

FOCUS

Bulldog Friendshop

How staff at Union Pleasant are making sure every child makes a new friend this year

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Summer
2023

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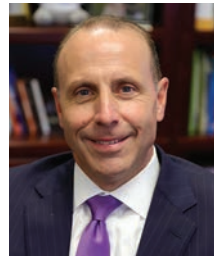


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Superintendent's Message



Michael Cornell
Superintendent

As the weeks of August turn into early September, our collective attention at home and here at the Hamburg Schools begins to turn towards the dawn of another school year. Because it is your children who bring the joy to our work, we look forward to Wednesday, September 6, which is the day that we welcome our students back to school.

As we continue to pursue the imperative of Modern Learning for all students, it makes sense to remind us that we do so within the critical context of understanding the mental, social and emotional wellness of our children. While establishing the academic building blocks for success after high school is obviously an important part of what we do in school, it was important for me to point out that we also want every student to experience the joy, value and connection that comes from a deep sense of belonging in school.

There is ample research to strongly suggest that when a child feels like she/he feels a sense of belonging at school:

- Attendance improves
- Academic outcomes are better
- Engagement in school activities increases
- Negative school behaviors, like bullying, decrease
- Student mental/emotional wellness improves

Creating that sense of belonging at school is a product of the work that our incredible teachers, administrators and support staff do every day. You will notice this priority in everything from morning circles and fun, interactive learning experiences, to the efforts that our teachers will make to build a positive and productive relationship with your child - all of which are designed to help our students feel true community with their teachers and classmates as a critical part of the school experience.

Creating belonging and community isn't simply a "feel good" effort. The benefits of learning in warm and collaborative environments lead to better academic outcomes resulting in excellent college opportunities for our students. Just as importantly, for students entering the workforce or military after high school, employers and recruiters actively seek to onboard collaborative people because they:

- Learn from their colleagues more readily
- Learn from constructive feedback
- Are able to resolve conflicts more easily
- Form stronger and more productive relationships with co-workers
- Are more self-aware and adaptable

Finally, please know that we never lose sight of the fact that everything we do is done in partnership with families at home, and with our entire community. We are grateful for the trust you place in us to care for your children, and we can't wait to see them on the first day of school, which is Wednesday, September 6.

Sincerely,

Michael Cornell
Superintendent of Schools

Welcome to Hamburg!

We are so excited to welcome a couple new faces (and one familiar face in a new role) to our district administration! They are all excited to be here and wanted to share a little bit about themselves.

Christine L. Ljungberg

School Business Administrator

Past experience: School Business Administrator at Holland CSD for the past 4 years; prior to that SBA at Cheektowaga Central for 3 years; prior to that Director of Employee Negotiations at KenTon UFSD for 8 years. I also worked in healthcare accounting for 10 years.

Why are you looking forward to being a Hamburg Bulldog?

I'm looking forward to being a Hamburg Bulldog because of the strong leadership, supportive community, and outstanding students.



Tom Adams

Hamburg Middle School Principal and HCSD Athletic Director

Past experience: Principal at HMS from 2019 – present, Principal at Newfane Middle School from 2007-2019, Assistant Principal at Newfane Middle from 2006-2007, 7th/8th grade social studies teacher from 1996-2006 and Coached cross country and indoor track



Why are you looking forward to being in this role?

I've found that the most enriching part of my work in education is seeing kids connected: connected to friends, family, teachers and staff, and their passions. Athletics is a place that fosters that connection for so many of our students, and I can't wait to see our teams in action. I'm fortunate to have witnessed many Hamburg Bulldogs games, meets, and matches over the last four years, and I'm looking forward to being more involved. Our coaches are skilled and dedicated, and I'll have the support of faculty managers Steve Chaffee and John McFall to assist as well. Debbie Olmsted and Christine Hooper, who work in the athletics office, are tremendously knowledgeable and similarly committed to the program, and they've been extremely supportive as I've begun the process of learning the role. Retired Athletic Director Pat Cauley has set a high bar for all of us, and I look forward to help continue to make every day a great day to be a Bulldog.

Thomas Riddoch

Armor Elementary School Principal

Past experience: I am a certified elementary teacher and began my career in Alden (also Bulldogs). After Alden, I taught for over ten years at Delevan Elementary in the Pioneer District. I received my administrative degree from the University of Rochester and prior to coming to Hamburg, I was the PK-5 principal in the Franklinville Central School District.



