

# HORSEHEADS

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Budget Edition | Spring 2026



## ON THE BALLOT

### PROPOSITION 1

#### 2026-27 School Budget

Budget: **\$112,109,890**

Budget Year-Over-Year Increase: **6.95%**

Year-Over-Year Tax Rate Decrease: **-1.99%**

**Est. Annual Tax Rate**  
Decrease of **-\$0.32 per \$1,000**  
or **-\$32 on a \$100,000 home.**

### PROPOSITION 2

#### Purchase of Buses

Purchase of school buses and vehicles at a cost not to exceed \$1,900,000.

### BOARD ELECTION

There are three available seats with three candidates running for election. Learn more on pages 10 and 11.



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

## Budget Vote

### May 19

**7 a.m. - 9 p.m.**

**Horseheads High School  
North Gym**

# Community Bound by Commitment

## Shaping the Future, Here and Now.

Dear Horseheads Community,

Horseheads Central School District supports the learning and well-being of our most important priority — our children. Our mission is to ensure all students explore opportunities, are empowered to rise to challenges, and excel in their own learning path throughout their school career. Over the past several months the district administration and board have openly worked to develop a districtwide budget that supports our mission. Engaging classrooms and extracurricular activities are the cornerstones of our community, where children find connections to each other, trusted adults, and their broader community, discovering a sense of belonging that lasts a lifetime. The proposed 2026-27 budget, unanimously approved by the Board of Education, will continue our tradition of strong academics, arts, and athletic programs.

The Board of Education is certainly proud of the education we provide to the children of our community. At the same time, we also recognize the responsibility to be careful stewards of our community's fiscal resources. We believe this proposed budget reflects these shared priorities.

The 2026–27 proposed budget was developed in collaboration amongst district administrators, staff, and the Board of Education, while acknowledging needs in both our educational and operational areas.

The proposed budget:

- Remains staff and program strong
- Maintains all current educational programs in academics, arts, and athletics
- Adheres to the New York State's 2% property tax cap calculation **requiring a 50% +1 majority for budget approval**
- Establishes a **1.99% estimated tax rate DECREASE**
- Presents a **\$32.00 a year DECREASE** in taxes on a residence with a full value assessment of \$100,000

We encourage all residents to be informed on this year's proposed 2026-27 budget. Full budget details are available in this newsletter, as well as at [horseheadsdistrict.com](http://horseheadsdistrict.com). Our online information can provide everyone specific information and videos to assist in the factual aspects of the district's complete budget development.

The Board of Education asks that you **please vote on Tuesday, May 19, 2026**, at the High School North Gymnasium located off Center and Sayre Street in the Village of Horseheads. Polls will be open starting at 7 a.m. and closing at 9 p.m.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our students, staff, and schools.

Sincerely,



Daniel P. Christmas,  
Board of Education President



### Board of Education

Daniel P. Christmas, *President*

Susan Ungvarsky, *Vice President*

Warren Conklin

Kristine Dale

Matthew Feinberg

Julie Monahan

Erin Schiavone

Kara Sheehan

Katrina Ungvarsky

Serenity Jefferson, *Student Representative*

### Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Thomas J. Douglas



**Tuesday, May 19 | 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.**  
**Horseheads High School North Gym**

*Vote*

# Supporting Every Student Through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

At Horseheads, we believe every student can learn and succeed when they receive the right support. To make this belief a reality, the district continues to strengthen its Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). MTSS helps us ensure that students receive academic, social, emotional, and behavioral support at the right time and at the right level. This work supports learning goals aligned with New York State’s Next Generation Learning Standards and the Horseheads Portrait of a Graduate.

The Portrait of a Graduate outlines the skills and experiences we want students to gain by graduation. MTSS focuses on how we help students reach those goals. It takes a whole-child approach, recognizing that success depends on more than academics alone. Students also need strong social skills, emotional well-being, and positive behavior to thrive in school and beyond. Teachers, counselors, social workers, administrators, and support staff work together to clearly define what students should know and be able to do at each grade level, from pre-kindergarten through senior year. This shared understanding helps ensure consistent learning expectations across the district. Our staff lead this work through ongoing curriculum development, keeping instruction focused on what matters most for student success.



Horseheads benefits from the wide range of skills and experience among our staff. At the same time, we recognize that no single educator can meet every student’s needs alone. Collaboration is essential. MTSS provides the structure and systems that allow staff to work together effectively to support all learners. We believe that every student is our responsibility, and this shared commitment reflects our district’s mission and values. It also helps create an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

This proposed budget maintains strong educational programs and staffing to support our Multi-Tiered System of Supports districtwide. By investing in high-quality instruction, clear learning standards, student well-being, and timely support, Horseheads remains committed to helping every student learn, grow, and succeed.



