



January 28, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Yesterday, Governor Cuomo announced that orange zone restrictions in our county and across the state are lifted. This is good news because it means that COVID numbers are down, and we are moving in the right direction. We hope that continues, and we must do our part to make sure that it does. For schools, this change means that the state testing requirement is lifted; however, we will continue testing as long as we are able to secure tests from the county department of health as an extra layer of safety in our schools.

Please note that this zone removal does not lift other safety requirements. Distancing, mask-wearing, capacity limits, and other requirements remain in all areas of the state. As the governor said yesterday, “We don’t know what lies ahead,” noting that new, more contagious forms of the COVID virus are appearing across the globe and in our country. We must stay the course and continue safety precautions.

Please see below for additional information:

Monday, February 1 is a Conference Day

Please be aware that Monday, February 1 is a Conference Day for all schools. There is no school for students on Monday, February 1. The second semester begins February 2 for grades 7-12, and the third marking period begins February 8 for grades PreK-6. Please note that Wednesday, February 3 will be a Cohort A day. February 4 and 5 are Cohort B days.

Second semester for grades 7-12

Students in grades 7-12 can now view their second semester schedules in Schoooltool. Parents can also view them in the Parent Portal. Middle School students received hard copies of their schedules this week. High School students will report to their Period 1/2 class when they arrive at school next week for the start of the second semester. Staff members will be helping any students who need assistance.

District working to assist with staff vaccines

We are working with our health department and other agencies to secure COVID vaccines for our staff. As education workers, all school staff are eligible for the vaccine under the state’s 1B guidelines. We cannot mandate the vaccine, but we are working to make sure that staff members who wish to be vaccinated get an appointment as soon as possible. Please keep in mind that even when vaccinated, we all must continue with safety precautions of wearing masks, maintaining safe distance as much as possible, and avoiding unnecessary outings and contacts. Schools are still required to follow state requirements and recommendations for school operations and capacity for a safe educational environment. Our health and safety protocols remain in place. [You can find that information here.](#)

continued

Online health survey needed for students on hybrid instruction

We remind parents of students on hybrid instruction that we must have your child's health survey completed each day your child attends school in person. **It is important that we receive these surveys each day.** You should receive an email each morning your child is scheduled to be in person with a link to complete the brief survey. If you are not getting these emails, please first check your spam/junk/clutter folders (the sender is noreply@gstbooces.org). If you still cannot find them, please email us at hcsdinfo@horseheadsdistrict.com.

State says "high risk" sports can resume

Governor Cuomo announced January 22 that state-deemed high-risk sports can resume February 1 as long as districts work with local authorities to make sure activities are as safe as possible. Yesterday, County Executive Chris Moss announced his approval for these sports to begin. Our Athletic Office will be sharing information with student-athletes and families this week.

High School cafeteria and library to open to students next week

We are looking forward to the opening of the High School's new library and renovated cafeteria next week. Students will be able to use these facilities as the second semester begins. We will be sharing photos and more information next week.

State seeks federal waiver

New York State plans to ask the federal government for a waiver to eliminate state assessments this school year. This would include the grades 3-8 ELA and math exams, as well as Regents exams, but please note that no decision has yet been made. At this time, the state assessments are still scheduled to take place. We will inform parents and guardians of any changes to the state assessments.

Report Card dates

- Grades PreK-4 – Cohort B and mailed to Cohort A February 11; included with pick-up materials for Remote students February 11-12
- Intermediate School – Cohort B and mailed to Remote and Cohort A February 12
- Middle School – Cohort A and mailed to Remote February 3; Cohort B February 4
- High School – Cohort A February 9; mailed to Remote February 10; Cohort B February 11

Thank you. If you have questions, please contact your school office.

Sincerely,



Dr. Thomas J. Douglas
Superintendent of Schools

More Information:

[2020-21 District Plan](#)

[Itslearning](#)

[Safety Protocols](#)

[Social Emotional Support](#)

[Technology](#)