

CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT Hornell FALL EDITION 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Capital Project vote Wednesday, Dec. 20 from noon to 9 p.m.

On Oct. 23, the Board of Education unanimously adopted a capital project referendum to be proposed to residents on Dec. 20. The project is largely focused on the construction of a new competition gymnasium at Hornell High School, including a new student fitness center and an elevated community-accessible walking track. Other important parts of the project include roofing work at the High School and security enhancements at each of our school buildings.

The current outdated gymnasium no longer meets the needs of our students and community. The increased seating capacity of the new gymnasium will allow Hornell to host sectional competitions for the first time and hold school-wide assemblies and other large community events in the gymnasium. The new elevated walking track will provide community members with a space to exercise indoors.

This project will have no impact to taxpayers and will be funded by a combination of state building aid and the district's capital reserves.

Construction of a new competition gym is part of Phase 2 of the district's 10-year comprehensive facilities improvement plan. The planned improvements are a continuation of our efforts to provide updated, modern spaces that support student learning and success.

"With Phase 1 of our long-range facilities plan underway, our focus shifts towards Phase 2 and the construction of a new competition gymnasium. This project represents our commitment to creating modern, safe, and inclusive spaces where excellence can thrive," said Superintendent Jeremy Palotti. "A new gymnasium will ensure we can support the growth and development of our student-athletes and bring the Hornell community together under one roof for decades to come."

2023 CAPITAL PROJECT VOTE

Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2023

noon to 9 p.m.

at Hornell High School

134 Seneca Road,

Hornell, NY 14843

JOIN US AT THE UPCOMING CAPITAL PROJECT COMMUNITY FORUM

Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023

5 p.m.

at Hornell High School Library

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PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

Capital Project total: \$30,215,000

Use of district capital reserves: \$12,075,000

No tax rate increase as a result of the project

What is being proposed?

- ✓ Construction of a new competition gymnasium at Hornell High School that includes a community-accessible elevated walking track and student fitness center
- ✓ Security enhancements at each of our school buildings
- ✓ Roofing work at the High School

GETTING TO KNOW OUR SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

School Resource Officers are here to support the entire school community – staff, faculty, students and their families. Their duties include but are not limited to, maintaining a visible presence throughout the day, developing and maintaining positive relationships with students, families, faculty and staff, acting as a liaison between the police department and the school district and assisting with school safety.

Three dedicated police officers serve the Hornell City School District.



Officer Nicole Cowdrick

Officer Nicole Cowdrick

Meet Nicole Cowdrick, the newest member of our School Resource Officer team. Officer Cowdrick recently retired after dedicating 20 years of service to the New York State Police, where she was based at the Wayland State Police Station. We're thrilled to have her join us as the School Resource Officer at North Hornell Elementary School, a role she accepted post-retirement.

Officer Cowdrick is a mother of two teenage boys. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, hunting, outdoor adventures, and quality time with family and friends.



Officer Michael Hoyt

Officer Michael Hoyt

Michael Hoyt has been a dedicated member of the Hornell Police Department since Aug. 7, 2007. He graduated from Hornell High School in 2000 and lives in Hornell with his wife and children.

Officer Hoyt earned his A.A.S. degree in Criminal Justice and Police Science from Monroe Community College in 2003 and worked at the Rochester Police Department during his college years. His dedication and service to the department and community were recognized with the prestigious Captain's Letter. He serves as the Hornell Police Department's DWI Coordinator, and a Field Training Officer, among other accomplishments. Officer Hoyt is assigned to the Intermediate School.



Officer Michael Losecco

Officer Michael Losecco

Michael Losecco majored in Political Science and Criminal Justice at Mansfield University. He graduated in 2017 with a bachelor's degree, and in 2018, he joined the Hornell Police Department. During his six years with the Department, Officer Losecco has served in various roles, patrolling day, evening, and overnight shifts. Now, as our Resource Officer at the Junior-Senior High School, he brings his dedication to helping create a safe and secure environment for our students.

Outside of work, Officer Losecco enjoys staying active, spending time with family and friends, playing with his adorable Goldendoodle, Louie, and indulging in some video game fun.

DISTRICT LAUNCHES NEW SCHOOL-TO-HOME COMMUNICATION TOOLS

This year, we're using two new platforms to improve school-to-home communication.

Synergy is our new grading and attendance platform. Parents with students in grades 7-12 will be able to access their student's account to monitor classroom information, including grades and attendance.

Remind is a new classroom communication tool that makes it easy to stay involved with your child's learning. You can use Remind to send and receive messages from your student's school on any device in the Remind App, or even a simple text message or email from your phone. We're excited to use Remind to make connecting with your family more engaging!

