



The Hamilton Project

2024-2025

Impact Report



The Hamilton Project

Impact Report 2024-2025



THE
**HOBBY
CENTER**
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

photo: Jacob Power

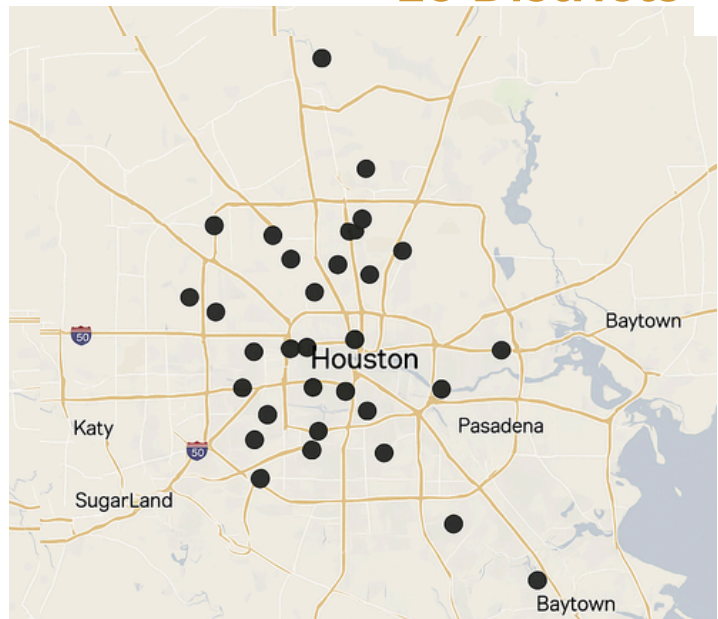
EXPLORE IMPACT

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PROJECT REACH

28 High Schools
2,200 Students
10 Districts



Letter From Mark Folkes, President & CEO

Dear Hobby Center Community,

This season, the Hobby Center took a bold step forward in our mission to connect, convene, and inspire Houstonians through the power of the arts. With the return of the Broadway phenomenon *Hamilton*, we launched The Hamilton Project — a transformative educational initiative designed to harness the energy of this landmark production and bring it into classrooms across our city.



Mark Folkes, President & CEO
The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

Over the course of several months, students from more than **28 high schools**, 27 of which are Title I campuses, explored U.S. history, civic leadership, and creative expression through a specially designed curriculum. Their work culminated in a once-in-a-lifetime experience: a **free student performance of *Hamilton*** at the Hobby Center's Sarofim Hall, **attended by more than 2,200 students and educators**. For many students, it was their first time seeing live theater. For all of them, it was a moment of connection — to history, to identity, and to their own power to create change. They didn't just watch the show; they prepared for it, researched it, and created original works of poetry, performance, and song inspired by it. In doing so, they became not just audience members, but authors of their own stories.

This initiative reflects the Hobby Center's expanded commitment to education and equity, and our vision for a performing arts center that serves as a catalyst for learning, leadership, and cultural connection. We're deeply grateful to Lesha and Tom Elsenbrook for their visionary support of this project, and to the consortium of donors and civic leaders who brought it to life. The impact of their generosity will resonate far beyond a single night at the theater. On behalf of our Board of Directors and staff, thank you for believing in the power of the arts to inspire the next generation of changemakers. This is just the beginning.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Folkes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being more prominent.

President & CEO

The Hamilton Project

Impact Report 2024-2025

Project Overview

The Hamilton Project is a transformative education initiative launched by the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, designed to merge the power of the arts with **civic education** for high school students across Houston. Through this program, more than **2,200 students**—primarily from Title I campuses—engaged in an immersive learning experience that combined classroom curriculum, creative expression, and a live performance of *Hamilton*. Culminating in a free student matinee on March 20, 2025, at the Hobby Center’s Sarofim Hall, the program offered students a rare opportunity to see **Lin-Manuel Miranda’s groundbreaking Broadway musical** live, an experience made possible through generous support from a consortium of donors. The program’s goal was to ignite students’ curiosity, elevate their voices, and inspire long-term civic and academic engagement.