Why are you looking forward to being a Hamburg Bulldog?

I am looking forward to working in conjunction with families and staff to create memorable educational experiences for all of our students. I am excited and honored to be the principal at Armor Elementary and will work to the best of my ability to ensure Armor is a place where students feel joy, value and connection. I could tell from the first day I entered Armor elementary that it was a special place. I felt so welcomed by faculty, staff and students. When they talk about Armor being a family, I knew that was true from my very first visit.





Mental health is a team effort

Mental health professionals across all our buildings are doing incredible work to make sure students feel supported. In the middle and high school, some of our social workers are running a variety of peer groups students can join. We asked a few of them to break down these groups and why they're beneficial for kids.

Mr. Paul Thompson: "I run the *Goodfellas Club* which is a group that strives to empower men to be upstanding people of character. Members of this group give back to the community, bond with each other, and build moral development. I also co-facilitate the grief group at the high school which is for students that have suffered a significant loss in their family. They learn the stages of grief and are able to find comfort through peer connection. Laura Sabia is the co-facilitator."

Mrs. Tina LaMendola: "At the high school, we facilitated six coping skills support groups with a total of 60 students this past year. These groups met weekly from October-May and ran on a rotating class schedule. Students invited to the group experienced a mental health challenge and some may have been diagnosed with anxiety and/or depression. These groups are facilitated by the high school social workers and counselors. Typically, students get referred by the school counselor or their friends.

Group is an excellent way to build positive peer connections, normalize mental health challenges, and provide hope that recovery is possible. It breaks down barriers among students in grades 9-12, both male and female. We work to create a welcoming, warm and safe environment. When students come together outside of their academic classes, this provides an

instant connection and an increase in support which reduces isolation. I often hear students say "I thought I was the only one who felt this way." Our group motto is 'everything you say in group, stays in group,' and 'you get out of group what you put into group.'

Weekly routines include: fist to five check-ins, guided meditation, journaling, coping



skills, and ending with a take-away for closure. Coping skills include: mindfulness, goal setting, self care plans, bilateral stimulation, benefits of cold exposure, exercise, paced breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, cognitive behavioral therapy, emotional freedom technique, random acts of kindness, volunteer work in the BOCES classroom, and yoga."

Miss Andrea DiCristofaro: "I help run the grades 5-8 mental health push-ins. District social workers collaborated with mental health professionals throughout the elementary buildings and Middle School to gain insight on the needs of students in grades 5-8. We used that information

to create a mental health education curriculum throughout the district, and tailored the lessons to each grade level. Push-ins occurred once for each of the 5th grade classes and two to three times for the middle school students.

The curriculum includes providing coping skills for students that can be used both inside and outside the classroom. These skills enhance students' confidence to work through their stressors without leaving the classroom. We also talk about the definition of 'stress' and the difference between 'good stress' and 'bad stress.'

We also teach signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression, where to reach

out for mental health support, and break down the stigma of mental health by discussing celebrities who are diagnosed with mental health disorders and how they manage their symptoms.

Lastly, we lead a therapeutic circle for middle schoolers. Students and teachers have the opportunity to ask questions to one another and respond to other's stories. This is a great way for everyone to connect on a personal level and open up the door for students to know their teachers and classmates can also be there for support.





Bulldog New friend

As students have been enjoying their summer vacation, a lot of work is happening behind the scenes at Union Pleasant Elementary School to ensure every child makes a new friend this upcoming school year. UPES strives to nurture a culture of inclusivity each day because every person has value and unique gifts to share.

The program is called the Bulldog Friendship, and the work started at the end of last school year. UPES speech-language pathologists and specialized teachers are leading the charge, including speech-language pathologist Mrs. Alexis Linz.

She heard Lake Shore was running a similar program, mainly focused on specialized classes, and she wanted to take it a step further.

"I wanted to take that and run with it a little further and include our general education and ICT classes. I wanted the main goals for Union Pleasant to be that our students are making a new friend from a different class, practicing their social skills, and getting some models from peers if they need support in that area. Overall also just having fun," Mrs. Linz said.

The group piloted the idea in June. They invited a few classes from kindergarten and second grade to meet up in the cafeteria. Among the group were general education, ICT, and specialized classes.

They had open-ended activities for the kids, such as puzzles, playdough, coloring, and more. The idea is to allow the kids to move around and socialize with little help from the adults, who just serve as models of encouragement. For example, an adult may see two students playing next to each other, and encourage conversation about a mutual favorite color, sport, or living in the same neighborhood.

