



# Cat Chat

Hardin-Houston Local School

August 2024



## News from the Superintendent's Office!

I hope you find the August Cat Chat informational as we get ready for the start of the 2024-2025 school year. As usual, our outstanding maintenance staff has been busy deep cleaning the entire building and once again has it and the campus looking like new. One major project that occurred over the summer was the asphalt remediation of approximately 30% of our surfaces on campus. The entire back bus lot, athletic access, and the main entrance to the property were repaved. Additional curbing and drainage was installed adjacent to the softball parking lot to eliminate issues that were present in this area. The district also purchased and received three new school buses over the summer. We were fortunate to access grant dollars to pay for this needed expense with the ever increasing cost of a bus being close to \$140,000. Lastly, the school district capitalized on the county's upgraded communication system. This improvement allowed the district to purchase bus radios for the entire fleet, permitting immediate communication with

our bus drivers increasing safety for our H-H students.

As a district we are also pleased to announce that school supplies, excluding book bags and headphones, will be provided this school year. Please wait to purchase these headphones until you have talked to your child's teacher at open house, especially at the elementary grade levels. This change should alleviate stress and minimize the costs for parents at the beginning of the school year. On a final note, the school district will be reviewing and completing our five-year strategic plan this fall. This kick-off meeting will occur on Thursday, November 21st from 6:00-7:30PM in the Commons. We encourage all community members to take part in this important process.

If you have any questions or concerns throughout the school year, I can be reached at [rmaier@hardinhouston.org](mailto:rmaier@hardinhouston.org) or at 295-3010 ext. 3001. The district will continue to use our school website to communicate with our community, in addition to our two X accounts @hhlocalschool and @HHWildcats. I am looking forward to a great school year and hope you are as well.

As always- GO WILDCATS!

Ryan Maier, Superintendent



## Important Dates:

- Aug 8** Fee Pay Day- 7:00AM-7:00PM;  
9th grade orientation-6:00PM Commons;  
7th grade orientation- 6:30PM Commons
- Aug 13** Open House- 5:00-7:00PM  
5th grade orientation- 6:00PM  
Auxiliary Gym
- Aug 16** First student day grades 1-12 & KDG (last name A-M only)
- Aug 19** First day for KDG (last name N-Z only)
- Aug 20** First day for all KDG
- Aug 30** Student/Staff Safety Training Day (2 hr. early dismissal)
- Sep 2** No school- Labor Day
- Oct 18** No school- professional development for staff
- Nov 12** JH/HS Band Concert
- Nov 15** Meet the Team Night
- Dec 23** Start of Christmas Break
- Jan 6** First day back!
- Jan 17** Homecoming Festivities/Game



## Elementary Principal's Message

### - Mrs. Sara Roseberry

The 2024-2025 school year is quickly approaching. I hope everyone had a summer filled with the blessings of fun, relaxation, and family. I am very excited to have our school family come together again for an outstanding year of growth and learning.

We will have a few new faces this year. Lexi Schmiesing will join us as an additional Intervention Specialist. She was a graduate of Jackson Center and a recent graduate of Wright State University. She is excited to begin her career at Hardin-Houston. Additionally, we have a new teacher's aide/ substitute teacher joining us. Corynna Rutter-Wisen most recently worked for Russia Local School. She has 2 boys in the building and is happy to join us. They will both be valuable additions to our excellent team of educators.

There will be a required 5th grade orientation to address our 1:1 technology program on the evening of Open House. It will take place in the auxiliary gym at 6:00 p.m. on August 13. Third grade meetings will be held at 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on August 8 in the 3rd grade classrooms. This meeting is important so that you can learn about the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

Our Building Leadership Team has been brainstorming ideas to both motivate and celebrate our students this year, and our amazing PTO always works tirelessly for the students' benefit. We have amazing kids. This will be a year to help them learn to maximize their abilities and continue their journeys toward greatness.

Enjoy the last few weeks of summer. We look forward to seeing you at Open House!

## Busing Information

As in past years, transportation information can be obtained at the Open House on Tuesday, August 13th in the Commons. To help alleviate some first day jitters, parents and students are invited to the back bus parking lot to meet their child's bus driver and walk through their bus. Please call the transportation office if you are new to the area or if you have had a change of address over the summer. We would be happy to assist you!

*Becky Heitman, Secretary to the Superintendent  
Transportation Coordinator  
937-295-3010 ext. 3000*

## Fee Pay Day/ 7th & 9th grade orientation

Houston High School will again host a Fee Pay Day on August 8th from 7am - 7pm. We look forward to seeing you. Also on August 8th, Mrs. Merickel and Mr. Judy will host 7th grade and freshman orientation in the Commons. Freshman orientation will begin at 6:00pm followed by 7th grade orientation at 6:30pm.

## Full-Time Flex Custodian

The school district has a full time custodian position available for immediate employment. This position includes a competitive compensation package including family health insurance and a defined retirement pension program. Please email Ryan Maier, Hardin-Houston superintendent at [rmaier@hardinhouston.org](mailto:rmaier@hardinhouston.org) if interested.