**Tuesday, May 19 | 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.**  
**Horseheads High School North Gym**

*Vote*

# PROPOSITION 1: 2026-2027 BUDGET

The Horseheads Central School District Board of Education has approved a proposed budget for the 2026-27 school year in the amount of \$112,109,890.

- The proposed budget results in an **estimated DECREASE of 1.99% in the full value tax rate**, from \$16.09 in the current year to \$15.77 per \$1,000 of assessed full value based on preliminary assessments. On a home with a full value assessment of \$100,000, the estimated change is a **DECREASE of \$32.00**.
- The proposed budget is within the statutory limit of the tax cap, and will allow the district to continue to provide all academic supports, social-emotional services and extracurricular activities for our students. Assessment values and equalization rates are finalized by each municipality in the summer, with final tax rates calculated in August.

Visit [www.horseheadsdistrict.com](http://www.horseheadsdistrict.com) for more information.



## Building Trusted Student-Staff Relationships

By prioritizing relationship-building, Horseheads Central School District fosters a culture of trust and belonging — one that not only enhances academic outcomes but also helps students grow into confident, resilient individuals.

When students feel known, respected, and supported by adults in our schools, they learn effectively.

## COMPARATIVE EXPENDITURES

	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Proposed	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Program	\$69,434,062	\$70,771,892	\$1,337,830	1.93%
Capital	\$21,816,157	\$26,661,696	\$4,845,539	22.21%
Administrative	\$13,577,977	\$14,676,302	\$1,098,325	8.09%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$104,828,196</b>	<b>\$112,109,890</b>	<b>\$7,281,694</b>	<b>6.95%</b>

## COMPARATIVE REVENUE

	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Proposed	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Property Taxes/STAR/Payments in Lieu of Taxes/Interest and Penalties	\$50,570,633	\$52,300,590	\$1,729,957	3.42%
State Aid	\$48,349,813	\$54,319,212	\$5,969,399	12.35%
Other*	\$2,662,750	\$2,623,186	-\$39,564	-1.49%
Interfund Transfer	\$145,000	\$166,902	\$21,902	15.10%
Appropriated Reserves	\$800,000	\$950,000	\$150,000	18.75%
Debt Service Fund	\$1,300,000	\$750,000	-\$550,000	-42.31%
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$104,828,196</b>	<b>\$112,109,890</b>	<b>\$7,281,694</b>	<b>6.95%</b>

\*Other revenue includes items such as Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements, BOCES refund, interest, rental income, donations and gifts, and gate receipts.

## PROGRAM BUDGET COMPONENT

This budget component includes all expenditures necessary for all PK-12 educational programs, instruction, and transportation of our students, including teacher and support staff salaries and benefits, BOCES special education and instructional services, interscholastic athletics, and transportation. The Employee Benefits line is a pro-rated calculation of this component's share of costs as required by the state for self-insured health/dental claims, district retirement contributions, workers' compensation and disability insurance, and social security. This component also includes materials, supplies, and contractual items such as conferences, repairs, and service contracts. Program expenditures make up 63.1% of the budget.

	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Proposed	Dollar Change	% Change
Legal	\$44,625	\$44,625	\$0	0.00%
In-service Training, Instruction	\$90,654	\$69,500	- \$21,154	- 23.33%
Teaching, Regular School	\$21,959,497	\$22,298,262	\$338,765	1.54%
Students with Disabilities	\$10,347,281	\$10,094,757	-\$252,524	-2.44%
English as a New Language	\$208,432	\$216,911	\$8,479	4.07%
Occupational Education (Grades 9-12)	\$3,374,675	\$3,662,952	\$288,277	8.54%
Teaching, Special Schools	\$3,150	\$3,150	\$0	0.00%
School Library	\$804,403	\$830,195	\$25,792	3.21%
Computer Assisted Instruction	\$648,650	\$753,183	\$104,533	16.12%
Attendance	\$219,065	\$222,643	\$3,578	1.63%
Counseling	\$1,199,155	\$1,146,314	-\$52,841	-4.41%
Health Services	\$802,671	\$774,171	- \$28,500	- 3.55%
Psychological Services	\$687,651	\$718,556	\$30,905	4.49%
Social Work Services	\$797,603	\$811,476	\$13,873	1.74%
Co-Curricular Activities	\$264,433	\$250,123	-\$14,310	-5.41%
Interscholastic Athletics	\$966,274	\$1,030,951	\$64,677	6.69%
Transportation Services	\$4,710,917	\$5,286,209	\$575,292	12.21%
Garage	\$74,550	\$75,450	\$900	1.21%
Employee Benefits	\$21,810,376	\$22,062,464	\$252,088	1.16%
Transfer to Other Funds	\$420,000	\$420,000	\$0	0.00%
<b>Program Total</b>	<b>\$69,434,062</b>	<b>\$70,771,892</b>	<b>\$1,337,830</b>	<b>1.93%</b>

