



# Cat Chat

Hardin-Houston Local School

February 2025

## News from the Superintendent's Office!



As you will soon see, the vast majority of the February Chat Cat will be spent showcasing our amazingly talented Wildcat students, which occurred the first half of the 24-25 school year. In addition, you will find the district's updated 5-year strategic plan within this February edition; it can also be viewed on the school website. Approximately twenty-five community and staff members participated in the very important endeavor, which charts out the course the district will take during the next five years in following three areas: academics, community, and facilities. Lastly, I would also remind our community members to access our district website and X for all school related news and student accomplishments.

As always 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. Enjoy the February Cat Chat edition.

Go Wildcats!  
Ryan Maier, Superintendent

## 2025 Homecoming

The 2025 Homecoming Band Show and Crowning Ceremony were held on Friday, January 17th. Congratulations to King Paul Samera and Queen Mekayla Pleiman!

"Under the Sea" was the theme for the homecoming dance that was held on Saturday, at the Houston High School Commons. All homecoming activities were organized and sponsored by the HHS Student Council.



*Pictured (L-R) are: Senior court members: Lucas Mohler, Sara Loraine, Reagan Steiner, and Addie Mowery; King Paul Samera and Queen Mekayla Pleiman; 2024 King and Queen Rusty Vondenhuevel and Kayla Winner; Junior attendants: Joseph Mohler and Malaiya Gross; Sophomore attendants; Cooper Echols and Megan South; and Freshmen attendants; Davis Burks and Carmen Beaver. Front row: Second grade; Crown Bearers were Weston Schutz and Aubrey Siegel.*

## Just Write

After months of practice, Houston's Just Write teams travelled to Xenia to compete in their creative writing competition. The division one team included Zane Hina, Kaelyn Richardson, Emma Koenig, Bentleigh Willingham, Lacey Naseman and Elizabeth Fogt. The division two team included Dylan Shaffer, Lylah Kennedy, Cadence DeLong, Malaiya Gross, Bera Sliter and Lilly Detrick.

The competition involved three rounds of writing. In each round, students were given a prompt and a genre to build a story around. They had 45 minutes to write this story and were evaluated on how well they matched the genre, how creatively they incorporated the prompt as well as story elements, description and grammar. While the final results determining who will attend state on May 20, 2025 will not be available for two weeks, Lylah Kennedy is guaranteed a spot as she placed 5th overall for her division. Congratulations to all of our writers!



## Elementary Principal's Message - Mrs. Sara Roseberry

We are now well into the 3rd quarter of this school year. It is amazing how fast time flies!

State testing is just ahead of us. The dates are posted here for your reference. Please make every attempt to ensure your child's

attendance on test days. Students perform much better when they test with their teachers and their classmates. The dates are as follows:

- 4th grade ELA - 3/31 and 4/2
- 5th grade ELA - 4/1 and 4/3
- 6th grade ELA - 4/4 and 4/8
- 3rd grade ELA - 4/7 and 4/9
- 4th grade math - 4/22 and 4/24
- 5th grade math - 4/23 and 4/25
- 6th grade math - 4/28 and 4/30
- 3rd grade math - 4/29 and 5/1
- 5th grade science - 4/30 and 5/1

Another important event coming up is kindergarten screening. Screening will take place here on 3/6 and 3/7. Thirty minute appointments can be scheduled on our website or by calling the school. If you know anyone with a child who will turn 5 by 8/1/2025, please let them know about this important event.

We have a lot of work and many fun activities planned for the 2nd half of the year. As always, please contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

## Spelling Bee

Hardin-Houston Local School held the Spelling Bee on Wednesday, December 18th. Alexis Rust, 7th grader, won the bee after spelling the words committee and linoleum correctly to emerge victorious after 19 rounds. First runner-up was 7th grader Dominic Richardson. The next level of competition will be the Lima Regional Spelling Bee in March.



Spelling bee winner Alexis Rust (right) with 1st runner up Dominic Richardson.