The pilot included a kindergarten group and a separate second grade group. Mrs. Linz said it was hugely successful. She said some kids in specialized classes who are typically more possessive, were allowing other kids to play with them without the need for adult intervention. She said they were even more receptive to sharing when the idea came from their peers.

"I think it goes both ways, so kids in the specialized class are able to observe peer models from the children in the general education or the ICT classes and all students are able to expand

Friendshop: s for everyone

their horizons and socialize with students that they might not always get to interact with outside of school.”

Mrs. Linz said the goal for this school year is to expand the program to all grade levels. She hopes to involve special areas like art, physical education, and occupational and physical therapists to bring different activities to the table.

The main goal is for each child to walk away with a new friend.

“I would love to continue to build the program until these students are in fifth grade and the next big step is middle school. Having more familiar faces they can see around a new building would be a huge advantage. Even a friend they could smile or wave at in the hallway could go a long way.”

Ultimately, the Bulldog Friendship is a place for kids to just be kids, play, and have fun.



Jazz ensemble goes global

The members of the Hamburg High School Jazz Ensemble recently took their talents overseas. The group, led by director Mr. Larry Dubill, traveled to Kanazawa, Japan and had the chance to perform and immerse themselves in the culture.

This is the fourth time Mr. Dubill has led this trip; it all started back in 2005. Mr. Dubill studied music in Japan back in the 1990's, and has used his connections to also give his students this life-changing experience.

"To see them have those experiences, both musically and socially, and see them light up, it's just great," he said.

The students performed at several schools, collaborated with Japanese student ensembles, and even had the chance to perform and participate in the Hyaku Mangoku Matsuri festival parade. This two-hour festival draws more than 420,000 spectators.

The group also traveled to Tokyo and Kyoto where they visited historical sites including temples, shrines, and gardens, and witnessed traditions like tea ceremonies.

"I love sharing the culture and the uniqueness of the Japanese people and music with the kids because that's something that I think is important for Hamburg to have, cultural diversity," Mr. Dubill said.

Typically, the Japanese students have traveled to Hamburg each year after our students visited Japan. Mr. Dubill said while nothing is in stone, he is in talks to hopefully welcome Japanese students here in Hamburg again in the near future.

"It's amazing that our administration is so supportive of this because it really is a unique thing that's only happening here in Hamburg."



Science of reading: Our new ELA curriculum

New this year, our teachers will be implementing the **Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA)** in grades K-3, **HMH Into Reading** in grades 4-5 for reading/ELA. Our district made these selections after careful consideration and a successful year-long pilot program.

Throughout the year-long pilot, staff dug into the Science of Reading, evaluating our practices and aligning our instruction. The term "Science of Reading" refers to more than fifty years of research that reading experts, especially cognitive scientists, have conducted on how we learn to read. It provides robust insight into what skills are involved, how those skills work together, and which parts of the brain are responsible for reading development.

CKLA is a language arts program grounded in the Science of Reading, that combines an explicit, multi-sensory approach to phonics with rich texts carefully sequenced to build content knowledge—so that learning to read and reading to learn develop together. **Into Reading** features research-based, explicit systematic instruction with resources to support whole class, small group, and independent student work. The program provides the tools students need to develop critical and strategic thinking skills for the 21st century.

As we transition to full implementation throughout the District, you may notice some changes:

Use of decodable readers. Students need regular practice with grade-level text and texts that are connected to each day's phonics instruction, so that they can apply what they've learned.

Dedicated phonics instruction. Learning to read is not natural and must be taught through explicit, systematic instruction.

Teaching content, not isolated comprehension strategies. Language comprehension is as important as decoding. The more background knowledge students receive, the more prior knowledge and vocabulary they can bring to texts.

This has truly been a labor of love for many in the District and we are looking forward to full implementation in September. Throughout the school year, we hope to provide information that will help parents and caregivers support reading at home.



ELA K-5 pilot video

Capital Project update

We are excited to share the latest update on the Hamburg CSD Discover 2021 Capital Project.

As of August 1, 2023, significant progress has been made.