- **Inservice Training, Instruction** decreased due to the reorganization of BOCES costs, with amounts moving to the administrative budget component.
- **Occupational Education (Grades 9-12)** increased due to the rising costs of GST BOCES services for career and technical education courses.
- **Computer Assisted Instruction** increased to maintain the district's replacement cycle of laptops and other technology used by students in the classroom.
- **Counseling** decreased due to various retirements with replacements to be hired at lesser salaries.
- **Interscholastic Athletics** increased due to rising costs of equipment, supplies, and officials needed to support student competitions.
- **Transportation Services** increased due to rising costs of supplies and equipment, in addition to adjustments to salaries for new bus routes.
- **Employee Benefits** increased due to the rising costs in healthcare.

# CAPITAL BUDGET COMPONENT

The capital component includes all costs related to the operations and maintenance of the district’s buildings and the financing of our annual bus purchases and capital improvement projects. This component includes all expenditures associated with custodial salaries, service contracts, supplies, utilities, and maintenance and repair of school facilities. The Employee Benefits line is a pro-rated calculation of this component’s share of costs as required by the state for self-insured health/dental claims, district retirement contributions, workers’ compensation and disability insurance, and social security. Capital expenditures make up 23.8% of the budget.

	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Proposed	Dollar Change	% Change
Operation of Plant	\$3,068,344	\$3,462,920	\$394,576	12.86%
Maintenance of Plant	\$1,899,391	\$2,082,196	\$182,805	9.62%
School Construction Financing	\$13,227,000	\$17,392,680	\$4,165,680	31.49%
Bus Purchase Financing	\$1,576,550	\$1,646,050	\$69,500	4.41%
Employee Benefits	\$2,044,872	\$2,077,850	\$32,978	1.61%
<b>Capital Total</b>	<b>\$21,816,157</b>	<b>\$26,661,696</b>	<b>\$4,845,539</b>	<b>22.21%</b>

- **Operation of Plant** increased primarily due to rising energy costs.
- **Maintenance of Plant** increased due to several contractual increases for services necessary to maintain district buildings and increased supply costs.
- **School Construction Financing** represents the annual payments due on debt liabilities for the short- and long-term borrowings for the district’s capital construction projects. This line increased primarily due to the final amount needed to be borrowed to complete the projects the High School and Ridge Road. **Please note, this debt increase is offset by the building aid the district receives from the state. For 2026-27, building aid is anticipated to increase by \$3,974,259.**
- **Employee Benefits** increased due to the rising costs in healthcare.



## Supporting Career Readiness

Partnerships with local and regional employers and the Career Development Council provide students with professional communication and networking skills. Experiences like job fairs play a critical role in building career readiness and helping students better understand the opportunities available to them upon graduation.

**Explore. Empower. Excel.**

*The Horseheads Central School District offers educational programs without regard to race, color, national origin, creed, religion, marital status, military status, sex, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, predisposing genetic characteristic, or disability, and provides equal access to applicable groups under the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act. Inquiries regarding this policy may be made to Caitlin DeFilippo and Anthony Gill, Co-Title IX/DASA Coordinators, and Co-Civil Rights Compliance Officers; or Kelly Squires, Section 504 Coordinator, Horseheads Central School District, 143 Hibbard Road, Horseheads, NY 14845, (607) 739-5601. This policy of non-discrimination includes access by students to educational programs, counseling services, course offerings, and activities, as well as recruitment and appointment of employees and employment pay, benefits, advancement and/or termination.*

# ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET COMPONENT

Administrative costs include all expenditures related to the administrative operations of the district: materials, supplies, and contractual obligations for school offices, the board of education, and district offices including the superintendent’s office, business office, and human resources; legal fees; the district’s portion of the BOCES administrative budget; and salaries of all school administrators, supervisors, and their support staffs. The Employee Benefits line is a pro-rated calculation of this component’s share of costs as required by the state for self-insured health/dental claims, district retirement contributions, workers’ compensation and disability insurance, and social security. Administrative expenditures make up 13.1% of the budget.