## Philip S. Abbott Junior Honor Society

On Wednesday, December 4th, the Philip S. Abbott Junior Honor Society membership held an induction of new members. The induction ceremonies were conducted by current members: Amber Young, Autumn Wilkins-Bunnell, Ben Coy, Brylee Breeze, Carmen Beaver, Claire Rust, Elizabeth Fogt, Emma Koenig, Gabriella Harding, Hailey Ewing, Hannah Ostendorf, Jackie Earl, Kaelyn Richardson, Kenleigh Nation, Kylie Price, Lacey Naseman, Laney White, Madison Plunkett, Maison Epley, Morgan Allen, Olivia Maier, Sophie Campbell, Trenton Hartings, Xander McCorkle, Zoey Kinsella. The newly inducted freshman members included Ava Mowery, Blake Heitman, Maison Epley, Quinten Delong, Jaycie Seipel, and Gemma Mummey. Newly inducted eighth graders were Alex Ginn, Jayden Pleiman, Vera Kelly, Rylinn Bruner, Claire Holscher, Lillian Niswonger, Teagan Rauch, Taylor Wagner, Aubrey Deppen, Leigha Larger, Mekenna Slay.



Congratulations to all the new members and their families. The Philip S. Abbott Junior Honor Society is advised by Mrs. Danielle Poepelman.



## Power of the Pen

Congratulations to the 7th and 8th grade Power of the Pen writing teams who BOTH took 1st place at the District Tournament on Saturday, January 25, 2025, in Coldwater, Ohio.

Individual medal winners were:

### 7th grade:

1st place Harlow Bonnoront  
4th place Landon Heitman  
5th place Alexis Rust  
11th place Paisley McDermit

### 8th grade:

1st place Teagan Rauch  
3rd place Claire Holscher  
5th place Taylor Wagner  
11th place Kayson Hines

Other team members contributing to the top place scores are: Cambrynn Rauch, Jack Walker, Vera Kelley, and Ava Widmark. Mrs. Paulus and Mrs. McClurg coach the teams.



*The 7th grade team proudly showing off their awards with Mrs. Paulus.*



*The 8th grade team proudly showing off their awards with Mrs. McClurg.*



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

The Houston High School community has much to celebrate as we reflect on an outstanding first semester. From academic achievements to special recognitions, our students have demonstrated exceptional dedication and commitment to excellence. Below are just a few of the highlights.

We are thrilled to recognize 17 students who have been inducted into the prestigious Philip S. Abbott Junior National Honor Society. This includes 11 8th graders and 6 freshmen who have displayed exemplary academic performance and leadership qualities. In addition, 20 outstanding students have earned the honor of being inducted into the National Honor Society. This achievement underscores their commitment to scholarship, service, leadership, and character—the core pillars of the NHS.

The first semester also showcased the academic success of our student body, with an impressive number of students achieving honor roll status:

- First Nine Weeks: 228 students in grades 7 through 12 were recognized for their hard work and academic excellence.
- Second Nine Weeks: 204 students achieved honor roll status, continuing their dedication to maintaining high academic standards.

These achievements are a testament to the students' resilience and determination, as well as the support provided by our dedicated teachers, staff, and families.

As we move into the second semester, we are excited to build on this momentum and continue celebrating the successes of our students. Congratulations to all of our students on a fantastic first semester! We look forward to seeing what you accomplish next.

During the second semester, there will be many important events that will occur. One important event for parents and students to be aware of is State Testing. Students will be tested in the areas of English Language Arts, Science, Math, and Social Studies. Testing will begin the first week of April and conclude the first week of May. It is vitally important that our students do their very best so that their content knowledge is accurately represented. As we approach testing season more specific information will be made available.

Visit our school website at <http://hardinhouston.org/> for updates on these and other items of interest. Please continue to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at 937-295-3010 ext. 2001 or [jjudy@hardinhouston.org](mailto:jjudy@hardinhouston.org).



