



February 19, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As our school year continues and we look to the future of our schools, I wish to take a moment to thank you for all that you are doing during this time. To say this time has been challenging for our students and for you is an understatement. We are very grateful.

This is the time of year our Board of Education and administration begin the process of developing the budget for the next school year. Our budget development process for 2021-22 began at the board's first budget workshop on February 4. The next budget presentation will be at the board's February 25 meeting.

At this meeting, which begins at 6pm, we will be presenting the State of Our Schools. Nearly a year since the beginning of the global pandemic, we will report on where we've been, where we are, and where we are going. We are looking to the state to update guidelines on in-person learning. It is our goal to increase the number of in-person instructional days for our students, but in order for that to happen we need to advocate for distancing guidelines to be revised at the state level. You may have heard that Governor Cuomo said students should be in school five days a week at his press conference today. He has not given districts updated guidance indicating the six-foot distancing rule is no longer in effect. Until we have written guidance and approval, we must adhere to his current guideline.

More information will be shared at our board meeting, which can be live-streamed here: [Horseheads Video Player](#).

The meeting will be held at the High School, and the Board continues to welcome in-person comments from the public. If you would like to make a comment, please see the process here: [HCSD Board of Education](#).

### ***A few announcements and reminders:***

#### **Athletics**

Our current sports season continues following county-approved protocols. Late yesterday, we learned of Chemung County Executive Chris Moss' announcement that two spectators per athlete is now permissible as long as they follow all health department protocols and any additional protocols established by the district. This is welcome news. The district has protocols for spectators in our return to play plan: [Return to Play Plan](#). Coaches will be sharing information with athletes.

Fans of the Blue Raiders can live stream home contests here: [Horseheads Sports Video Player](#), and view sports schedules here: [Horseheads Schedule](#). We wish all our teams the best of luck. Go Blue!

#### **Clue**

We are pleased to announce that the High School Greenroom Players will present *Clue: Stay-at-Home High School Version* Saturday, February 27 at 11am. Tickets are \$5 with a \$3 service fee and allows an entire family to gather around a computer or smart TV for the price of one ticket. Create an account and purchase tickets at this link: [Clue - Broadway On Demand](#). The GRP hopes to have the performance available on demand for a few days after the production, but these details are still being finalized.

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*Clue* is based on the 1985 movie inspired by the classic board game. The show is a whodunit featuring favorite characters including Miss Scarlett, Professor Plum, Mrs. Peacock, and Colonel Mustard. As they say in the theater, “Break a leg, cast and crew!”

### **Text messaging**

We currently use text messaging as an additional way to communicate school delays and closings to parents/guardians. If you are not receiving these texts and would like to, you must opt in to text messaging on your cell phone by texting Y to 67587. Note that standard messaging and data rates may apply. For more information, [click here](#).

Please also note that our system allows us to text to cell phone numbers that are in our student database for parents/guardians and staff only. If your cell number is not in our student database, texting will not work for your phone. If you are receiving our autocalls, your number is in our database. You can also check for the number on your student’s information on the Parent Portal ([SchoolTool](#) or <https://schooltool.horseheadsdistrict.com/sthhWeb/default.aspx>).

### **COVID data**

We continue to post information on positive cases and direct contacts known to the district here: [Covid Update](#). We are pleased to see the number of cases in our region, state, and nation going down, but we must remind everyone to continue with safety practices so that we may continue to see improvement. Please remember to wear masks properly when we must be out, avoid unnecessary outings, and wash hands frequently and thoroughly.

As a reminder, our schools are no longer in the state-designated orange zone, which means we no longer are required to test a portion of our students and staff. However, we are continuing to test in the six schools previously in the orange zone as an additional layer of safety. The district is also regularly testing a portion of our student-athletes as part of our high-risk sports reopening plan approved by the county. If your child is on hybrid instruction (and is not an athlete) in any of the six schools formerly in the orange zone and you no longer want your child tested, please contact your child’s building principal via email.

If you have questions, please contact your school office. Again, thank you for all you are doing for our children and community.

Sincerely,



Dr. Thomas J. Douglas  
Superintendent of Schools

**More Information:**  
[2020-21 District Plan](#)  
[Itslearning](#)  
[Safety Protocols](#)  
[Social Emotional Support](#)  
[Technology](#)