Families with students in the district should have received a welcome message with the information needed to set up their accounts. Please check your email inbox, as well as your spam folder, or your text messages for this information.

Visit our website to learn more: hornellcityschools.com/about-us/communication-tools/



Around the District

➤ Mr. Kull's Art 8 students visited the Dyer Art Gallery at the Rochester Institute of Technology on Friday, Oct. 20. The students toured an exhibition by Laurie Shapiro titled "You Don't Need to Hear to Listen," an exploration of her personal journey as a hard-of-hearing individual and how it has influenced her artistic expression.

Hornell graduate Reilly Liberto is currently the Coordinator of Exhibitions and Collections at the Dyer Arts Center and led the student tour.



➤ The GST BOCES building trades program takes hands-on learning to groundbreaking levels.

Each year, students work alongside BOCES instructors to construct a home from start to finish, including framing floors, walls and roofing, and completing plumbing and electrical work. Five Hornell High School students are participating in the program this year.

"They see it from nothing to then getting delivered in place where it's located. They all have a piece of it," said Robert Sherburne, GST BOCES director of Career and Technical Education. "They get to drive by and say 'Hey, I helped build that wall there.' It's such a unique program and we are very excited to give kids these opportunities."

The program, a partnership between BOCES and the City of Hornell, celebrated the completion of its twelfth home this September.



➤ Hornell Intermediate School is fortunate to have a partnership with Cornell for their "Ag in the Classroom" program. This year, third grade gets a monthly hands-on lesson about agriculture.

In October, third-graders learned about the potato growing and harvesting process and got to decorate their own potatoes!



NEW SLIDE UNVEILED AT HORNELL INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL



A brand-new addition to the Intermediate School playground was recently unveiled. The project was sparked by the efforts of four students in Mrs. Nikki Miller's third grade class last year.

Taking action through persuasive essays

Elena McDaniels, Bennett Willis, Jack Thayer and Makenzie Outman wrote persuasive essays suggesting improvements to the school playground. Thayer and Outman used their writing skills to advocate replacing the playground's broken curly slide. A new slide was purchased by the district and installed by the HCSD Maintenance and Grounds crew and the City of Hornell.

On Friday, Oct. 13 the Intermediate School celebrated the new slide with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. During the event, Thayer and Outman read their essays to the entire fourth grade. Following their reading, all four students had the honor of cutting the ribbon and being the first to enjoy the slide.

Special guests were in attendance, including the students' former third grade teacher Mrs. Nikki Miller, Superintendent Jeremy Palotti and Director of Facilities Shannon Davis.



LONG-RANGE PLAN

The district's long-range facilities plan is a 10-year roadmap to making needed improvements and enhancements to school buildings and district facilities in a fiscally prudent manner. The plan was developed through close consultation with faculty, staff, community members and district leadership.

Improvements focus on meeting student needs through renovations of classrooms, updating building infrastructure and addressing safety.

Phase 1 of the long-range plan was approved by voters in December 2022 and includes classroom renovations (Intermediate School and High School), a two-story classroom addition (Intermediate School), roof replacements (North Hornell Elementary), installation of a new turf field and new tennis courts to replace the courts that were severely damaged and currently condemned (High School).

A third and final phase of the facilities plan is planned to be put before voters around 2027. We expect the scope of work to include additional updates to the Intermediate School, including a new gym.

If approved by the voters on Dec. 20, construction of the new competition gymnasium at the High School is expected to be completed in 2026.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY FORUM

District leadership as well as our architects and construction manager will host a Capital Project Community Forum to share additional information and answer questions about the project. Please join us on Wednesday, Dec. 6 at 5 p.m. at Hornell High School.



A rendering of the competition gymnasium's interior.



An architectural rendering shows the gym's elevated track. The track makes use of the facility's additional space to create a sheltered and accessible exercise area. The track will be available for community use.



An architectural rendering of the new competition gymnasium exterior as viewed from the high school turf field.



An architectural rendering of the gym's interior. The space features high ceilings to accommodate all sports, as well as ample space for school-wide assemblies and community events. The gymnasium is adequately sized to allow Hornell to host sectionals.

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

It has been wonderful welcoming students, parents, faculty and staff to the Hornell City School District for the 2023-24 school year!

This year is particularly exciting as we begin to see elements of our facilities improvement plan take shape on several of our campuses and we work towards the strategic priorities identified by parents, students, faculty and staff last fall.

The comprehensive needs assessment our school community held last fall looked at our district's strengths and areas for growth. We identified three priorities that we would focus on for the next several years to best support student success:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



What is the tax impact of the proposed project?