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

Dear Fellow Wildcats,  
The conclusion of our Fall Sports season brings the opportunity to highlight several remarkable

accomplishments for our athletes and teams.

First, our high school girls' volleyball team came together and played their best matches of the year as they entered tournament play. In the District Quarterfinals, they defeated Franklin Monroe in four games, advancing to the District Semifinals to face Tri-Village. Once again, the Wildcats played an outstanding match, securing a 4-game victory. This win propelled them to the District Finals, where they earned the District Runner-up title, falling to the Anna Rockets. A key contributor to this success was Lexi Hartings, whose outstanding season play earned her a spot on the SCAL All-League Honorable Mention. Additionally, Lauryn Crim set a new school record for assists in a season with an impressive total of 525.

Tanner Voisard of the varsity golf team also had an exceptional performance. Tanner finished third at the SCAL Golf Match, which earned him a First Team All-SCAL honors. Tanner went on to shoot a 79 during the Sectional Golf Tournament, just one stroke shy of a playoff opportunity to move on to the District Match. Another key highlight of the golf season was, Tanner Voisard, Reagan Steiner, Luke Crim and Bryce Lukey tying the 9-Hole Team Record shooting a total of 159. The record was initially set back in 2021.

The cross-country team had another strong season, highlighted by Ava Mowery's impressive performance. At the Shelby County Athletic Meet, Ava placed fifth, earning a spot on the SCAL All-League First Team. In the District Cross Country Championship, Ava finished 23rd, which qualified her for the Regional Championship, where she placed 38th.

Looking ahead, as our basketball season wraps up and teams prepare for tournament play, I want to wish all of our teams the best of luck in their upcoming matches. Additionally, good luck to our baseball, softball, and track teams as they head into the Spring season.

Go Wildcats!

## Food Drive

The National Honor Society coordinated the Thanksgiving Food Drive again this year. Thanks to the generosity of our entire Pre-K-12 student body, parents, and staff, it was another successful drive! All items were donated to the Houston Congregational Church's Food Pantry and dropped off by NHS members.



(L-R) Cadence DeLong, Seth Merickel, Dylan Shaffer, Mekayla Pleiman, Addie Mowery, Lexi Hartings, Cheyenne Stangel, and Paul Samera.

## Jr. High Robotics

Congratulations to our Jr. High Robotics Team for their performance so far this season. The team consisting of 7th graders Alexis Rust, Kelseigh Hughes, Aria New, Harlow Bonnoront, and Cambrynn Rauch, competed January 28th at the First Lego League Newark Regional Qualifier and came in 1st in Robot Design and 2nd in the Robot Games portion of the competition. They advanced to the Central Ohio District Qualifier scheduled for February 8th in Newark, OH. They have worked hard over the past few months and look forward to the opportunity to share their presentations and compete with their robot.



Junior High Robotics Team.



## National Honor Society



The National Honor Society held their annual induction ceremony in October. New inductees are: First row (L-R): Mya Lentz, Aubrey Johnston, Kinzy Westfall, Shayna Bulcher, Skylar Bone, Lauren Maier, Lauryn Crim, Olivia Burks, Makenna Vondenhuevel, Keaton Turner, and Cali Gordon. Second Row (L-R): Lylah Kennedy, Cadence DeLong, Madison Garrett, Paul Samera, Trace Nishwitz, Skylar Bowman, Ryleigh Hughes, Seth Merickel, and Sara Loraine.

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## Wildcat Band News

The Wildcat Band had a successful fall performing at Shelby County Fair, Shelby County Band Combined Performance, Fort Loramie Fall Festival, Bradford Pumpkin Show, Fall Concert and the Veteran's Day. In December, 28 alumni joined the pep band at our Christmas game. At the start of the new year, band students performed their homecoming show ahead of the crowning ceremony. Six students (Cadence DeLong, Jasmine Diehl, Alexis West, Bera Sliter, Lilly Detrick, and Amber Young) participated in the District 11 Solo and Ensemble competition on January 18th. These students received three excellent ratings. The HS Band will also be participating at the OMEA District Contest on March 7th at Versailles High School. Additionally, all music ensembles (5th Grade Band, 6th Grade Band, Jr. High Band, 7-12 Choir, Jazz Band, and High School Band) look forward to performing at the spring concert on April 15th.