## Substitute Bus Drivers/Substitute Cooks/ Substitute Custodians/Substitute Aides

Hardin-Houston Local School is actively looking for caring and dedicated individuals to fill substitute positions within the school system. There is an immediate need to fill positions, as well as a need to fill anticipated openings in the near future. Please call the superintendent's office for more information.

## Closings & Delays

In the event of inclement weather or other school emergencies, the district will use The Education Connection (TEC) and X (formerly Twitter) to notify parents and guardians of delays or closings.

## Neola 9160 Handicap Access Disclaimer

This notice is available for anyone who is interested in attending a Hardin-Houston event who may require one or more accommodations. In accordance with State and Federal Law, the District will provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities who wish to attend and/or participate in school events. Such individuals should notify the principal/athletic director if they require a reasonable accommodation.

## Hardin-Houston Open House

On Tuesday, August 13th from 5:00-7:00pm the school district will have its traditional open house for you and your child to meet their teachers and bus driver. The PTO will once again have the Big Susie's Ice Cream truck by the front entrance providing free ice cream for all H-H PS-6 grade students. The ice cream truck will also be open to any other family members wanting to purchase ice cream. In addition, on the way out of the building, stop and grab a free hotdog for the entire family.

## First Day of School

August 16 ALL students in grades 1-12 & KDG  
(last name A-M only)

August 19 First Day for KDG (last name N-Z only)

## Lunch Prices for 2024-2025

The Hardin-Houston School District will follow the same lunch prices that were in place last year. As in the past, JH & HS students must use their online lunch account for Coffee Bar and ala Carte items. Free and reduced applications need to be filled out this year and are available in the Principal's Office. Children from families whose annual income is at or below the federal guidelines are eligible for free and reduced price meals and school fee waivers.

## Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

According to the Every Student Succeeds Act, districts having Title 1 programs must annually notify parents of their right to request information regarding professionals and paraprofessional qualifications in the building.

Parents may request professional and paraprofessional qualifications of Hardin Houston Elementary School personnel criteria for your child's grade level and subject area being taught including:

- *If the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade level and subject areas in which they are teaching*
- *If the teacher is teaching under emergency or temporary status in which Ohio qualifications or licensing criteria are currently waived*
- *The teacher's baccalaureate degree major, graduate certification, and field of discipline*
- *Whether the student is provided services by a paraprofessional, and if so, his/her qualifications*



## JH/HS Principal's Message - Mr. Jeff Judy

I hope that everyone had a safe, and relaxing summer break. We are excited to welcome students back for the 2024-2025 school year.

This school year will bring a continuation of a few initiatives and the introduction of some important changes. First, we will continue our 1:1 Chromebook initiative. We are

beginning year 3 and will again be providing our 9th graders with a Chromebook at the beginning of the year. This will mean that students in grades 7th (received in 5th grade), 9th, 10th, and 11th grade will all have a computer that has been issued to them. Second, the district will begin providing essential classroom supplies to all students. This will hopefully relieve some of the financial strain that back to school shopping can create. More information on this initiative will be shared by Mr. Maier. Third, students will no longer be issued a student planner. As a result, students and parents will access the Student Handbook from the school website. The handbook can be found under the School Information - Houston High School tab. Finally, beginning with this year's Freshman class, the class of 2028, we will transition away from the current valedictorian/salutatorian model and begin the implementation of the Latin Honors model of commencement recognition. This Board approved measure is outlined in the Student Handbook (pg. 13), and additional information regarding this change will be shared at Freshman Orientation on August 8th.

The administration, teachers, and staff at Houston High School look forward to a successful school year. We will always be committed to providing our students with a safe learning environment that challenges our students to meet their potential. In addition, we are committed to creating meaningful partnerships between students, parents, and school personnel. Please reach out to your child's teachers with questions or concerns. The staff directory on our school website contains the email addresses of all staff members. I can always be reached by phone (937-295-3010 Ext. 2001) or email (jjudy@hardinhouston.org) and will be more than happy to help in any way that I can. Finally, please access important information from our school website, X accounts, and the Education Connection system.

Respect, success, and pride - that is the Wildcat Way!

Mr. Judy

## Junior Class Chicken Dinner Sales Coming Soon!

The Junior Class will once again be selling chicken dinners to raise money for Prom. Dinners will be available for pick up at the high school on Friday, October 11th. Juniors will begin selling presale tickets in early September. Dinner includes ½ chicken, chips, applesauce and a roll. Please see a Junior for tickets, or contact Gina Maier, gmaier@hardinhouston.org or Tina Mertz tmertz@hardinhouston.org to reserve your tickets today! Contact information about chicken dinner sales will also be on the school website in early September. Thank you in advance for supporting the Junior class.



## FCCLA National Leadership Conference

Over the summer, one member of the Houston Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) chapter, along with adviser, Mrs. Abby Pleiman, had the opportunity to attend and compete in various competitive events, known as STAR Events, at the FCCLA National Conference held in Seattle, Washington.



Sophia Waesch competed in the Chapter Service Project Portfolio event.