Structured in collaboration with the **Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Hamilton Education Program Online**, the project featured a TEKS-aligned curriculum centered on the Founding Era. Teachers led students through critical analysis of historical texts and guided them in creating original artistic responses—including raps, monologues, and spoken word pieces—showcasing their understanding of history through creative expression. The project is part of **Broadway Bridges on the Road**, a national effort led by The Broadway League, to expand access to touring Broadway performances. By connecting students to history, identity, and civic responsibility through the lens of the arts, the Hamilton Project has set a new standard for educational outreach, making the performing arts a powerful vehicle for equitable learning and youth empowerment in Houston.



Deborah Lugo,
Vice President of
Programming
and Education
with City of
Houston Vice
Mayor Pro Tem
Amy Peck

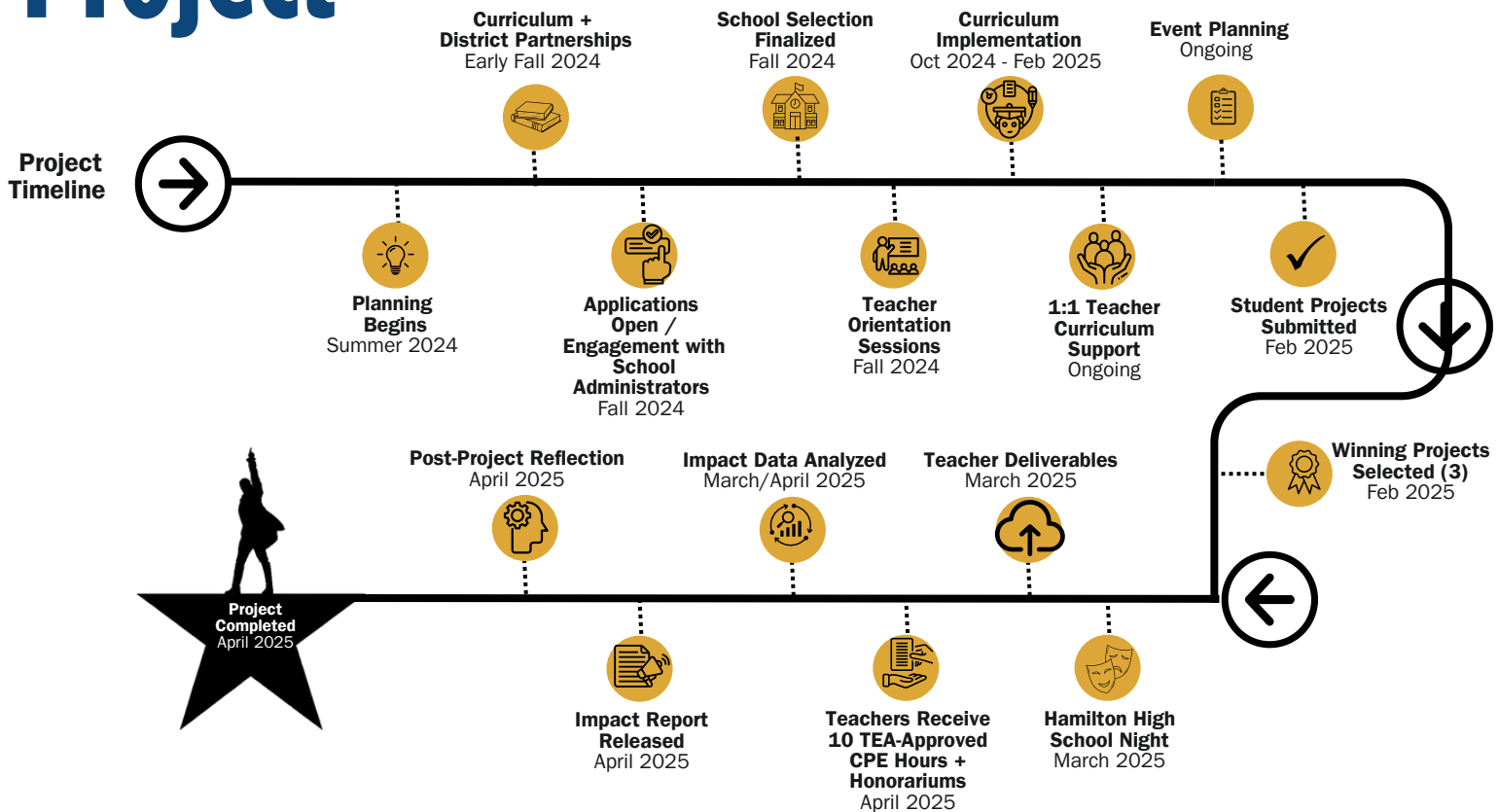
photo: Jacob Power

28 PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

A+UP Charter School	Kerr High School
Alief Taylor High School	Kingwood High School
Aldine High School	KIPP Houston High School
Austin High School	MacArthur High School
Chavez High School	Nimitz High School
Cristo Rey Jesuit College Prep School	Scarborough High School
Davis High School	Spring High School
Dekaney High School	Westbury High School
Dickinson High School	Wheatley High School
Dwight D. Eisenhower Senior High School	Wisdom High School
Elsik High School	Worthing Early College High School
G.W. Carver High School	Westfield High School
Hastings High School	Yates High School
Kashmere High School	Yellowstone School

The Hamilton Project

Roadmap to IMPACT



Student Video Montage



72%

of students said they are **more likely to engage in their community or vote** in the future after participating in the Hamilton Project.

"We learned how Hamilton and others fought for a better system. That made me ask: what am I doing for my community?"

— Jaylen M.

Alief Taylor High School

28 High Schools 2,200 Students 10 Districts 65 Teachers

The Hamilton Project

Project-Based 9-12th Grade Curriculum