	2025-26 Budget	2026-27 Proposed	Dollar Change	% Change
Board of Education	\$12,220	\$13,120	\$900	7.36%
District Meeting	\$33,319	\$52,118	\$18,799	56.42%
Superintendent’s Office	\$393,992	\$415,122	\$21,130	5.36%
Business Administration	\$815,045	\$867,825	\$52,780	6.48%
Auditing	\$45,000	\$45,427	\$427	0.95%
Tax Collection	\$3,900	\$3,900	\$0	0.00%
Fiscal Agent Fees	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	0.00%
Legal	\$44,625	\$44,625	\$0	0.00%
Human Resources	\$646,025	\$673,646	\$27,621	4.28%
Public Information and Services	\$80,822	\$84,949	\$4,127	5.11%
Central Printing and Mailing	\$410,777	\$431,286	\$20,509	4.99%
Central Data Processing	\$2,714,043	\$2,832,210	\$118,167	4.35%
Insurance	\$305,000	\$331,000	\$26,000	8.52%
School Association Dues	\$1,200	\$1,500	\$300	25.00%
BOCES Administrative Costs	\$1,936,514	\$2,070,383	\$133,869	6.91%
Curriculum Development/Supervision	\$1,178,207	\$1,234,488	\$56,281	4.78%
Supervision, Regular School	\$1,968,044	\$2,312,928	\$344,884	17.52%
Research, Planning, and Evaluation	\$105,837	\$110,018	\$4,181	3.95%
Employee Benefits	\$2,878,407	\$3,146,757	\$268,350	9.32%
<b>Administrative Total</b>	<b>\$13,577,977</b>	<b>\$14,676,302</b>	<b>\$1,098,325</b>	<b>8.09%</b>

- **District Meeting** increased due to the cost of a potential capital project vote. The Board of Education is currently in discussions regarding this possible project to continue the Horseheads 2030 initiative.
- **Business Administration** increased due to rising BOCES costs and the addition of needed clerical position that was filled during the 2025-26 fiscal year.
- **Supervision, Regular School** increased due to the inclusion of three new assistant principals who will support students, staff, and families at this district’s three elementary schools.
- **Employee Benefits** increased due to the rising costs in healthcare.



**Tuesday, May 19 | 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.**  
**Horseheads High School North Gym**

*Vote*

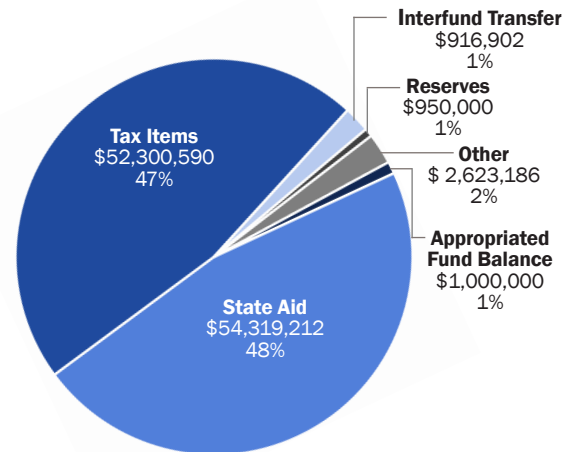
# REVENUE

## PROPERTY TAX

The proposed 2026-27 budget represents an increase in the tax levy of 3.41% over the current year. The tax levy refers to the total amount collected in revenue across the entire district. This is not the same as the full-value tax rate, which indicates the cost to individual property owners based on their property's assessment by their municipality when assessed at 100% or full market value.

The district's current 2025-26 full-value tax rate is \$16.09 per \$1,000 of assessed value. For the 2026-27 school year, **the full value tax rate is estimated to DECREASE by 1.99%** (-\$0.32 to a potential rate of \$15.77). The estimated annual change is a **DECREASE of \$32.00 per \$100,000 assessed value.**

## REVENUE CATEGORIES



Because assessments and equalization rates are finalized after the budget process, the district must estimate the effect on the full value tax rate based on the information provided by Chemung and Schuyler counties and New York State Taxation and Finance at this time. In the past, the final tax rate has trended lower than the district's estimate, as seen in the budget presentations. The district calculates the final tax rate in August upon receipt of final assessments and equalization rates. The Horseheads Central School District is made up of seven municipalities: Horseheads, Big Flats, Catlin, Erin, Veteran, Cayuta, and Baldwin. Each municipality assesses its properties separately and submits final assessments in late summer. **The district does not participate in developing any residential and business property assessments.**

State law requires that all properties within a municipality be assessed at a uniform percentage of market value. In the summer, the state sets equalization rates, which are meant to equalize the assessments from one municipality to the other. Equalization rates are determined by the state using a calculation comparing assessed values to market values.

