the great things to come in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Casey Kosiorek, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Integrity - District Forum Discusses Electric Buses, Proposition to Purchase One at No Cost

In 2022 New York State passed a law which will prohibit school districts from purchasing gas or diesel buses beginning in 2027. In addition, the law states that beginning in 2035 all districts must be using electronic buses exclusively.

It's because of this that the Hilton Central School District is once again asking for voter approval to purchase a single electric bus this May. The district put the same proposal up for a vote last year, but it was rejected by fewer than 50 votes. The cost of an electric bus is approximately \$495,000, as opposed to \$195,000 for a diesel bus. Using a grant provided by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) in the amount of \$220,500 and state aid, the district would be able to obtain the bus at no cost. If it is voted down again, the district would be required to re-apply for the grant to receive the money.

The district can apply for waivers to extend the 2027 deadline, but this would mean that the district would have to purchase more electric buses over a shorter period to meet the 2035 deadline. There will also be a proposition for purchasing gas and diesel buses up for a vote this May, which will be the last time they can be purchased unless the state grants the waiver.

The district recently held a public forum to discuss the purchase of electric buses and to answer questions about the plan. You can see a video of the forum along with other information regarding the district's plan for an electric bus fleet here: <https://www.hilton.k12.ny.us/page/electric-bus-information>

One of the main reasons the district wants to have an electric bus in service as soon as possible is for training purposes. Not only for the drivers and the mechanics, but also for first responders so that they can become familiar with the vehicles in the unlikely event they are ever needed.

Another benefit of getting an EV bus would be to get a better sense of how the bus handles the needs of the transportation department. HCS D covers 66 square miles, and a study done earlier this year discovered that electric buses could cover 80% of the district's current routes (this was up from 50% from a study completed in 2023). With the rapidly increasing technology of EV batteries, that percentage will more than likely

continue to increase, but having a bus to use in actual operation will give a more accurate sense of what is needed.

In addition to the vehicles themselves, the district will have to install chargers for each electric bus purchased. The cost for the chargers ranges from \$15,000 for an AC Level 2 charger and up to \$65,000 for a DC Fast charger. The completion of a Fleet Electrification Plan in conjunction with NYSERDA provides grants for districts of up to \$65,000 for each charger purchased and installed.

The current transportation facility on Old Hojack Road would also require several upgrades. Built in the mid 1980's, the building needs substantial renovations or may need to be replaced with a new facility in a different location. This is something that has been under review even before the EV mandate was implemented by the state. Our current electrical infrastructure could only handle up to six (6) electric buses. The district would need to work with RG&E to meet the state mandate for our fleet of 100 buses. An all-electric fleet would make building a new transportation facility a more pressing need.

"Regardless of anyone's opinion of electric vehicles, this is something the district is required to pursue based on the mandate from the state. The purchase of one (1) electric bus is one step towards making that happen as we continue to prepare the district to move forward based on the parameters that are coming down from the governor's office," said Adam Geist, Assistant Superintendent for Business.



Integrity - District Preparing for Next Capital Project

The Hilton Central School District is in the process of long-range planning for its capital project, to be voted on in December of 2027 with work tentatively scheduled to begin in 2029 or 2030. To help determine the priorities of the project, the district is seeking input from a variety of stakeholders through long-range planning subcommittees. These include community members, building administration and department leaders.

There are a total of eight (8) subcommittees, one for each building, and one for athletics, transportation, and food service. The district has a fully funded capital reserve of \$10,000,000 which was approved by voters in 2024.

Much of the work which is to be done will be determined by reviewing building condition surveys. These are completed every 5 years by engineers and architects who look at what needs to be replaced throughout the district. However, the subcommittees also look at needs that are not picked up during the survey but need to be addressed and prioritize them. An example of that is the district air conditioning plan.

The subcommittees rank the items and report out, then those lists are condensed to one by the long range planning committee, ranking them from most to least important in order to determine the scope of work for the project.

Subcommittees will meet through December of this year, with Board of Education approval for the project scheduled for June of 2027.

Plans would then be submitted to the New York State Department of Education before being voted on by the community.