Lesson 4

History Through Artistic Expression

Lyrics for "Farmer Refuted" by Lin-Manuel Miranda

SAMUEL SEABURY

Hear ye, hear ye! My name is Samuel Seabury, and I present
"Free Thoughts, on the Proceedings of the Continental Congress!"
Heed not the rabble who scream revolution,
they have not your interests at heart.

MULLIGAN

Oh my God. Tear this dude apart.

SEABURY

Chaos and bloodshed are not a solution.
Don't let them lead you astray.
This Congress does not speak for me.

BURR

Let him be.

SEABURY

They're playing a dangerous game.
I pray the king shows you his mercy.
For shame, for shame ...

HAMILTON

Yo!
He'd have you all unravel
at the
sound of screams but the
revolution is comin'. The
have-nots are gonna win
this, it's
hard to listen to you with a
straight face.

Chaos and bloodshed already
haunt
us, honestly you shouldn't
even
talk. And what about Boston?
Look at the
cost, n' all that we've lost n'
you talk
about Congress?!

My dog speaks more
eloquently
than thee!
But strangely, your mange is
the same.

HAMILTON

Is he in Jersey?

For the
revolution!

COMPANY

For the
revolution!

SEABURY

Heed—

HAMILTON

If you repeat yourself again I'm gonna—

SEABURY/HAMILTON

Scream—

HAMILTON

Honestly, look at me, please don't read!

SEABURY

Not your interests—

HAMILTON

Don't modulate the key then not debate with me!
Why should a tiny island across the sea regulate the price of
tea?

SEABURY

I pray the king shows you
his mercy.

For shame,

For shame,

The Hamilton Project Teacher Guide

2024-2025
Adapted for
Grades 9-12



THE HOBBY CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

“ Now I understand what civic engagement means — it's not just voting, it's knowing your history and using it.
— Tariq W., Eisenhower HS Student ”

Lesson 1

The Background of the Musical *Hamilton*

TEACHER PREP TIME: 15M

AVERAGE STUDENT COMPLETION TIME: 60M

Start Here
Activate Account

<https://hamilton.gilderlehrman.org/>



Lesson Overview

- Activate account in portal
- Student Survey
- Introductory reading
- Class videos and discussion

Objective

- Students will understand the creation of *Hamilton* and compare perspectives of Lin-Manuel Miranda and Ron Chernow