## STATE EDUCATION AID

As of this newsletter's publication, the New York State budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year has not yet been finalized. After multiple deadline extensions, state leaders have still not reached a final decision. Per the Governor's initial proposal released on January 20, 2026, the district was allocated an increase in foundation aid in the amount of \$957,445 or 3.40%, compared to foundation aid actually received in 2025-26. However, this increase is not sustainable for a district the size of Horseheads, especially as expenses continue to rise.

## OTHER REVENUE SOURCES

The proposed budget includes \$750,000 of debt service funds, \$1 million of fund balance, \$950,000 of appropriated reserves, and \$166,902 of interfund transfers. Other revenue of \$2.6 million includes Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements, BOCES refund, interest, admissions, rental income, and donations and gifts.



# PROPOSITION 2: PURCHASE OF BUSES

Each year, voters are asked to vote on the purchase of buses, and at times other vehicles. This allows the district to borrow funds to replace buses that are 10 years old or older and have 100,000 miles or more. This replacement process meets New York State Education Department recommendations for maintenance and replacement of a bus fleet.

For 2026-27, the district seeks approval to purchase school buses and vehicles at a cost not to exceed \$1,900,000. It is anticipated that the district will purchase eight school buses and one vehicle with the approval of this proposition. **This year's purchases will not include any electric buses.** The district will finance the purchase through a five-year bond, with a substantial portion of the payment covered primarily by state aid for the five years following the purchase. Please note, the district will only borrow what is needed of this \$1,900,000. At this time, the prices of buses and vehicles are unknown due to the impacts of market conditions. The proposition for 2025-26 also sought to borrow \$1,900,000 but the district only needed to borrow \$1,600,000 once we received final pricing.



Currently, the district has 77 buses and eight other student transport vehicles.

Maintaining a replacement schedule allows the district to keep its bus fleet in good working order, minimizing maintenance needs. The district's transportation department has a current bus inspection passing rate of 99.21% as a result of the regular care they take in maintaining buses while minimizing costs.

## Transporting Precious Cargo Daily

The Horseheads Central School District is a large and complex system, and one of its most critical daily operations happens before the first bell ever rings. Each day, nearly 2,000 students are transported safely using a fleet of 77 buses—an effort that requires careful coordination, dedicated staff, and a strong infrastructure working behind the scenes.

Managing transportation on this scale is no small task. Routes must be designed for efficiency, timing, and reliability while adapting to the unique needs of families. From driver training and vehicle maintenance to route planning and communication, every decision is guided by a commitment to student safety. This commitment is strengthened by use of the My Ride K-12 app, a GPS-enabled parent app that allows families to see where their child(ren)'s bus is in real time.

Your partnership is critical to a successful 2026-27 school year. Accurate and up-to-date transportation information is essential to building effective bus routes. We strongly encourage all families to submit updated bus request information before the end of this school year to help the Transportation Department finalize routes over the summer and avoid last-minute adjustments that can cause confusion for students and families.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us provide safe, reliable transportation for every student in our care.



### By the Numbers

- 77 Buses
- Serving 143 sq. miles
- Nearly 2,000 students
- 4,000 Miles Daily
- 900,000 Miles Annually

Download the My Ride App



# BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTION

On May 19, voters will elect three residents to three-year terms on the Board of Education. Below are three candidates and information (**unedited**) they provided to the district. Candidates are listed in the order their names will appear on the ballot.



## Erin Schiavone

**Employment:** I have 25+ years of experience in education, including service as a high school social studies teacher at Horseheads High School, instructional technology, and administrative roles as assistant principal and principal of the GST BOCES Career and Technical Education program. For the past 3.5 years, I have held a position in Information Technology at Corning Incorporated.

**Educational background:** Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Social Studies Education (Grades 7–12) from SUNY Oswego, a Master of Science in Reading Analysis and Correction (K–12) from SUNY Cortland, and a Master of Science in Educational Administration from SUNY Brockport.

**Family:** Husband - Mr. Christopher Schiavone - vocal music director at Horseheads High School and 1994 alum; Daughter - Dr. Emma (Schiavone) Yalanzi 2019 alum; Son - Mr. Ryan Schiavone 2025 alum

**Number of years living in the district:** 20 years living in the district.

**Reason(s) for running:** I am running for re-election to the Horseheads Central School District Board of Education after completing my first term. Serving our district has been a meaningful way to give back to a community where I have lived, worked, and raised my family. Our schools are central to who we are, and I am deeply committed to supporting students, faculty, and staff so they can continue to thrive. With a professional background in education and educational leadership, I bring experience and perspective that help inform thoughtful decision-making and long-term planning. I believe in balancing strong academic opportunities, extra-curricular activities, and community service with the support systems that allow students and educators to succeed. This district and its traditions mean a great deal to me. As we look ahead, I am committed to being part of a future that honors and preserves the strong culture of the Blue Raiders while continuing to grow and adapt to and adapt to meet the needs of our students and community.