The district will be working with LaBella Architecture, Campus Construction and BPD Municipal Finance for the proposed project.

Meetings will be scheduled both during the day and evening to make it easier for community members to participate. If you are interested in joining one of the subcommittees or have any questions regarding the project, please contact Adam Geist, Assistant Superintendent for Business: ageist@Hilton.k12.ny.us



Continued from page 1 - Hall of Fame

Johnathan Letta, Football, Basketball (Class of 2017)

Letta was a force to be reckoned with on the football field and the basketball court.

A four-year starter on the gridiron, Johnathan was named Monroe County Division 2 Player of the Year in 2015. He also earned All-Greater Rochester and All-County honors in both 2015 and 2016.

A team captain his senior year, he would close out his Cadet career as the school record holder for career touchdown passes.

In basketball, he was also a member of the team as a freshman and would go on to be named First Team All-County following his junior season. A two-year captain, he finished number four on the school's all-time scoring list.

Following graduation Letta attended St. John Fisher, earning a bachelor's degree in business management and an MBA in Business Administration. While at Fisher he started for five years on the football team and was a captain for two of those.

Vanessa L'Abbate-Soccer (Class of 2016)

Vanessa was one of the most dominant goalkeepers our area has ever seen, even though her freshman year she was a starter as a defender and even earned All-County recognition. Once she moved to her natural position as goalie it was obvious where she belonged.

The next three years, in addition to All-County she would be named All-Greater Rochester First Team and All-State. She was also selected to the Democrat and Chronicle's All-Decade Team.

Vanessa was Team MVP for the Cadets three years and in 2016 was presented with the U.S. Marine Corps Distinguished Athlete Award.

Her success in soccer wasn't limited to her school team. She was also a member of a two-time NYSWYSA State Cup Champion in club competition in 2011 and 2012.

Tahjae Hill-Basketball, Football (Class of 2020)

Tahjae has the distinction of being the first person from this decade to be selected for the Hall of Fame, but that is hardly his greatest accomplishment. Truly one of the most outstanding athletes to come through Hilton, he holds the school record for career points (1,953), rebounds (555), and most points in a game (48).

The accolades he amassed are just as impressive-2nd team All-County as a freshman, and 1st team the next three years. Division 1 Player of the Year Twice, three-time All-Greater Rochester selection and earned spots on the 4th, 5th, and 9th All-New York State Teams.

A two-year starter in football, he ended his career with 53 receptions, 986 receiving yards and 11 touchdowns. Both years he was selected First Team All-County and his senior season was capped with a First Team All-Greater Rochester spot.

Hill earned a basketball scholarship to Niagara University, then went on to play at Butler Community College, Wayland Baptist University, and finished his career at LSU Shreveport.

The Hilton Central School District would like to congratulate this year's inductees to the Athletic Hall of Fame and thank them for all they have done for our school.

To see a video of this year's ceremony, please go here: <https://www.hilton.k12.ny.us/page/athletics>

People First - New Programs Help Aspiring Teachers Find Success

Tia Clark and Emma Spelman are both working towards becoming teachers, but they're doing it in ways that weren't available before. The Hilton High School graduates were able to take advantage of two new programs, one offered by New York State and the other through BOCES.

After two years as a teaching assistant at the High School, Tia learned about a program that could help her financially while she worked towards becoming a certified teacher and earning her master's degree. At the same time, it would give her the type of experience that would be invaluable in the classroom.

It's called the Monroe Regional Teacher Residency Consortium (MRTRC), a program set up through Monroe Two and Monroe One BOCES in conjunction with the University of Rochester's Warner School of Education and Nazareth University's School of Education.

Instead of the traditional path of spending eight weeks as a student teacher as an undergraduate, then getting your master's, this program works like a medical residency. It places graduate students in year-long co-teaching assignments. Four days of the week they are assigned with a school-based teacher educator, on the fifth day they serve as a substitute teacher.

The benefits of this method have been obvious to Tia.

"Since you're in a placement for the entire year, you just see things that you wouldn't see in an 8-week traditional student teaching. You actually get to know the students, you get to know how to differentiate, and you become a part of the team."