Materials

- Computer/Tablet, Internet Access
- Online portal account activated
- Printed Student Guide
- Activate Teacher Account Online
- Student Survey via Hobby Center emailed link

Teacher Tips

- Assign homework if needed
- Restructure order as needed
- Document process with photos and videos

FIRST >>>

Share Hamilton Project Overview with Class:

- In this project, you'll explore the Founding Era, analyze important historical documents, and create your own performance piece inspired by the musical *Hamilton*. We will be submitting the top performance piece from our campus to the Hobby Center. We will go to the Hobby Center to see *Hamilton* on March 20 at 7pm and awards will be given for the top performance pieces
- Watch: "It's Your Story to Tell!" <https://hamilton.gilderlehrman.org/> (2m)

<<< THEN

Student Survey, Activate Account, & Student Guide

- Give student survey via emailed link
- Students activate online portal accounts
- Distribute printed Student Guides

READ & WATCH >>>

Student Guide p. 4-6

- Read Bios, about the author, creators, process
- Watch Videos (via activated portal log-in/video library)
 - Lin-Manuel Miranda: How the Teller Determines the Story (2m)
 - Ron Chernow: Artistic License in Non-Fiction (2m)

<<< DISCUSS

- How did *Hamilton* become a musical?
- How do Miranda and Chernow's interviews reveal different views on history and storytelling?
- Why is it essential for pop culture representations to be historically accurate?
- Why are primary source documents important in studying history?
- What happens to our understanding of history when we use and compare multiple sources?
- How can learning about historical figures and their stories inspire you to participate in your community or civic duties?

★ questions? HamiltonProject2025@gmail.com

2024-2025 The Hamilton Project Student Impact Results



photo: Jacob Power

Student Impact Overview

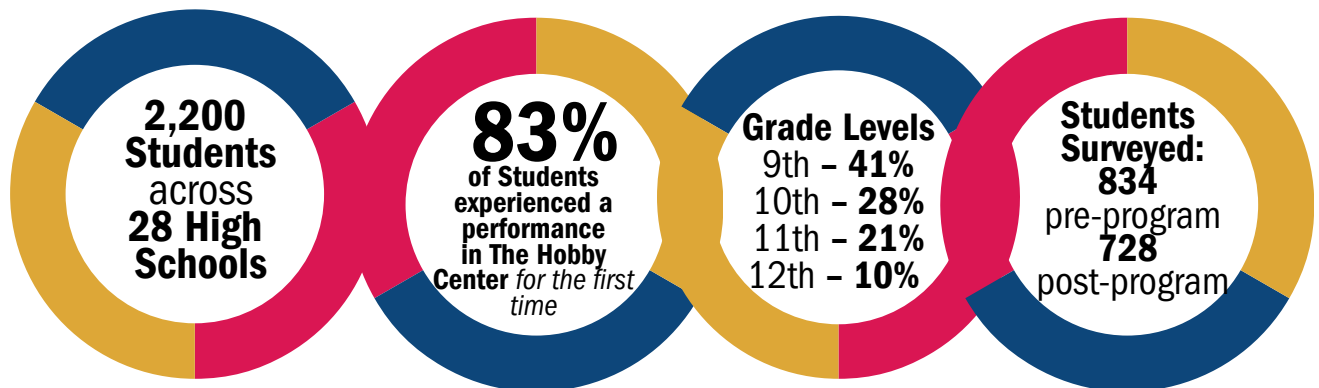
As part of the 2024–2025 Hamilton Project, over **2,200 students across 28 participating high schools** in Houston engaged in a dynamic blend of arts and civic education. Of those, 834 students completed pre-program surveys and 728 completed post-program surveys, offering a rich dataset that reveals how this initiative shaped student learning, creativity, and civic identity. The majority of participating students were in the early years of high school, with nearly 70% in 9th or 10th grade, and **98% attending Title I campuses**. For many, this marked their first time seeing a Broadway production or stepping inside the Hobby Center—an experience that left lasting impressions on their academic and personal growth.



photo: Jacob Power

Key Findings

The survey results compared pre-program knowledge in October with post-program gains the following March. The Hamilton Project **sparked measurable growth in civic identity, historical knowledge, and creative confidence**. Students' **likelihood to vote rose from 65% to 84%**, while those seeing a connection between history and their lives jumped from **54% to 80%**. Confidence in public speaking **grew nearly 20 points**, and knowledge of the Constitution and Founding Era increased by 26 points. **Across all indicators, students reported gains of 15–26 percentage points**, showing that the program made history more personal, relevant, and inspiring.