## Angie Finlayson

**Employment:** School District Accountant, GST BOCES

**Educational background:** Bachelor's of Science in Accounting, SUNY Old Westbury; Masters in Business Administration, Delaware State University

**Family:** Nick Finlayson (Spouse), Amelia (Horseheads, Class of 2022), Kathryn (Phoenix Academy, Class of 2027), Jacob (Horseheads, Class of 2026)

**Number of years living in the district:** Almost 7 years

**Reason(s) for running:** Our schools are truly at the heart of this community, and I want to serve by giving back in a meaningful way. I'm running for the Board of Education as a parent and resident who has proudly called this community home for nearly seven years. When our family was relocating, we chose Horseheads because of the diverse academic programs, wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, and outstanding educators.

With over a decade of local experience as a school district accountant, I've seen firsthand how financial decisions impact our schools over time. I understand the importance of careful planning and maintaining a strong financial foundation, and I am hopeful that my background will bring a valuable perspective to our experienced board. I value transparency, open communication, and using data to guide decisions in ways that reflect both district priorities and community needs.

I believe strong leadership starts with listening and working together. I look forward to collaborating with fellow board members, administrators, educators, and community members to make thoughtful decisions and continue building on the important work already underway.



**Tuesday, May 19 | 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.**  
**Horseheads High School North Gym**

*Vote*



## Katrina Ungvasky

**Employment:** Owner of 112 North Main Street LLC. Located in Hanover Square Horseheads where I practice Massage and Esthetics

**Educational background:** Horseheads Highschool class of 2002, The Natural Health Institute, The Fingerlakes School of Massage, and GST Boces Esthetics Program

**Family:** Daniel Swartz (Spouse), Kingston swartz (5th Grade IS) Zachary Swartz (1st Grade Gardner Rd)

**Number of years living in the district:** Over 40

**Reason(s) for running:** I am running for re-election of Horseheads school board because I care deeply about the community that I grew up in, that I am raising my family, and that I own a business in. I attended Horseheads from K-12th grade and was very active in the student council, choir/GRP, as well as being a student athlete. I currently serve on the Intermediate PTO and was a former bus driver for the district. It is very important to me that all of the children in our community get to have a positive schooling experience and strong educational foundation. That the staff have a supportive and positive work environment, while also being fiscally responsible to the tax payers that support our district. I was also a Director for a school that I worked to get nationally accredited following the rules, and regulations of the New York State education department (NYSED). The experience being responsible for creating the schools policies gave me an incredible insight as to how policy could be made to create either a wonderful or stressful schooling environment and the avenues you can use to change policy to best suit the needs of the people. This term I would really like my focus to be on communication with the community to figure out the wants, and needs of all stakeholders, and to create open dialog to find common ground in those areas.

## ABSENTEE AND EARLY MAIL BALLOTS

Qualified voters who cannot get to the polls on May 19 may request an application for absentee or early mail ballot.

Applications for absentee and early mail ballots are available in the district's Business Office, 143 Hibbard Road, Horseheads, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. up to and including May 18.

Completed ballots must be returned to the District Clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 19. The district mails absentee ballots to voters listed as "permanently disabled" by the Chemung County Board of Elections.

Questions? Call (607) 739-5601, x4201.

## Coming Soon: New Parent & School Communication Tool

We are excited to share that we have adopted a new communication platform called ParentSquare to help us keep you better informed and more connected with your school community in the 2026-27 School Year.

With ParentSquare you will be able to:

- Stay up to date on news and events
- Send and receive messages with teachers and staff
- Fill out forms and permission slips
- Sign up for conferences and volunteer opportunities
- View calendar items and photos from your school



On May 27, designated parents and caregivers will receive an introductory email about the new platform with helpful directions and instructional videos on its use. Access will be granted on July 1 and all school, grade-level, and classroom communications will come through ParentSquare on that date.

ParentSquare is available through a mobile-friendly app that can be downloaded for free for iOS and Android. You will also be able to access ParentSquare from your web browser at [www.parentsquare.com](http://www.parentsquare.com) after the July 1 launch date.

# SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET NOTICE

<b>Overall Budget Proposal</b>	<b>Budget Adopted for 2025-26 School Year</b>	<b>Budget Proposed for 2026-27 School Year</b>	<b>Contingency Budget for 2026-27 School Year</b>
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$104,828,196	\$112,109,890	\$109,837,656
Increase/Decrease for the 2026-27 School Year		\$7,281,694	\$5,009,460
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		6.95 %	4.78%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		2.63%	
<b>Proposed Tax Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount</b>	<b>\$50,001,308</b>	<b>\$51,705,642</b>	
Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$0	\$0	
<b>Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy</b>	<b>\$50,001,308</b>	<b>\$51,705,642</b>	<b>\$50,001,308</b>
Total Permissible Exclusions	\$3,639,593	\$4,304,925	
School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$46,426,887	\$47,400,717	
Total Proposed Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions	\$46,361,715	\$47,400,717	
Difference: (Negative Value Requires 60% Voter Approval - See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions)**	\$65,172	\$0	
<b>Administrative Component</b>	<b>\$13,577,977</b>	<b>\$14,676,302</b>	<b>\$13,659,394</b>
<b>Program Component</b>	<b>\$69,434,062</b>	<b>\$70,771,893</b>	<b>\$69,807,836</b>
<b>Capital Component</b>	<b>\$21,816,157</b>	<b>\$26,661,696</b>	<b>\$26,370,426</b>

\*A contingency budget includes ordinary contingent expenses as determined by the Board and salaries subject to a cap on the administrative portion of the budget, with no increase in the tax levy over the prior year. There would be no purchase of new equipment, including buses unless approved by separate proposition, no capital expenditures unless approved by separate proposition and except in emergency situations, no salary increases for certain civil service employees not covered by an agreement with a recognized bargaining unit, outside organizations would have to pay for all facilities use, and the budget would be subject to an administrative cap on administrative expenditures.

\*\* List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)

## Separate Propositions\*\*

<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Acquire school buses and vehicles	\$1,900,000

## Estimated Basic School Tax Relief (STAR) Exemption Savings<sup>1</sup>

	<b>Budget Proposed for 2026-27 School Year</b>
Basic STAR Tax Savings	\$496

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2026-27 by the qualified voters of the Horseheads Central School District, Chemung, and Schuyler Counties, New York, will be held at the Horseheads High School in said district on Tuesday, May 19, 2026 between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time in the Horseheads High School, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

<sup>1</sup>The basic School Tax Relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

# State of the Art

## Construction to Facilitate Effective Instruction



Horseheads Central School District continues to make significant progress on its long-term capital improvement efforts, ensuring that school facilities remain safe, modern, and aligned with the needs of today's students. These ongoing projects reflect a multi-year commitment to maintaining high-quality learning environments while maximizing state building aid and minimizing the local tax impact.

Much of the current work builds on the district's broader capital improvement strategy, often referred to as "**Horseheads 2030**," which focuses on upgrading infrastructure and learning environments across the district. This district-wide effort prioritizes improvements that directly impact student safety, instructional quality, and operational efficiency.

Current work is focused on two sites, Ridge Road Elementary School and the High School, with projects at Ridge Road to be completed this summer and the High School by early June of next year.

**At Ridge Road Elementary School**, crews are largely working on finishing touches to larger spaces where students gather frequently. Completion of the west-side bus drop-off and parking area is near. Students will be greeted by a new outdoor plaza and entryway. The kitchen and cafeteria are an estimated 90% complete, with only flooring and finishing items remaining. In the gym, the laying of a new floor and stage construction recently started, marking the last updates to the space.

**At the High School**, the gym project is realizing progress. The steel structure is now being enclosed, roof work continues, and plumbing, electrical and mechanical infrastructure are being installed. The main entrance steel work is complete with site work to follow.

## Safe, Modern, and Inspiring

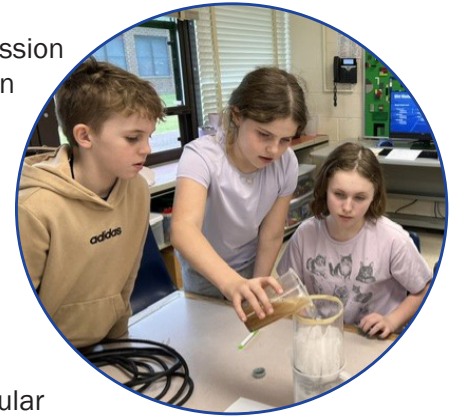
By investing in its facilities, Horseheads is not only maintaining its buildings, it is creating spaces that support student learning, innovative teaching, and community pride.

These capital projects represent a partnership between the district and the community, ensuring that today's students—and future generations—have access to safe, modern, and inspiring places to learn and grow.



# Exercising Mind, Body, and Creative Spirit

A well-balanced education is central to the Horseheads Central School District's mission to support student success both inside and outside the classroom. The combination of strong academics, hands-on learning, physical activity, and the arts that helps students fully develop their true potential.