There will be no increase in taxes as a result of the project. The construction of a new gymnasium will be funded by New York State building aid that is available for the maintenance of school facilities. As a result of prudent financial planning, the district will be able to leverage its capital project reserve fund to supplement state building aid and limit the tax impact of the project.

How was this project chosen?

In 2018, the Board of Education and district administration began working with its Facilities Committee, community members and a team of architects to review our school buildings and facilities and plan for needed improvements. The district created a 10-year master plan to guide capital projects and ensure our students and community can continue to enjoy safe, supportive and modern educational spaces and athletic facilities. The proposed competition gymnasium replacement is Phase 2 of this 10-year plan.

Phase 1 of the plan, which was approved by voters in December 2022 and is currently underway, includes: Construction of a two-story classroom wing, reconstruction of some existing classrooms, reconstruction of main office and nurse's office, construction of a new playground (Intermediate School); Roof replacement and reconstruction of entry canopy and bus loop (North Hornell Elementary); Modernizing classrooms, corridors, lights, security and technology in the Junior High wing and turf replacement, tennis court renovation (High School).

● MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

1. Family Engagement and Involvement
2. Improve Postsecondary Readiness through Academic Engagement
3. Foster a Safe and Respectful Culture that Supports the Learning Environment

Each building has specific goals and activities relating to improving in these areas. Details of the specific plans can be found on our district website.

Construction is underway as part of the first phase of our facilities improvement plan, including the renovation of our tennis courts and baseball fields at the High School.

On Dec. 20 we will bring a proposal to the community for the next phase of our capital project. The project will focus on a complete reconstruction of the A gym at the High School, as well as replacing some failing roofs in the

Capital project Phase 1 underway

Construction is underway to replace the aged tennis courts at the High School. This work is a part of Phase 1 of the district's capital project, approved by voters in Dec. 2022.



school and enhancing safety and security across all of our school buildings.

The proposed project will not result in any tax rate increase. The project will be funded by New York State building aid and the strategic use of savings in our capital reserves. The end result is a project that supports the needs of our students and school community with no cost increase to taxpayers.

We thank the entire Hornell community for your continued support in our effort to provide modern teaching, learning and community spaces for our students. Please stay current on all the happenings at the Hornell City School District by following us on Facebook, checking out our website, and reading about the successes our students are achieving in other media outlets.

Superintendent of Schools Jeremy Palotti

Awards and Achievements

HORNELL HIGH SCHOOL RECOGNIZED AS A SCHOOL OF DISTINCTION



Hornell High School was named a 2022-23 School of Distinction by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association.

To earn the School of Excellence award, 100% of a school's varsity teams must qualify and receive the Scholar-Athlete team award, meaning the roster's total grade point average must be 90 or above.

"This award reflects our dedication to academic excellence through sports," said John Cardamone, Hornell City School District Athletics Director. "We're proud to be among the 84 schools in New York State to receive this honor, showcasing our commitment to our students' growth both in the classroom and on the field. Go Red Raiders!"

Dr. Nancy Shedlock receives School Psychologist of the Year Award

The NY Association of School Psychologists recognized Dr. Nancy Shedlock for excellence in the provision of school psychological services. Shedlock will be honored at the Awards Ceremony at the NYASP annual conference.



Alumni Spotlight Dr. Ismail A. Mehr / Class of 1991



After graduating from Hornell High School in 1991, Ismail Mehr went on to receive his medical degree from Universidad Iberoamericana (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic) in 1998. Mehr is currently the chair of the department of anesthesiology and medical director of operating room services at St. James Mercy Health System in Hornell.

He has served on the coaching staff of Hornell's varsity football team for 21 years. In the 2023-24 school year, he became head coach. Mehr's dedication to community service extends far beyond the reach of Hornell.

Just after the birth of his son, Ibraheem, in December 2004, Mehr was deeply affected by watching the devastation of the Indonesian tsunami unfold on the news. "I just recall saying 'I wish that I could help these people.' I think all of us have said that at some point when we see tragedies occur," he said.

Several months later, Mehr received an email from the Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA), an organization of which he was a member. IMANA provides medical relief in disaster-hit areas and they were assembling teams to respond in Indonesia. They wanted Mehr to join. "I thought 'I have to go. I said that I wanted to help and here's your chance,'" Mehr said.

Since 2004, he's served on nearly two dozen international medical missions and now plays a role in managing IMANA's Medical Relief teams. In October, the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry awarded Mehr with their Humanitarian of the Year award.

At home in Hornell, his volunteerism tackles a different challenge.

"There are three things I'm very, very passionate about: Family and friends first and foremost, medical relief, and Hornell Football," Mehr said.