“This helped me actually enjoy learning. I used to just do the minimum. But I wanted to make something powerful – and I did.” – Diego P., Cristo Rey Jesuit High School

2024-2025 The Hamilton Project Student Impact Results

Pre and Post-Program Gains

CIVIC IDENTITY & ENGAGEMENT

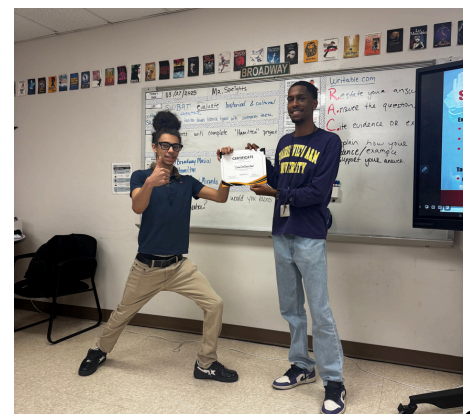
Indicator	Pre % / Post %	Change
Understood what civic engagement means	59% ---> 83%	+24 points
Saw themselves as having a civic voice	39% ---> 74%	+35 points
Believed they could make a difference	54% ---> 76%	+22 points
Likely to vote when eligible	65% ---> 84%	+19 points



CREATIVE EXPRESSION, UNDERSTANDING & APPLICATION

Creative work helps express history	50% ---> 74%	+24 points
Felt their voice matters in civic history	58% ---> 79%	+21 points
Connected classroom content to real life	60% ---> 83%	+23 points
Had chance to be creative (writing/performance)	64% ---> 86%	+23 points
Comfortable speaking/performing	48% ---> 68%	+20 points
Saw history as connected to their life	54% ---> 80%	+26 points
Believed politics applies to people like them	50% ---> 74%	+24 points

“After watching Hamilton, I realized how people fought for our rights, and it made me want to be involved too. I’m going to vote as soon as I turn 18.”
— Marcus D., Westfield High School



2024-2025

The Hamilton Project

Student Impact Results

HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE & ACADEMIC SKILLS

Indicator	Pre % / Post %	Change
Knowledge of Hamilton & Founding Era	53% ---> 79%	+26 points
Could identify primary sources	56% ---> 78%	+22 points
Could explain history's link to today	58% ---> 81%	+23 points
Learned something new about U.S. history	68% ---> 90%	+22 points
Confident researching history topics	55% ---> 74%	+19 points

"I usually don't talk much in class, but this gave me a way to express myself. I felt seen." — Zion B., Spring High School

I love student groups! It re-energizes the cast. This group of students in particular had a maturity that other student groups maybe haven't had. Having performed in many student performances, students historically have laughed during more emotional scenes (like when Philip is shot/Eliza cries over his body) but this group handled those scenes much better. I loved hearing their joy and excitement throughout the performance, and it was impressive to see how they stayed engaged through the entire performance.

-- Marja Harmon

Actor - Angelica Schuyler



photo: Jacob Power

Auston Henderson, *HAMILTON* cast member and Houstonian

2024-2025 The Hamilton Project Student Testimonials

Personal Empowerment & Voice

"This experience made me feel like my voice matters. I used to think politics was boring and not for people like me. Now I want to write about history and use my art to talk about things I care about."

-Ariana L., Wheatley

"Before this project, I never thought of myself as a leader. But writing and performing my piece gave me confidence that my perspective matters."