In the classroom, students engage in hands-on experiences such as experiments, collaborative projects, and real-world problem solving. These lessons deepen understanding, **strengthen communication**, build confidence, and **encourage critical thinking**.

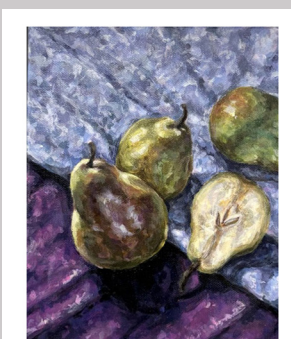
Physical education and extracurricular athletics play an important role as well. Regular activity supports students' physical and mental well-being while teaching teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. From daily physical education classes to a variety of sports program offerings, students are encouraged to stay active and connected.



The arts round out this balanced approach. Through visual arts, music, and performance opportunities, students explore **creativity** and self-expression while building skills in **communication** and **collaboration**.

Together, these experiences support the whole child academically, physically, and creatively ([The Horseheads Portrait of a Graduate](#)). Horseheads is proud to offer a well-rounded education through a multi-tiered system of support that helps each student discover their full potential.

## 2026 Spring Art Show at Arnot Mall, May 5-17



## Leading the Way on Inclusive and Early Childhood Education

Horseheads Central School District is fostering an inclusive environment where every student feels valued, supported, and prepared to succeed. This commitment begins with early childhood education, where young learners are introduced to foundational academic and social-emotional skills. By creating classrooms that embrace diverse learning needs, the district ensures all students have access to opportunities from the very start. Early intervention, supportive services, and inclusive practices help build confidence and strong relationships, setting the stage for long-term success and a positive educational experience for every child.

The district continues to work ahead of New York State's mandate to provide all four-year-olds with access to access pre-K programs in the next three years.



# Championship Pedigree

## Blue Raiders Compete at High Level

Horseheads Central School District's athletics programs continue to be a source of pride for the community, with student-athletes demonstrating excellence, resilience, and sportsmanship across all seasons. Competing in the Southern Tier Athletic Conference (STAC), the district offers more than two dozen athletic teams, providing broad opportunities for student participation and achievement.

Recent seasons have brought notable success, particularly in championship competition. The Horseheads girls' soccer team captured a Section IV title in fall 2025, highlighting the program's continued strength and competitiveness at the sectional level. This accomplishment reflects not only talent on the field, but also the dedication of student-athletes and coaches who commit countless hours to preparation and teamwork.

In addition to soccer, the district's cheerleading program has built an impressive run, earning back-to-back STAC championships, continuing to establish itself as a premier program in the region. Their success is a testament to precision, athleticism, and a strong culture of commitment. Horseheads teams have also seen success in league play across multiple sports. The Blue Raiders have secured division titles and key victories against regional rivals, reinforcing the district's reputation for competitive athletics. Individual performances have stood out as

Beyond championships and accolades, the strength of Horseheads athletics programs lies in its depth and inclusivity. With offerings spanning fall, winter, and spring seasons; from football and soccer, to basketball and wrestling, to lacrosse and flag football, in addition to multiple unified sports, students have opportunities to explore their interests, stay active, and build lifelong skills.



# BLUE RAIDERS



*Horseheads Boys' Baseball Class AA  
New York State Champions*



### Next Level Competition

Horseheads High School graduated athletes are charting successful paths as College Division I, II and III athletes, setting an example for future Blue Raiders continuing their academic and athletic careers at the next level and making their our community proud. We look forward to seeing the Class of 2026 succeed on and off the field as well.

[Raider Nation College Signing Day is May 28, 2026 at the HS Auditorium.](#)

As the district looks ahead, the continued success of its athletic programs reflects a strong foundation and a bright future, one built on opportunity, dedication, and the unwavering support of the Horseheads community.



*Horseheads Girls' Basketball Class AA Section IV Champions  
and State Semi-Finalists*

## Budget Vote/Board of Education Election

Tuesday, May 19, 2026  
7 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Horseheads High School, North Gym

### Who is eligible to vote?

All district residents are eligible to vote, as long as they meet the following requirements:

- Are a U.S. citizen
- Are 18 years of age or older on the day of the vote
- Have lived in the district for at least 30 days prior to the vote on May 19
- Are not restricted from voting in general elections based on election law

You do not have to be registered in general elections or own property in order to vote.



### Stay Connected with HCSD

 [www.horseheadsdistrict.com](http://www.horseheadsdistrict.com)

 607.739.5601 Ext. 4295

 [hcsdinfo@horseheadsdistrict.com](mailto:hcsdinfo@horseheadsdistrict.com)

