



Dr. Thomas J. Douglas
Superintendent

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January 17, 2025

Dear Horseheads Families,

As we begin the new year, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the changes ahead and share updates on the redistricting process that will impact all in the 2025-26 school year.

Since 2017, the district has been working diligently to implement the voter-approved Horseheads 2030 projects. These projects focus on preparing our district for the future while addressing critical needs in our schools. While much of these projects have included significant capital improvements and construction, this process also involves transitioning to three elementary schools, better aligning district-wide start times, and revising our busing system, which will all begin in the 2025-26 school year.

New School Start/End Times

Starting this fall, the district will implement the following approximate start and end times (indicated by \pm).

- **Elementary Schools:**
 - Start at 8:40 a.m. \pm
 - End at 3:26 p.m. \pm
- **Intermediate and Middle Schools:**
 - Start at 7:20 a.m. \pm
 - End at 2:10 p.m. \pm
- **High School:**
 - Start at 7:30 a.m. \pm
 - End at 2:30 p.m. \pm

These start and end times will be finalized in late spring once the initial draft of the bus routes has been developed and the district will set the specific start and end times for each grade level, that are close to the times listed above.

Revised Transportation Model

With our start and end times aligned, the district will implement a more streamlined transportation model. **Students in grades K-4 will be transported in one tier, while grades 5-12 will be transported in a second tier**, respectively. These changes will reduce a majority of the ride times to an hour or less, enable all Intermediate and Middle School students to be transported at the same time in the event of an emergency, remove late bus arrivals, minimize daily bus-to-bus transfers, and adhere to current district staffing needs in Transportation.

Support for Students and Families

While these changes are necessary to align our resources and improve efficiency, the district understands they represent a shift for our families. Our goal is to keep families informed as more information is made available and to provide as much planning time as possible.

To help support conversation with your students, the district has a [Continuing the Build Timeline](#) that is updated monthly, as well as a [Transition Talks Guide](#) that was created by our social workers and school psychologists to help students and families navigate these anticipated changes on our website.

Keeping Our School Community Healthy

Now that the district is in the heart of cold and flu season, keeping students healthy is a shared priority. If your child is feeling unwell, school leadership asks you to review our [When to Stay Home Guide](#) to determine when it is best to keep them home and when they can safely return to school. Thank you for helping maintain a healthy learning environment for all. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to your school nurse.

Thank you for your partnership as we work together to create a stronger future for our students and community.

Sincerely,

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