-Camila R., Chavez

"The project taught me that I don't have to wait to be older to make a difference. I can speak up now — through music, writing, or just using my voice." -Devon S., Yates

"I usually don't talk much in class, but this gave me a way to express myself. I felt seen." -Zion B., Spring

Civic Awareness

"It made me realize that history isn't just old stories. It's about how we got here — and how we still need to fight for justice." -Erika T., MacArthur

"Now I understand what civic engagement means — it's not just voting, it's knowing your history and using it." -Tariq W., Eisenhower

Winning Submissions

Each participating campus selected one standout student video—featuring original raps, poems, or dramatic pieces inspired by Hamilton and Founding Era documents—which were then reviewed by a Hobby Center panel that selected the top three winning submissions.



Hastings High School
Alief ISD



Kashmere High School
Houston ISD



César E. Chávez High School
Houston ISD

2024-2025

The Hamilton Project

Student Testimonials

Creative Expression & Understanding

"Writing and performing our piece helped me actually understand what was going on during the Revolution. It wasn't just memorizing names — I had to think like them."

-Jasmine C., Cristo Rey Jesuit

"I've never connected to school projects like I did with this one. Writing a rap about history helped me learn it way better than a test ever would." -Lena K., Hastings

"The performance made history feel alive. We had to think like the people from the past and tell their stories in our way."

-Nasir J., Scarborough

"I thought history was just facts and dates. But this made it personal. It made it art." -Olivia S., Kingwood

Connection to Identity & Representation

"Seeing people of color telling the story of America made me feel proud and included. It made me think maybe I can be part of telling the story too." -Luis R., Davis

"Seeing actors that look like me play the Founding Fathers made me believe I can be part of American history, too." -Nia F., Westbury

"This program changed the way I see myself. I didn't think someone like me had a place in these stories — now I know I do."

-Alejandro M., Spring

"As a young Black woman, I felt connected when I saw Angelica and Eliza tell their stories. It inspired me to write my own."

-Kiana J., Carver Magnet

Academic Engagement & Growth

"I didn't care much for history class before this. But this made it real. We debated, we researched, we created — and now I actually remember what happened and why it mattered."

-Imani T., Alief Taylor

"I remember more from this project than anything else we did this semester." - Bryce W., Dekaney

"We learned to research, write, revise, rehearse... I didn't even realize how much I was learning because it was fun." -Maya C., Dickinson



Hastings HS



Kashmere HS



Chavez HS

2024-2025 The Hamilton Project Student Impact Results



Opportunities for Growth

- **31% of students said they needed more time to write, rehearse, or film their creative pieces.**
 - *"We were rushed at the end. I wish we had more time to make it better."*
– Student, Spring High School
- **24% wanted clearer guidance, rubrics, or examples to understand the project expectations.**
 - *"It was confusing at first. I didn't know what the final project was supposed to look like."*
– Student, Kingwood High School
- **18% asked for more freedom in choosing historical figures or events to explore.**
 - *"I wanted to pick someone I connected with more, not just from the list."*
– Student, Davis High School
- **13% noted challenges with filming equipment, editing tools, or needing technical support.**
 - *"It was hard to film and edit without equipment or someone to help."*
– Student, Chavez High School
- **11% said they wanted more access to live theatre or a chance to attend additional performances.**
 - *"Seeing Hamilton changed how I feel about theatre. I wish we could see more shows like this."* – Student, Wheatley High School

“Those are my favorite types of performances. The energy is often, as it was, inescapably palpable for the entire performance. Hearing the young audience emote and cheer, it was clear many of them fully appreciated the moment and how lucky they were to be a part of it. Those are the most rewarding shows for me. Well done!”

-- Alden Corey, Head Carpenter

”¹²

2024-2025 The Hamilton Project Administrator Reflections



photo: Jacob Power

Program Impact & Feedback

Post-program feedback from administrative leaders across **10 school districts and 28 campuses** paints a compelling picture of the Hamilton Project's success. Administrators across districts expressed **unanimous satisfaction with the experience**, citing its exceptional academic, artistic, and equity-driven impact. Nearly all leaders reported transformative outcomes for students—particularly in **civic learning, creative expression, and confidence-building**. Most noted the program **advanced educational equity**, especially for Title I schools. Less than 10% mentioned logistical challenges, primarily due to testing or scheduling—not program structure. From **increased student engagement to strengthened teacher preparedness**, the feedback reflects a high-impact, high-value educational program with long-term relevance for schools and communities.