Alumni Pep Band Night!



## Houston FFA Happenings



The Houston FFA Chapter has been busy the first half of the year with several events and contests completed. Here are just a few of the highlights we've had so far this year.

- ❖ Competed in the district soils contest and placed 16th overall with Hailey McCorkle being the high scorer for the team.
- ❖ At the end of October, 11 students attended the National FFA Convention where the chapter was recognized as a three-star chapter (the highest rating a chapter can receive), watched graduate Gabe Dershem, walk across stage and be recognized as a National Proficiency Finalist (only 4 in the nation) and celebrated as graduate Alex Kellersmith walked across stage Saturday to receive his American FFA Degree, the highest degree a member can be awarded from the organization.
- ❖ Officers held an appreciation breakfast for the staff during American Education Week in November before school.

- ❖ Two students were selected to receive a free FFA Jacket from the Ohio FFA Blue Jacket program with a total of 23 students purchasing a blue jacket this year!
- ❖ Food Science team competed at the District contest in January and placed 9th with Kaia Kellersmith being the high scorer for the team.

As we make our way into the second semester of the school year the chapter has several activities and contests coming up. Below are just a few of the upcoming events.

- ❖ Secretary, Treasurer and Reporter are hard at work preparing officer books for the upcoming district evaluations.
- ❖ Spring Career Development Event contests are starting up and several students are making plans to participate in General Livestock, Meats, Equine, Poultry, Ag Sales, Public Speaking and Floriculture to name a few.
- ❖ The Business Management classes are putting together businesses in class to make items to sell during lunches and the upcoming greenhouse sales as well. Make sure to keep an eye on our Facebook page to know when and what these classes are going to be selling.
- ❖ State FFA Convention and the annual chapter banquet will be held in May to recognize student and chapter accomplishments at the state and local levels.
- ❖ Greenhouse Sales are coming - it will be open Thursday through Saturday at the end of April and the start of May. Back again are the mulch sales and 'design your own' pot/hanging basket.



## FCCLA News

FCCLA has had a busy fall attending various leadership events. In October, we had two members attend the FCCLA Leadership Training Camp where they completed various leadership and team building activities. In November, 12 members attended the FCCLA District Meeting to learn more about FCCLA and what it all has to offer. Finally, in December members had the opportunity to attend the FCCLA Career Day with the Columbus Blue Jackets. Members were able to skate on the ice, hear from a panel of speakers about the different careers in the organization, and complete a traffic safety activity. We then stayed to watch the Blue Jackets take on the Washington Capitals that evening! Follow Houston FCCLA on Facebook and Instagram to stay up-to-date on our upcoming events!



# ACADEMICS 2025

## Action Plan / Cost Benefit Analysis

### Goal: Potential Pre-K/Preschool offering

Action Planned	Assigned To:	Target Date	Completed Date
1. Continue to collect data to determine community interest in a school operated preschool program. -Consider options for ½ day and full day program. -Evaluate transportation options for students. 2. Develop our own preschool curriculum that aligns to our district curriculum and goals. 3. Continue our relationship with Shelby County Developmental Disabilities. 4. Analysis of available space for the addition of preschool classrooms.	District administrative team - monitor progress, collect data  Primary teachers - development of curriculum	Data collected 2025 - 2027 (process began in 2024)  Possible expansion planned & developed by 2027  Possible program expansion 2030	2030 (ongoing if necessary)
<b>Costs to the District</b>		<b>Benefits to the District</b>	
TBD Considerations: addition or realignment of staff, expansion of building, curriculum development, transportation.		1. Parents become exposed, involved, and invested in the district earlier. 2. Increased academic achievement. 3. Early student exposure to routines and socialization. 4. Growth in overall district enrollment. 5. Students have fundamental skills that will help them be successful in the primary grades and beyond.	