Tia spent the first semester at QUEST and is currently at Merton Williams. While at QUEST she was working alongside Tracey D'Alonzo and the veteran teacher has seen other student teachers, but this program takes things to a different level.

"I am so impressed with the level of preparation Tia has shown and the wrap-around training and support that University of Rochester has provided for School Based Teacher Educators," said D'Alonzo. "Tia became an integral part of the QUEST Intermediate team."

The fact that the program requires her to substitute one day a week is another big plus. Not only does she gain experience in a different classroom, it helps to fulfill a need for substitute teachers in the district. On top of that, on the day that she substitutes, she gets the per diem rate from the district.

The financial benefits to the program don't stop at the substitute teacher pay. Participants also receive \$15,000 in tuition assistance as well as a \$15,000 stipend for living expenses.

"I never thought I would go to the University of Rochester," said Tia. But really when you get the grant from the state and the supplement from BOCES, it's not that much money. It was a way for me to get certified and not go into debt."

With her earlier experience at the high school as a TA, and now with a year split between QUEST and Merton Williams, Tia will have been able to work at every grade level in the district.

Emma had no intention of being a teacher when she graduated in 2021.

She went to St. John Fisher with the goal of becoming a pharmacist but, the further she got in that program, the more she realized it wasn't for her.

"The more I thought about what made me happy and where I felt the most comfortable, the more I kept returning to school."

After earning her bachelor's degree, she returned to Fisher and began work on her master's and became part of the Teacher Residency Program, where she is working with two mentor teachers at Village Elementary, the same school she attended.

Hilton is the first district in Monroe County to sponsor a New York State Teaching Apprentice. This is a collaboration between the Department of Labor, Wayne Finger Lakes BOCES, St. John Fisher and the district. Apprentices are sponsored by districts but have been supported with additional funding from the New York State SUNY Hub to offset other costs.

"I still have my college classes, but I am here Monday through Friday with my mentor teachers for the whole year. I came here in January, then I'll come back in September."

Just like Tia, Emma has nothing but good things to say about her program and the experience she is gaining.

"Student teaching's hard. It's being thrown into a place where you just don't know what to expect. But here, they've shown me things that I will forever hold on to."

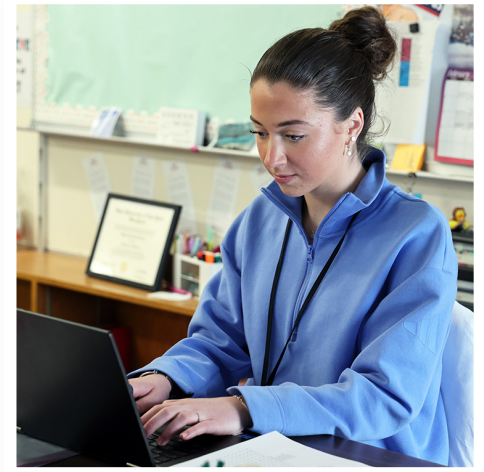
"We are thrilled to support Tia and Emma in their journeys to become teachers," said Ned Dale, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. Engaging in the partnerships to support such talented young educators is one of my main goals as well as one of our district values of being people first."

Tia will graduate in August and then start looking for teaching jobs, Emma's set to graduate in December. They both are hoping that an opportunity to stay here in Hilton will be an option.

"I'd love to stay in Hilton; I absolutely love this district," said Tia.

Emma feels the same.

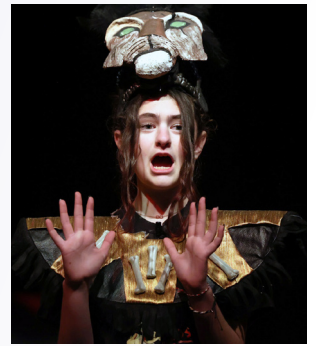
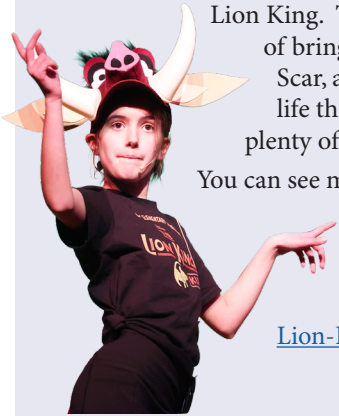
"I've loved Hilton, I started here, I know this place and I'm surrounded by people I've had relationships with for years."