This event recognizes chapters that develop and implement an in depth service project that makes a worthwhile contribution to families, schools, and communities. Students must use Family and Consumer Sciences content and skills to address and take action on a community need. Sophia organized a Miracle Minute held last winter to help fellow classmate, Dustin Strunk, with his battle with cancer. Sophia was able to raise over \$5,000 for Dustin and his battle. Sophia received a Gold rating at regionals and received a Gold rating and 2nd place at the state competition, which qualified her for the national competition. At Nationals, Sophia received another gold rating and placed 11th out of 45 entries.

Sophia also started her officer position as Ohio FCCLA State Secretary for the 2024-2025 school year. She is one of 10 student leaders that will lead our state chapter in helping organize and carry out various state sponsored events this school year!

We would like to thank everyone in our community for all their support and help to make these opportunities available to our students!

## Hello Wildcats!

My name is Karri Sherman, and I am the new Ag Teacher and FFA Advisor here at Houston. Just a little bit about myself, my husband and I have been married for nine years and have two adorable little girls ages six and three. When I am not at work or spending time with my family, I enjoy baking and sewing. I am really looking forward to working with everyone in the community and continuing to grow the Houston FFA Chapter.

Houston FFA is gearing up for another awesome year! Several members just finished up at the Shelby County Fair with several having many successes in the areas of shop and crop and showing their livestock projects. Officers are hard at work making plans for the annual Fall Fest set for Friday, September 27th.

## High School New Staff

**Karri Sherman** will join the High School staff as the Agricultural Education teacher and FFA Advisor. Mrs. Sherman has spent the last 10 years at Greenville HS in a similar role. We are excited to add her experience and skill as the leader of our Ag. and FFA programs.

**Marissa Pollock** will join our staff as a JH science teacher. Mrs. Pollock is a recent graduate of The Ohio State University and will bring a fresh perspective to our excellent science department. We look forward to seeing her grow as a member of the HHS staff.

I encourage students and parents to come to open house to meet and greet our new teachers.

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Jason Shaffer, Vice President  
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The CAT CHAT is published and distributed two times a year by Hardin-Houston School for the purpose of keeping district residents informed.

#### Neola 9160 Handicap Access Disclaimer

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\*The Hardin-Houston Local School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, color, religion, national origin, handicap, or age in its education, activities, admissions, or employment policies as required by Title IX of Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Executive Order 11244 and all its amendments.

Any violations of this policy should be referred to the Civil Rights Officer for Hardin-Houston Local School District, Superintendent Ryan Maier, (937) 295-3010 ext. 3001.

## RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER



### Athletic Department

#### Mr. Craig Knouff - Athletic Director / Asst. K-12 Principal

Parents and athletes, it is my hope that each of you have been able to enjoy your summer break. I look forward to seeing all of you on August 13th for our Open House. Until then, there are a couple of important dates to keep in mind. On August 1, the fall sports season officially begins. Therefore, please confirm your OHSAA pre-participation physical is up-to-date, as we begin the season. By OHSAA qualifications, physicals are good for thirteen months and then must be renewed. Furthermore, students and parents, remember to login into your Final Forms accounts. There is necessary OHSAA preseason material in your account that must be reviewed prior to the official start of a school sponsored sport. If this

is not accomplished by both the parent and student, the athlete is not eligible to participate in their chosen sport.

Houston students will have the opportunity to purchase a Houston High School Athletic t-shirt again this year. The fee to purchase the shirt will be \$25. As in previous years, the purchase of the t-shirt allows Houston students to enter any home athletic event for \$1, as long as they are wearing any Houston shirt to the event. In addition, athletic passes can be purchased at the front office. The fee for a student pass is \$50 and an adult pass will be \$100. The Golden Wildcat pass will be available free to any Houston resident 65 years or older.

Home athletic events will be broadcast through the NFHS Network system. A subscription must be purchased to view the games. The cost of an annual subscription is \$79.99 and a monthly subscription is \$11.99. To get your subscription visit [nfhsnetwork.com/subscribe/retail](https://nfhsnetwork.com/subscribe/retail). With each subscription the Houston Athletic Department receives a portion of the fee.

The athletic department has been looking for a better option for streaming home games, due to being in our final contract year with NFHS. During this transition, all sporting events held in the high school gym will also be broadcast over Hudl TV. Games can be accessed through <https://fan.hudl.com/usa/oh/houston/organization/65309/houston-high-school>. An annual subscription will be \$80; a monthly subscription will be \$15 or individual games may be purchased for \$5. Sixty percent of all funds generated through Hudl will go directly back to the athletic department. Additionally, a camera will be installed in the Auxiliary gym for the 2025-2026 athletic season which will allow the streaming of JH games through Hudl TV as well!

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize Emilee Earl. Emilee qualified to the state track meet in three separate events: pole vault, shot put and discus. At the state meet Emilee placed 16th in the discus, 15th in the shot put and 9th in pole vault. The athletic department and Houston High School would like to congratulate her on an incredible season.

I look forward to seeing all athletes, parents and Wildcat fans during this 2024-2025 athletic year.