Key Findings

100% of administrators rated their satisfaction at the highest level

90% of administrators saw increased student engagement in civic learning and history

100% of administrators would participate again and want to expand the program

90% of administrators reported a rise in student interest in theatre and creative expression

92% of administrators observed growth in student confidence and presentation skills

100% of administrators agreed teachers were well-prepared and supported throughout

Administrator Insights

"Giving students access to a professional theatre performance of this caliber is a gift that keeps giving."

— Mary Williams, Coordinating Principal, Taylor High School, Alief ISD

"Students were elated to see the diversity of the cast members."

— Patrick Blake, Assistant Principal, Houston ISD

"Students from our school district are primarily from low-income households (over 80%) and may never have an opportunity to attend a national touring musical at the Hobby Center... For many of them, it may have unlocked a love of theatre that could influence them for the rest of their lives." — Kristin Falcon, Principal, Anderson Elementary, Spring ISD

"This has allowed our students to imagine a level they could never imagine on our own." — Joe Clark, Director of Performing and Visual Arts, Spring ISD

2024-2025 The Hamilton Project Educator Reflections

Program Impact & Feedback



The Hamilton Project received overwhelmingly **positive feedback from participating educators**, who praised both the academic and creative outcomes of the experience. **61 Surveyed Teachers across 28 Houston schools** reported that the program meaningfully deepened student engagement in history and civics, while also fostering confidence, creativity, and collaboration. Nearly all teachers found the curriculum easy to implement and **aligned well with their instructional goals**, with **98% recommending the program to their peers**. Beyond the classroom, many described the live Hamilton performance as a **transformative moment** that sparked student passion, voice, and civic curiosity—especially among those new to theatre. 65 Educators implemented **10 curriculum hours across 7-10 lessons** and guided students in project-based learning. Educators received 10 TEA-approved CPE hours for participation and a \$500 honorarium.

Key Findings

95% of teachers said the program met their expectations as an educational tool.

94% felt it meaningfully engaged students in U.S. history and civics.

84% observed increased student interest in civic issues and history.

93% agreed the creative performance aspect deepened student understanding.

65% saw growth in student confidence and skills like public speaking and creativity.

94% said implementation was easy.

88% felt materials and lesson plans were sufficient.

98% would recommend the program to other educators.

73% felt confident facilitating the research and creative components.

93% said the live performance helped connect classroom learning to student projects.

“Many said as soon as they turn 18 they were going to register to vote... My students said they want to be in the room where it happens! – Roshunda Jones-Koumba
Theatre Director & Choice School Liaison, G.W. Carver Magnet

“A sophomore who was hesitant to participate now wants to join the debate team and possibly go into politics.
-Cynthia Dale, Theatre Director, Chavez High School

2024-2025 The Hamilton Project Administrator & Educator Reflections



photo: Jacob Power



photo: Jacob Power



photo: Jacob Power

Opportunities for Growth

- **Expanded Student Recognition:** Feature multiple all submissions in a shared digital library.
- **Enhanced Cast Engagement:** Offer meet-and-greets, talkbacks, or virtual Q&As with the cast.
- **Increased Teacher Support:** Provide PD on arts integration and earlier access to materials.
- **Improved Project Planning:** Give students more time to develop and refine their work.
- **Stronger Tech Support:** Offer tools and guidance for filming, editing, and submissions.

“

Initially reserved and hesitant to participate, one student found her passion for civic engagement... She's now helping the government club promote voter registration among her peers.