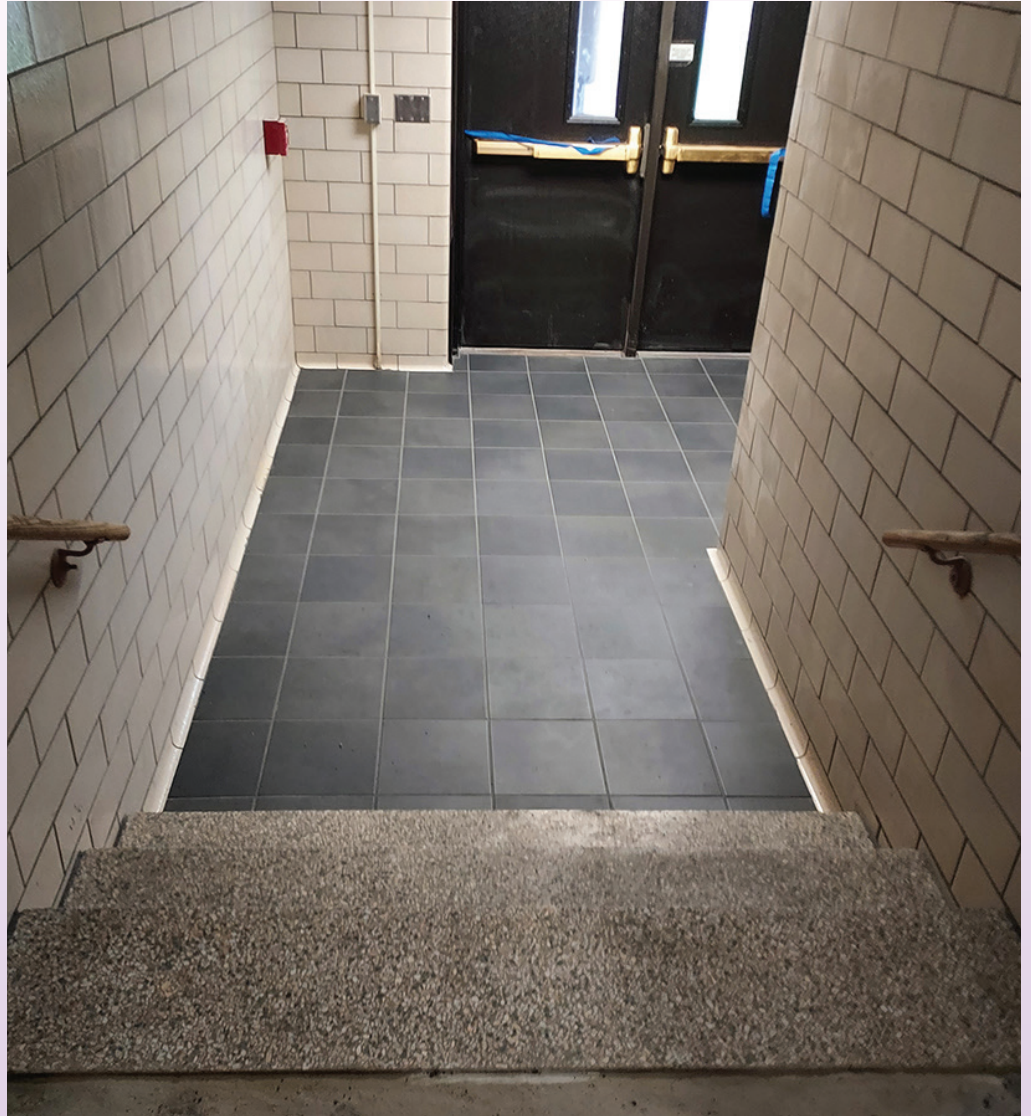
- The regrading of Howe Field is nearly complete, along with the new concrete flatwork and fencing
- The new bus loop stormwater management systems are currently being installed
- The North parking lot is being prepared for new asphalt and concrete sidewalks
- The baseball and softball new drainage systems are being installed currently as well

In the upcoming weeks, the project will be continuing with new electrical and plumbing installations, followed by asphalt and concrete paving in multiple areas.

The new turf and scoreboard at Howe Field are expected to begin in the upcoming weeks as well. The project team has been diligently working to ensure the work is completed on schedule.

At our recent Capital Project Community Committee meeting, we discussed a few design and timeline changes that were made. The new pool complex will be built using some of its existing footprint rather than having it built in a completely new footprint. This change will bring millions of dollars in additional state aid to the school district to support the project. Importantly, the pool will still be 100% new construction and state of the art. It will feature six lanes plus a zero entry lane for folks with extra mobility needs (we initially hoped to fit eight lanes), and a diving area.

