

With two weeks left in the school year, a water main break flooded Hamilton Elementary School. In addition to determining what this would mean for fifth grade graduation and other end of the year celebrations, there was the more immediate question of where Hamilton students would be attending school on Monday. Some quick planning led to the students finishing out the remainder of the year at Troy High School in whatever spaces were available. Though the situation was far from ideal, both Hamilton and Troy High found great value in their unexpected collaboration. High school classes created learning opportunities for the younger students, teachers of different levels were able to gain insight into what a regular day looked like at the elementary or high school level, and a general sense and spirit of community permeated the final weeks as the two communities pulled together. It was this spirit of belonging that became the focus not only of the video but of the 2024-25 school year in the Troy School District. This video was used at the all staff welcome back meeting in August, where TSD superintendent Dr. Rich Machesky shared a vision of belonging for the district this school year. All buildings and staff were encouraged to reflect on current practices and how they could build upon existing structures to enhance a sense of belonging in TSD. Additionally, the video performed well on all TSD social media platforms, where it was shared with the community. The key components of our TSD Portrait of a Learner mission are the 6Cs. In this case, collaboration became a point of emphasis, with schools around the district looking to the Hamilton-Troy model as an exemplar of how different buildings from different levels can work together. We have seen an increase in this type of collaboration throughout the school year, and hope to see more carry on in the future (preferably without any schools flooding). This story was a testament to the idea that there can be value in disaster, and we were proud of our students and staff for making the most out of a difficult situation.