-Danyell Nixon

AP/US History Teacher, Cristo Rey Jesuit Preparatory High School

”

“

It was such a wonderful student audience for Hamilton at the Hobby Center this past Thursday. Every audience is unique and special, but there is something extra gratifying about performing for young people who may have never had the opportunity to witness an onstage production at this scale. As a musician down in the pit, my whole experience of each audience is based entirely on sound and feeling, and I could tell just from listening that our student crowd at Sarofim Hall was electric, enthusiastic, and involved from the first note to the last. It was a fantastic night and I hope there will be many more student performances in this community in the future. -- Joel Alpers, Percussion

”

“

It was a great cultural experience for kids who have never been to a play. The kids were excited about the talent of the performers and the ambiance of the venue! — Gina Rigsby, Administrator, Aldine ISD (Aldine Senior High School)

”⁵

The Hamilton Project Support

Our deepest thanks to the generous donors who have made this initiative possible.



Tom Elsenbrook, Project Chair

photo: Jacob Power

\$25,000+

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The Hamilton Project Committee

The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts is deeply grateful to the Hamilton Project Committee for providing thoughtful guidance and support, and in particular to Tom Elsenbrook for his visionary leadership in making this project a reality for students in Houston.

Thomas Elsenbrook, Chair
Managing Director, Alvarez & Marsal Holdings, LLC

Paul Castro
Superintendent, A+ Unlimited Potential Charter School

Ryan Dolibois
Executive Director, Sarofim Foundation

Kap McWhorter
Principal, A+ Unlimited Potential Charter School

“The Hamilton Project was a great success. I have never watched a Broadway performance with 2,200 high school students, and it was fun! The students' enthusiasm was incredible. They came prepared to learn, be inspired and enjoy the performance. I talked to many students before the show and at intermission. Most had never seen a Broadway performance, and all were inspired by it. I also talked with several of the creative team after the show. They were inspired by the audience's enthusiasm and reaction to each song. This may have been the best audience for any *Hamilton* production. The students made Houston proud! As a Houstonian, I encourage you to support the arts in Houston and the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts!

-Tom Elsenbrook, Project Chair

”

Staff

Senior Leadership Team

Mark Folkes, President & CEO
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Lynne Earll, Vice President of Finance and Administration
Sheri Johnson, General Manager, Broadway
Deborah Lugo, Vice President of Programming and Education
Denise Wright, Vice President of Operations

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Warda Binte Humayun, Advancement Services and Analytics Specialist
Melissa Limmer, Marketing and Development Manager

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James Gross, Security
Chip Manfre, Painter
Armando Mota, Housekeeping Manager
Rusty Taylor, Senior Engineering Technician
Debbie Thomas, Disinfecting Team Lead
Keith Thomas, Chief Engineering

Finance and Administration

Sylvie Bauerova, Controller
Eric Cardona, Finance and Administration Manager
Shelby Connolly, Project Manager

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Ray Deal, Assistant Director of Operations
Michael Metzdorf, Operations and Production Director
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Jose Rivera, Security Supervisor
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Debbie Tellez, Audience and Accessibility Services Coordinator

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Riana Canetti-Rios, Zilkha House Electrician
Mark Dolney, House Electrician
Nathan Haworth, Production Manager, Zilkha Hall
Jack Jacobs, Production Manager, Sarofim Hall
Danny Nordby, Jr., House Audio Engineer
Kevin Van Orden, House Carpenter

Programming and Education

Robin Anderson, Education and Engagement Manager
Elizabeth Constant, Programming and Events Manager
Jamey Watts, Programming and Education Coordinator

Ticketing

Sonia Bartley, Box Office Supervisor
Jennifer Goodman, Box Office Associate
Anthony Konon, Assistant Box Office Manager
Elizabeth McClees, Box Office Manager
Sheri Voight, Ticketing Services Manager

thehobbycenter.org

“

This experience was transformative. The kids spoke about the impact of the show and expressed inspiration to make the most of their education in order to make an impact on the world

-Kap McWhorter
Head of Schools, A+UP Charter

”

The Hamilton Project Lead Education Team

Deborah Lugo
Vice President of Programming and Education

Robin Anderson
Education and Engagement Manager

Jamey Watts
Programming and Education Coordinator

Christine Phares, Ed.D.
Curriculum Specialist
Surveys, Data Analysis & Impact Report Design



photo: Jacob Power



Impact Report