Himself a former Red Raider (1987-1990), Mehr sees coaching as an invaluable form of mentorship for student athletes. "The impact that my coaches had on me playing Hornell football was inspirational," he said. Mehr hopes that he and his coaching staff can play a similar role for today's students.

His dedication to Hornell football was recognized in September by the Buffalo Bills and ADPRO Sports who named him high school coach of the week for both the Buffalo and Rochester regions.

THE ONE AND ONLY HORNELL INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL WELCOMES MR. JOHN SCHU

Mr. John Schu, a children's librarian and author of "This is a School," visited Hornell Intermediate School on Oct. 26. Schu shared his passion for books as he met with students throughout the day.

"He is a big proponent of finding books that students relate to and connect with," said library media specialist Jordan Hahn. "He shared with students how books helped him through life challenges and about his own connection to our school-wide book this year, 'The One and Only Ivan.'"

This year, the Intermediate School's theme is The One and Only Hornell Intermediate School. Every student in the school received a copy of the book "The One and Only Ivan" by Katherine Applegate and will be reading it this school year.

Schu's own writing reflects on the importance of friendships and building relationships based on compassion and respect for differences, all themes in "The One and Only Ivan." The book is inspired by the true story of a gorilla named Ivan who spent 30 years caged in an indoor zoo. The book imagines what Ivan may have felt. Schu had the opportunity to meet Ivan and have a book signed by the gorilla's thumbprint.

As part of his visit, Schu gave away a selection of books, signing one for each student. The visit had a resounding impact. "I feel like my heart could burst at any second with all of this excitement; I feel so inspired about books!" said one sixth grade student. After Schu's talk, students returned to their classrooms and created 'thank you' cards for the visiting author. One student even created a storybook to gift Schu, Hahn said.

"We're bringing these experiences to our students who might otherwise not have the opportunity to meet a published author," said librarian and literacy coach Jennifer Carretto. "It allows them to make a personal connection to the joy of reading and consider how books can open doors to different perspectives."



Mr. John Schu leads a student assembly at Hornell Intermediate School. This was the first in-person author visit since 2021.

GRANT SUPPORTS LITERACY PROGRAMS AT HORNELL

The district's author visits are made possible through Projected Accelerated Literacy, a district program funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Overall, the district was awarded \$4 million to invest in promoting and supporting student literacy.

As part of the program, the Intermediate School holds monthly book giveaways that allow students to choose from a wide variety of children's books at no cost. Over the course of the school year, students each receive more than 25 books.

Students secure early college admission through Alfred State College partnership

Hornell High School partnered with Alfred State College for an Instant Decision Day held on Tuesday, Oct. 17. Six students were accepted into the program of their choice:

- Jack Emo - Electrical
- Ayden Jones - Game & Interactive Design
- Isabel Miles - Nursing
- Lillian Miles - Nursing
- Kevin Regan - Nursing
- Liam Sirianni - Architecture

Hornell's young stars light up the stage with Into the Woods

Earlier this fall, students performed Hornell's first-ever Junior High School musical, "Into the Woods". Students auditioned for parts in July and worked diligently over part of the summer and early fall to launch the musical in September. "By putting on these performances, students gain confidence and are able to learn about themselves - that they can go further than they thought they could," said Dawn Hopper, vocal/classroom music teacher.





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POSTAL CUSTOMER



2023 CAPITAL PROJECT VOTE

Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2023


Noon to 9 p.m.

At Hornell High School

134 Seneca Road,

Hornell, NY 14843

For more information
visit our website at
[https://hornellcityschools.com/
about-us/capital-project/](https://hornellcityschools.com/about-us/capital-project/)
or scan the QR code



- Q**
A **Who can vote on the proposed project?**
You may vote if you are 18 years old or older, a U.S. citizen, a district resident for at least 30 days, and a registered voter for either a general election or a school board election.
- Q**
A **How do I register?**
If you are registered to vote for the general election through the county, you are also registered for school votes. If you are not a registered voter for the general election through the county, you may register specifically with the Hornell City School District, for school votes only, by coming into the district office on the registration day Dec. 2, from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. If you have questions contact the district clerk by phone at (607) 324-1302, ext. 1450.
- Q**
A **Can I vote by absentee ballot?**
To receive an absentee ballot by mail, voters must submit the required application to the district clerk by Dec. 13, 2023. Applications can be requested by contacting the district clerk or obtained in person at the district office. Voters who choose to pick up the application at the district office have until one day before the election to submit it in person to the district clerk. Pursuant to election law, persons designated by the Steuben County Board of Elections as “permanently disabled” will automatically receive an absentee ballot. All absentee ballots must be returned to the district clerk by 5 p.m. on the day of the vote, Dec. 20, 2023. The district office is located at 120 Raider Road, Hornell, NY.