The timeline of certain elements of the project will be extended into 2029, with the pool construction portion scheduled to get state approval in early 2028. This was also done to make the project more affordable within the



New tile placed at multiple middle school and high school entrance vestibules

current project budget. Our district, and all districts who had projects approved in 2021, are dealing with the increase of construction inflation. Depending on the labor and materials required, it has risen to between 18-30% per year since 2021.

We are proud of the fact that our construction management team, architects, and fiscal management team have been creative in

finding solutions so the primary elements of our project have the intended impact on how our students learn in school.

We know that even minor renovations to one's house can be messy and inconvenient. Construction on this scale over many years is even more so. We are very grateful to everyone for your patience and understanding since the start of construction.

more photos on next page.



New fuel pad complete and relocation of existing fuel tank in progress



New sidewalk and parking lot resurfacing preparation at the north parking lot



Regrading of the subbase at Howe Field with new choker course stone in preparation for the shockpad and new turf



New fencing and sidewalks at Howe Field



Construction of the stone subbase at the new bus loop

Hamburg Alumni Foundation announces 2023 Wall of Fame honorees

The Hamburg Alumni Foundation's Wall of Fame dinner and induction ceremony will be held on Saturday, September 30, 2023 beginning at 5:30 pm "under the tent" at the Hamburg Brewery, 6553 Boston State Road in Hamburg. The Brewery is a new venue for this year's Wall of Fame event and we are excited to be there with the following 2023 class of distinguished honorees:

Distinguished Alumni:

- George Toles, Class of 1966
- J.J. DiGeronimo, Class of 1991
- Jennifer Kuhn, Class of 1997
- Jennifer Jantzi-Schlichter, Class of '2002
- Matt Peters, Class of 2005

Distinguished Educators:

- William Brand
- Jim Henneberg

Sports Legends:

- Mike O'Keefe, Class of 1964
- Jim Hoefinger, Class of 1972
- Tim O'Shea, Class of 1983
- Gabe Kogler, Class of 1995
- Bridget Hogan, Class of 2013
- Taylor Wolf, Class of 2013

Sports Family Award:

- Draudt brother's soccer dominance:
Jim: 1972, Tom: 1974, Gregg: 1977

Coach of Distinction:

- Bill Malican

Team of Distinction:

- 2013 Girls' Softball
New York State
Class A State Champions



Please join us for an evening of nostalgia and recognition as we honor our fellow athletes, teachers and distinguished alumni. Tickets on sale. See the Foundation website at www.hamburgalumnifoundation.com for additional event and ticket information or to nominate future inductees.



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Thomas F. Flynn III, Board President
Michael Cornell, Superintendent

Armor Elementary..... 716-646-3350
Boston Valley Elementary..... 716-646-3240
Charlotte Avenue Elementary.. 716-646-3370
Union Pleasant Elementary..... 716-646-3280
Hamburg Middle School..... 716-646-3250
Hamburg High School..... 716-646-3300
General Information..... 716-646-3200

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Parents: Here's how to receive school text messages

*If you have already opted in, there is no need to do so again.

- First, check the Parent Portal to ensure your cell phone number is correct and listed as the primary contact number
- If you need assistance, contact central registration at (716) 646-3200, ext. 7217 or centralreg@hcsdk12.org
- Then, to receive texts, you must text the word "yes" to 68453
- Please be aware that your cell phone provider's standard message and data rates may apply

Own a piece of Hamburg history

The Hamburg Bulldogs Booster Club is selling pieces of the old Howe Field Turf. Each piece costs \$20 and comes with a Certificate of Authenticity, used from 2009-2023. Installed in 2009 and used



until April 2023, Howe Field was one of the first turfed high school fields in the area. It was home to many memorable Bulldog moments from countless high school sporting events, pep rallies, marching band, PE classes, community events, along with Class of 2020 and 2022 graduation ceremonies! Get your piece today! More information visit www.bulldogsbooster.com or email hamburgbulldogsbooster@gmail.com. All proceeds from the fundraiser supports the Hamburg Bulldogs Booster Club and their mission to enhance the HCSD Athletics

The Bulldog Dash

In Celebration of Conor Long

5k Fun Run/Walk

**Sunday October 15, 2023
at 9:30am**

Hamburg High School Howe Field

Online only pre-registration closes 10/6/23
Student: \$20.00 • Non-Student: \$25

Day of Race Registration (cash only)
Student: \$25 • Non-Student: \$30

