

# Horseheads 2030

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is Horseheads 2030?**

A: Horseheads 2030 is a comprehensive project to improve the education and physical infrastructure of the district – for students now, in 2030, and beyond. Through the project, we will examine both our physical infrastructure and educational program and plan improvements for our students now and in the future, benefiting our entire Horseheads community.



**Q: Why is this project necessary?**

A: Through Horseheads 2030, we seek to identify and implement an educational program that meets the needs of our students in a time of changing educational demands, i.e. educational reform, global connectedness, experiential and inquiry-based learning, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and STEM/STEAM/STREAM (science, technology, research, engineering, arts, and math). We also are working to provide an infrastructure that supports an educational environment where anything is possible for our students.

[\*Click here to learn more about Horseheads 2030.\*](#)

Horseheads 2030 would replace or upgrade critical systems that have reached or passed the end of their lifespan, i.e. boilers, lighting, roofs, and mechanical systems. Many of these systems and equipment are original to the buildings. Currently, more efficient and cost-saving products are available.

The project would also bring district buildings to local and state codes as well as state education department recommendations for classroom size and other requirements.

The Horseheads district has long been recognized as providing the best education in the region. The district at one time possessed the best facilities as well, but this is no longer the case. Area districts have completed capital projects on a greater scale than Horseheads. The district facilities staff have worked hard to maintain buildings and grounds, but over time, wear and tear on the physical infrastructure must be remedied.

A quality school district is necessary to maintain property values and to attract businesses and families to the community.

**Q: Who does this project affect?**

A: Everyone! Horseheads 2030 centers around our children – today, tomorrow, and further into the future – but it also involves all stakeholders – that is, all who have a stake in our district, including students, parents (with children in our district, parents whose children have graduated, those who will be parents in the future), district staff (teachers, support staff, administrators), our board of education, community members (those without children, property owners, renters, senior citizens), businesspeople, municipalities, elected officials.

**Q: What buildings will be affected?**

A: Horseheads 2030 would affect all seven of our schools and additional buildings including our facilities and transportation departments, as well as athletic fields, parking lots, roadways, and grounds – the district’s entire infrastructure.

**Q: Will improvements be made before 2030?**

A: Yes! The project is not just about our schools in the year 2030. It's about our schools now and in the future. 2030 is the year our current pre-kindergartners will graduate, so 2030 is a big year for our youngest students. We thought Horseheads 2030 would be a good name for the project. But again, the project is about improving our educational program and schools now, in the near future, and for future generations of students.

**Q: What is the BCS and what does it have to do with the project?**

A: BCS stands for Building Condition Survey. The New York State Education Department requires schools districts to submit a BCS every five years, describing the state of the infrastructure and building needs. In 2015, Horseheads' BCS identified \$159 million in necessary repairs, replacements, and upgrades plus construction fees and incidental costs.

The BCS will serve as a guideline for discussions about the infrastructure of the district. It is not a set plan. Items included in the BCS may or may not become part of the final project.

Click here to view the district's 2015 BCS:

<http://www.horseheadsdistrict.com/uploadeddocs/2015BCS.pdf>.

**Q: How will the project be funded?**

A: The project would be primarily paid for through state building aid. The remainder of the cost would come from replacing retired debt, utilizing the district's capital reserve, and local taxes. We will also seek additional means of funding, including energy performance contracts, rebates, grants, and e-rate reimbursements. The district will work to minimize the impact on taxpayers.

**Q: How much would taxpayers pay for the project?**

A: Taxpayers might contribute to building projects in two ways: through any local tax levy and through state aid. The state funds its budget through taxes, so the state aid districts get for building project comes from all the taxpayers in the state. In essence, we have helped pay for building projects for area districts and those across the state. For this project, taxpayers across the state would contribute through our portion of state aid. The state determines the rate we would receive for the project; our current state aid ratio is approximately 80%. We would work to maximize state aid for this project.

As we mentioned in the previous question, the remainder of the cost would come from debt replacement, capital reserve, other options such as grants and rebates, and local taxes. Our goal is to minimize the amount needed from local taxes.

**Q: What is state aid?**

A: State aid is money paid through taxes across the state. State building aid goes to all districts with approved capital projects. Horseheads has not utilized a significant portion of this aid in many years, yet Horseheads taxpayers have paid into funding state building aid, thus helping to improve other districts rather than their own. Horseheads 2030 seeks to secure Horseheads' share of state building funds.

**Q: Will residents get to vote on the project?**

A: Yes. At this time, we are tentatively planning a public vote on either part or all of the project in October 2017.