Lifelong Learning - QUEST Students Bring Lion King to Life in Annual Production

Another year brought another great performance by the students at QUEST with their performance of The Lion King. The kids did an amazing job of bringing characters like Simba, Scar, and Timon and Pumbaa to life through song, dance and plenty of laughs.

You can see more photos from the performance on our district Smugmug page: <https://hiltonschools.smugmug.com/2025-2026/QUEST/Lion-King>



Lifelong Learning - Northwood Students hit the Stage for Annual Revue

For the seventeenth-year students from Northwood put their talents on full display as they sang and danced their way through their Broadway Revue.

The Northwood Theatre Club is comprised of roughly 60-65 4th, 5th, and 6th graders. Students audition in June for the following school year.

Rehearsals for the show begin in October, with 1-2 meetings per week through December. In January they work 2-3 times per week.

The show contains a variety of Broadway tunes, songs from Disney movies and a few popular songs mixed in.



People First - Safety, Smiles, Artwork and A-Days: How the Merton Williams Security Staff is Redefining Morning Greetings

By Dr. Marc D'Amico-Merton Williams Middle School Principal

How Hilton Central School District's intentional value of creating welcoming and affirming environments at Merton Williams Middle School is embodied by the simple act of picking up a marker to transform how students start their day.

A Humble Beginning

It didn't start with a task force, formal committee or action plan. Instead, it began during the quiet hours of the evening. A night security guard, looking for a way to make the morning transition special for students, began drawing on the dry-erase board at the main entrance.

The goal was simple: help students identify which "Letter Day" it was (A through J) while giving them something creative to look at as they walked through the doors. Mike Simonelli, the original artist, shares "One night I decided to put stripes on the B so it looked like a bee." The following B-Day, Mike's partner, Dan Risewick, decided to one-up Mike and drew an entire bee. Dan adds, "and it's just taken off from there."

From One Sketch to a Friendly Competition

Seeing the joy these drawings brought, others on the security staff—known within the district as Youth Assistants—decided to join in. What was once a single animal has evolved into a friendly, creative art competition among the team. The Youth Assistants now vie to see who can create the most imaginative illustration that aligns with the letter of the day.



The movement grew so popular that the main office stepped in to support the effort, supplying the Youth Assistants with high-quality, vibrant dry-erase markers to ensure their "masterpieces" truly popped. Whether it's a Cactus on a C-Day, a Duck on a D-Day, or an Iguana on an I-Day, the entrance has become an avant-garde gallery.

Why the Small Things Matter

While a drawing on a whiteboard might seem like a minor detail, it is a powerful tool in building a sense of belonging for everyone in the middle school community. These drawings offer a moment of connection between the students and the staff members charged with their safety. It has also allowed the Youth Assistants to share their skills beyond the safety and security skills gained from prior careers in law enforcement.

A New School Tradition

The impact has reached the student body in a delightful way. The daily drawings are no longer just a visual treat; they have become part of the school's official communication, ensuring that everyone—even those who didn't enter through the main doors—is in on the fun and knows exactly what creation is accompanying the letter on the sign.



By turning a routine schedule update into a creative highlight, the Youth Assistants at Merton Williams are proving that building a welcoming and affirming environment doesn't always require a complex strategy. Sometimes, all it takes is a little imagination, a fresh set of markers, and a security team that cares.

Lifelong Learning - Students and Star Combine for a Great Night at Evening of Jazz

Take two amazing school ensembles, add in a Grammy-nominated artist and you get an incredible night of music.

On February 13th Hilton High School hosted the 22nd annual Evening of Jazz, featuring trumpeter Wayne Bergeron. The list of artists that Bergeron has performed with over the course of his career is a veritable who's who of the music industry, running the gamut from Ray Charles to Green Day. He has also accumulated an incredible number of movie and television credits including *The Lion King*, *Frozen*, and *The Simpsons*. So for the students in the High School and Merton Williams Jazz Ensembles



to not only perform with him but to learn from him was an amazing opportunity.

