



September 19, 2024

Good evening Horseheads Families,

As we continue our redistricting journey, I wanted to take a moment to share an important update with you. For several years we have been discussing the future of our district and how to best serve our students and community.

In December 2021, the community approved a second capital project referendum. This decision has allowed the district to begin right sizing our elementary classrooms and transition from four elementary schools to three. The heart of this process includes ensuring that we provide an environment where every student can be supported and thrive.

Transitioning from four elementary schools to three requires redrawing elementary boundary lines for the 2025-2026 school year. To accomplish this task, the district started to work with a demographer in 2023. The demographer examined local and national population trends, reviewed district demographic information, building infrastructure, and geography of the district. This past July, the demographer presented two options to the Board of Education. Since then, the Board has carefully considered these options, including the potential impact of adjusting school start times and implementing a three-tier busing system. Simultaneously, our volunteer Redistricting Cultural Team has started the important work of making recommendations that will positively shape our schools for staff, students, parents, and the broader community.

I am writing to share that, after much thoughtful discussion, the Board has decided that starting in the **2025-26 school year**, the district will move forward with [Option B](#) for elementary redistricting boundaries. The Board also decided to change the **high school start time to approximately 7:20/25 a.m.** beginning in the 2025-26 school year to align with the BOCES start times. This change will allow students to have a full class prior to attending their BOCES Educational Programming. This anchor time will also be used to determine future bus runs and start times for elementary, intermediate, and middle school students once the runs are finalized.

I understand that you may have many questions about next steps. There are still operational decisions to be made, and we will continue to keep you informed every step of the way at both a district and building level. In a world where news travels faster than ever, we felt it was important to share this update with you as soon as possible. In the coming weeks, we will confirm the placement of students who are transitioning to a new elementary school for the 2025-26 school year.

Please know that we are committed to supporting all our students and families during this transition. Together, we will ensure that Horseheads remains a place where our students can grow, succeed, and feel supported every day.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas J. Douglas  
Superintendent of Schools  
Horseheads Central School District