**Q: Have there been capital projects like this in the past?**

A: This would be one of the most comprehensive projects in our district since buildings were built in the 1950s and 60s. For the past several years, the district has spent funds from the educational budget on small capital expenditures, with amounts ranging from \$300,000 to \$1 million annually. Additional building projects included the auditorium renovation in 2006, the fieldhouse construction at the Intermediate/Middle complex in 2003, and the construction of the link connecting north and south wings at the High School in 1987.

In 1950, 36 small school districts (many one-room schoolhouses) into the Horseheads Central School District. Our schools were built at various times from 1954 to 1969.

**Q: What happened to the recent building study?**

A: The building consolidation study, or facilities use/grade configuration study, came to a conclusion last year, when the Board of Education chose the “green option,” which meant that no schools would be closed at this time. This study also used the Building Consolidation Study (BCS) to determine what costs would be necessary to upgrade/repair the buildings. The board’s decision to keep all of our schools open at this time also included the need to improve our buildings.

**Q: Will there be an opportunity for public input?**

A: Yes. Several public infrastructure discussions have been scheduled. All meetings are open to the public and begin at 7pm in the Horseheads High School Auditorium:

February 28	April 26
March 16	May 11
March 27	May 30

Additionally, all meetings will be videotaped and uploaded to our website here:

<http://www.horseheadsdistrict.com/hh2030.cfm>

Dr. Thomas J. Douglas, superintendent of schools, holds monthly conversations in the community. A schedule of these meetings can be found on the district calendar or on the district website at <http://www.horseheadsdistrict.com/uploadeddocs/Calendarpages2016-17.pdf>.

In January 2017, interested residents were invited to submit applications for the Horseheads 2030 Educational Committee. Applications were mailed to all residents and information was posted to our website, shared on social media, and sent to local media outlets. That committee was formed in late February and will meet several times through June. The district will share updates on the work of this committee.

**Q: Will there be student input?**

A: Student input is an important part of the development of the Horseheads 2030 project. In fact, we have already begun gathering input from students at the High School. Superintendent Tom Douglas has spoken with students in all of the current Participation in Government/Economics classes. All students completed a survey during a recent homeroom period. There is student representation on the Horseheads 2030 Education Committee, and students are welcome at the infrastructure discussions. We will continue to gather student input, from students across the district.

**Q: Will traffic flow be considered, especially at the Middle/Intermediate complex?**

A: Yes. Traffic flow is a priority in the development of this project, not just at the Middle/Intermediate complex, but also at all buildings. We are aware that traffic flow is an issue.

**Q: Has the district thought about building new facilities rather repairing current, especially the High School?**

A: Yes. The Board of Education, district administration, and architects have considered the option of building a new high school. A new high school building would cost from \$60-90 million, in addition to demolishing the current building. Additionally, when building a new facility, the state provides less state building aid than it would for building renovations. Less state building aid would require the cost be supported by other sources, including local taxes. The board and administration felt that building a new high school would not be the best option for the district and community.

**Q: Has the district thought about an indoor sports facility?**

A: As we work through developing this project, we will consider and discuss any idea, including innovative academic, athletic, and arts facilities to provide the best education we can and position our district to be the premier educational organization in the region. We must also make sure that our plan maximizes state building aid, and indoor sports facilities aren't aided by the state, which means the entire cost of this part of the project would come from local taxes and any other means of payment we could find.

**Q: Will community organizations benefit as well?**

A: Our schools should be the gathering place for our community. We hope to have organizations like the youth bureaus, senior citizen groups, and community sports organizations be a part of our district's future. Ideally, all of these organizations would be able to use our facilities, and our entire community would benefit.

We would also like to bring large interscholastic sporting events like sectional competitions, to our district. Because of the growth of the hotel industry in our community, our area is a prime location for interscholastic sporting events such as sectional championships – if our athletic facilities are upgraded and expanded. This would lead to economic benefits for our entire community.

**Q: Are you considering 'astroturf' for the athletic fields, and isn't it a safety issue?**

A: Because we are considering all options for the entire project, artificial turf is an option. We're working with Hunt Engineers and Architects, who have researched the topic extensively. The question about artificial turf stems from reports that the materials used can be unsafe for the health of those using the field. There are products that are deemed safer than others, and we will look into the safety of any product. We will consider safety as well as quality, cost, and all aspects of a product or idea. A main benefit of artificial turf is that the material allows fields to be used by more people during a longer period of time than grass.

**Q: How can I get more information?**

A: More information on Horseheads 2030, including videos and presentations from meetings and a link to the BCS, is available on the district website at

<http://www.horseheadsdistrict.com/hh2030.cfm>. This site will be updated regularly.

If you have questions or comments, please contact us at [hcsdinfo@horseheadsdistrict.com](mailto:hcsdinfo@horseheadsdistrict.com) or (607) 739-5601, x4295.