The performance at the High School was the culmination of a unique experience for the band members, starting the day before when students from grades 4-12 were treated to a morning masterclass. That afternoon the two ensembles performed for Bergeron, and he offered pro tips and advice on how they could take their music to the next level.

The concert itself was a great showcase for the students and a rare opportunity for them to perform with not only Bergeron, but several other guest performers from the local music scene.

This was Bergeron's second time appearing at the Evening of Jazz, and he proved once again why someone once called him, "A once-in-a-lifetime lead trumpeter player."



Welcoming and Affirming - Sign-up Now for the Sources of Strength 5K Color Run and Walk

Sign-up Now for the Sources of Strength 5K Color Run and Walk

The Hilton High School chapter of Sources of Strength will hold its second annual 5K Color Fun Run and Walk on May 30.

Join us for a day that offers something for everyone! Don't feel like running or walking, there's plenty to do, including food trucks and live entertainment.

The Sources of Strength 5K is more than just a race – it's an opportunity to promote mental health, build community, and support the incredible mission of Sources of Strength. SOS is a nationally renowned organization, with a proven track record of transforming communities by equipping youth and adults with evidence-based tools to build connections, promote well-being, and create lasting change.

Thanks to the Hilton-Parma Parks and Recreation Department and The Friends of Hilton-Parma Parks and Recreation for teaming up with the district to make this event possible.

You can sign up by using this link, or by scanning the QR code.

<https://runsignup.com/Race/NY/Hilton/SourcesOfStrengthKColorRun>



Lifelong Learning - QUEST's Annual Sled Race is About More than Just Fun

Just like most days this winter, February 6th was a cold and snowy day, but that didn't keep the students and staff of QUEST Elementary from heading outside for the annual sled race.

The race itself was a culmination of months of work as the kids worked on their own to design, build, and test their creations. It taught them valuable lessons about engineering, cooperation and in many cases how to handle, and rebound from setbacks.

Congratulations to this year's winners:

- The Primary Level champ was the Charmander created by Mrs. Langswager's class
- The Elementary Level champ was the Volcanis created by Gauge Camp, Alden Kenig and Wyatt Werner from Mrs. PJ's class
- The Intermediate Level champ was the Flight Simulator created by Andrew Stickney from Mrs. Healey's class, who also went on to win the title of Grand Champion!

Here are some pictures from this year's races:

<https://hiltonschools.smugmug.com/2025-2026/QUEST/Sled-Race>



Hilton School Board Members are elected to three-year terms and serve without pay. Online Board meeting agendas and minutes: Hilton.k12.ny.us/BoE

**2025-26
Board of Education**

Nancy Pickering
President

Kaylee Bennett
Vice President

Amanda Diedrich

Mark Hilburger

Ed Mascadri

Kristine Price

Stephanie Sloan

District Clerk
Michelle McCue

Hilton School District Resident

HILTON INSIGHT



hilton.k12.ny.us

The Hilton School District does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, race, color, religion, political affiliation or national origin.

Superintendent of Schools,
Casey Kosiorek, Ed.D.

Director of Communications,
David Yates

HILTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

2026-2027 SCHOOL BUDGET & BOARD OF EDUCATION VOTE

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026

6 a.m. – 9 p.m. | Parma Town Hall | Hilton, NY 14468

For more information on the proposed budget, please visit our website:
<https://www.hilton.k12.ny.us/page/school-budget-2026-27>

CADET INTENTIONAL VALUES

INTEGRITY: Upholding the highest standards of honesty, transparency, and ethical behavior in all our interactions and decision-making.

WELCOMING & AFFIRMING: Fostering an inclusive and supportive environment where diversity is celebrated, and every individual is valued, and respected.

PEOPLE FIRST: Prioritizing the well-being and growth of students, staff, and all members of our learning community by placing their needs, perspectives, and aspirations at the forefront of our work together.

LIFELONG LEARNING: Cultivating a culture of continuous growth, curiosity, and adaptability, encouraging students and educators alike to pursue knowledge, skills, and personal development.

HILTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