### Goal: Increase opportunities for juniors/seniors within the school district

Action Planned	Assigned To:	Target Date	Completed Date
1. Evaluate current course offerings in an effort to expand course offerings if possible: -CCP (College Credit Plus). -Upper level courses on campus for those that may or may not have the goal of attending college. 2. Explore the possibility of creating a pre-apprenticeship/internship/work-study program for juniors and seniors.	High school principal and school counselor	Collect data and analyze course offerings 2025-2027  Implement new programs 2027-2030	2030 Ongoing
<b>Costs to the District</b>		<b>Benefits to the District</b>	
TBD		1. Increase numbers across our academic programs. - CCP, Band. 2. Target preparation of students: -Help students become career ready. 3. Create a controlled, safe, and focused environment for students. 4. Build/regain the student leadership from our junior and senior students.	

### Goal: Continue to pursue vertical alignment of curriculum

Action Planned	Assigned To:	Target Date	Completed Date
-Expand our partnership with Workforce Partnership of Shelby Co. 3. Collect student survey data. 4. Explore opportunities for more students to obtain their driver's license.			
<b>Costs to the District</b>		<b>Benefits to the District</b>	
TBD		1. Increase numbers across our academic programs. - CCP, Band. 2. Target preparation of students: -Help students become career ready. 3. Create a controlled, safe, and focused environment for students. 4. Build/regain the student leadership from our junior and senior students.	

### Goal: Complete the current 1:1 Chromebook initiative

Action Planned	Assigned To:	Target Date	Completed Date
1. Complete 1:1 for grades 5 - 12. 2. Analyze existing curriculum resources. 3. Research available digital resources to determine the impact that they may have on student learning. -Resources that connect teacher and student. 4. Transition teachers away from Smart® Notebook software. 5. Replace teacher symposiums with alternative device (ex. Surface Pro).	District administrative team - monitor progress, collect data  Classroom teachers - research available/potential curriculum resources	The 1:1 initiative will be completed (fully implemented) during the 2025-2026 school year  Analysis of digital curriculum resources 2025-2030	The 1:1 initiative will be completed (fully implemented) during the 2025-2026 school year  Evaluation of curriculum resources will be ongoing - 2030
<b>Costs to the District</b>		<b>Benefits to the District</b>	
1. Ongoing 1:1 device cost. 2. Cost of digital curriculum resources. 3. Cost for replacement/updates to teacher devices.		1. Maximize district investment of 1:1 - technology enhanced learning. 2. Improve grade level testing (State Test preparation). 3. Support all students - IEP and regular education. 4. Enrich existing curriculum in all grade level disciplines.	

# FACILITY

## Action Plan / Cost Benefit Analysis

### Goal: Additional Athletic Complex Parking Lot/Renovate Field

Action Planned	Assigned To:	Target Date	Completed Date
Design and construct an athletic complex parking lot that will accommodate approximately 110 vehicles. Design and construct 4-5 material bins to store dirt/stoner/trick dust. Renovate and add drainage to the playing surface of field #1.	Supt./Treasurer	Summer 2025	
<b>Costs to the District</b>		<b>Benefits to the District</b>	
\$400,000-\$450,000		Provides the appropriate parking/walking surfaces and spaces to accommodate visitors to the athletic complex. The field renovation minimizes the current safety erosion issues, minimizes rain-outs that currently exists so kids can play when the weather is not optimal in the spring, and helps with drainage issues on this section of the property.	

### Goal: Replace the high school gymnasium floor

Action Planned	Assigned To:	Target Date	Completed Date
Remove and replace the high school gym floor including adding floor box outlets for scores tables.	Supt./Treasurer/Maint. Supervisor/Athletic Director	Summer of 2027 or 2028	
<b>Costs to the District</b>		<b>Benefits to the District</b>	
Unknown at this time. (Estimated to be around \$400,000)		Allows for our student athletes to play on a safe playing surface. Eliminates the annual need to replace split or broken boards due to end of life.	

