

December 5, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As we begin the month of December, I am reminded of how fortunate we are to be in the Horseheads community. There is so much going on in our schools today, from daily learning and student achievement to concerts, sporting events, and other extra-curricular activities. I am so proud of the Blue Raiders and how we have returned to a much-needed sense of normalcy.

Here are a few items of information to share as we move toward the end of the calendar year.

### **Health and Safety**

We keep saying this, but we truly do thank you for your continued cooperation and care for our students' health. These next few weeks – after the Thanksgiving Recess to mid-January – are when we have seen the greatest increase in COVID cases in the last two years. We will be sending COVID test kits home with our students at some point this month. We ask that you continue to test and keep your children home when feeling ill, as we know that there has been an increase in cases of the flu and other viruses. If at any time you would like more COVID tests, please contact your school office. We have and we will continue to work together to keep our students safe and our schools open.

The state health and education department commissioners have sent school districts [this letter](#). Please note that these are not requirements, but simply reminders as we move through the winter season.

### **New District Image Selection**

With the upgrading of our facilities, the Board of Education would also like to update the image we use to identify ourselves as Horseheads Blue Raiders. We invite students, staff, alumni, community members to submit designs for our new image. Submissions are due no later than 3 p.m. January 31. After this date, we will hold a district-wide vote of finalists. For more information and the design submission form, [please click here](#).

### **Board of Education Meeting**

The next Board of Education meeting is Thursday, December 15 at 6 p.m. in the High School Multi-Media Center. Board meetings are open to the public, and they are live streamed at <http://ideas.gstbooces.org/hhds/>.

### **Network Safety**

Having our email compromised, or 'hacked', is a concern for anyone who uses technology, including our schools. Our technology team works with our regional technology partners through BOCES to combat or minimize this type of action. As part of this effort, there will be a region-wide resetting of student account passwords on Wednesday, December 7. For students in grades PreK-6, a small change to the default password format will be implemented. Teachers will work with our youngest students on this new format. On Wednesday morning, students in grades 7-12 will receive a notification on their log-in screen that they must reset their password. They will be given the requirements for the new password, i.e. number of characters, combination of letters and numbers, etc. If you or your student has questions about this, please contact the teacher or school office.

### **Middle/Intermediate School Safety Reminder**

As a reminder to Middle/Intermediate parents and guardians, there is no pick-up or drop-off of students on Sing Sing Road.

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## **Kids' Night Out**

This month, our High School Greenroom Players will sponsor a Kids Night Out Friday, December 9 for district students in grades PreK-4. For more information, [click here](#). In the attachment, there is a QR code to register, or [click here](#). If you have questions, email [dthompson@horseheadsdistrict.com](mailto:dthompson@horseheadsdistrict.com).

## **Opt-In to Text Messaging for Closings/Delays**

We have yet to use a snow day/delay, but we know that winter weather will soon be coming. We remind you that parents and guardians can opt in to receiving text messages about school closings or delays. If you would like to receive a text message when schools are closed or delayed and have not opted in already, text "Y" or "Yes" to 67587. Note that your standard text/data rates apply. [Click here](#) for more information or go to this link: <https://horseheadsdistrict.com/releases/Text%20Opt-In%20Flyer%20Parents.pdf>.

## **Family Resources Questionnaire**

The state now requires that districts send a digital resources questionnaire to parents and guardians. We ask that you help us meet this requirement by completing a questionnaire for each child in grades K-12. You can access the questionnaire by logging in to your Parent Portal account and [following the instructions here](#). If you have questions, please contact your school office or email us at [hcsdinfo@horseheadsdistrict.com](mailto:hcsdinfo@horseheadsdistrict.com). If you do not have a Parent Portal account, [click here](#).

## **Health Care Careers**

The district is seeking registered nurses, licensed practical nurses (LPNs), and substitutes. [Click here](#) for more information or visit the employment page of our website here: <https://horseheadsdistrict.com/employment.cfm>.

## **Holiday Recess**

There will be no school December 23 to January 2 for the holiday/winter recess. We wish everyone a very happy, healthy holiday season and a joyful new year.

Sincerely,



Dr. Thomas J. Douglas  
Superintendent of Schools