### Goal: Renovate/retro the Media Center & Flexible Classroom Seating

Action Planned	Assigned To:	Target Date	Completed Date
Remove the set of computer spots in the middle of the media center. Replace this area with furniture/charging stations for students to use with the 1-1 Chromebooks. Add/replace classroom chairs, desks, tables to optimize unique student learning styles.	Supt./Treasurer/ Principals/Technology Director/Media Specialist/Dir. of Student Services	Summer 2026	TBA
<b>Costs to the District</b>		<b>Benefits to the District</b>	
\$150,000-\$200,000		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows for a more user friendly environment for students working on small group projects.</li> <li>Allows for charging or docking stations for student's Chromebooks.</li> <li>Specialized seats &amp; tables will enhance the student's learning environment based upon their individual learning needs.</li> </ul>	

### Goal: Addition of academic & athletic spaces

Action Planned	Assigned To:	Target Date	Completed Date
Addition of: Specialized (special education and pre-school) academic classrooms; HS gym locker rooms/coaches offices/athletic storage; Weightroom; Athletic trainer room; Multi-purpose gymnasium which includes a batting cage and golf simulator.	B.O.E./Supt./Treasurer/ Principals/Athletic Director	TBA	TBA
<b>Costs to the District</b>		<b>Benefits to the District</b>	
Unknown		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based upon previous and future surveys, this will allow the district's students to be ready for kindergarten academically and socially.</li> <li>Provides needed sensory and therapy classrooms for identified students based upon their individual needs.</li> <li>Additional locker rooms will provide a buffer for athletes and the general public during athletic contests which will enhance safety and reduce congestion.</li> <li>The weight room will accommodate the sheer number of student-athletes, which is not possible in our current weight room.</li> <li>Provides shared spaces (weight room &amp; multi-purpose gym) for the community to use when not being used by our students.</li> <li>Multi-purpose gym can be used during the day. Examples: Large group testing, inside elementary recess, etc.</li> </ul>	

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 Houston, OH 45333 Brian Helman, Vice President  
 937-295-3010 Bill Clark  
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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**

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.

\*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

**COMMUNITY 2025**

**Action Plan / Cost Benefit Analysis**

**Goal: Positive Outreach**

Action Planned	Assigned To:	Target Date	Completed Date
Info Phone Bank; info postings; Literacy Night with adult employment	Student Groups/IT/ Assigned Staff Members	2025-2026	Ongoing
<b>Costs to the District</b>		<b>Benefits to the District</b>	
Additional lines in TEC, flat screen, printing, snacks, craft supplies		Community pride, assisting families	
<b>Explanation</b> Additional phone bank created. Interested parties can sign up to receive announcements on events, fundraisers, positive happenings. Flat screen in the connector scrolling happenings. Graduates info on commons screens.		Have Literacy Night with student groups supervising students. At the same time, adults can receive assistance on job applications, resumes, etc.	

**Goal: Growing School Spirit**

Action Planned	Assigned To:	Target Date	Completed Date
Expand student and community school spirit	Staff/Principals/AD FFA (Shop)/Parents of Athletes	2025-2026	Ongoing
<b>Costs to the District</b>		<b>Benefits to the District</b>	
Lumber for signs (Athletic Boosters to help)		More school pride, community awareness of happenings	
<b>Explanation</b> Invite the community to donate gently used HHS attire that can be offered to students and adults for free. Students on sports teams receive a sign that they turn in each year. Signs are placed in the school yard during the tournament season, and students keep after their senior year.			

**Important Dates:**

**February 28/March 1**  
Spring Play

**March 6 & 7**  
Kindergarten Screening

**April 5**  
Prom at the Oaks Club

**April 15**  
JH/HS Art Show & Band Concert

**April 18-21**  
Spring Break

**May 16**  
Last student day

**May 18**  
Graduation- 2:00PM