

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HORICON

Home of the Marshmen

2017 State of the School District Address

Rich Appel, Horicon District Administrator

Good evening, I'd like to share with you all the state of affairs for the School District of Horicon as to what has occurred this past year and what the plans are for its immediate and long term future.

The School District of Horicon has remained fiscally responsible as we work to provide opportunities for our students to grow and excel through our curriculum and extracurricular activities. We continue to operate with decreased resources, and increased accountability for students, employees, and school operations. We continue to forge on with a positive approach as we evaluate ourselves, our programs and set goals for continuous improvement.

The start of the 2017-18 school year has been full of energy and excitement. Our future and our students are too important not to. I thank the Board of Education and the community for their trust and support as we work together to find solutions to the problems before us.

As I stated last year, the facilities are in need of major improvement projects as we have made monumental efforts in the past years to maintain and improve our aging buildings. I applaud our maintenance and custodial crew and our staff for their continued efforts to maintain our facilities, however budget limitations have kept us from including much of this work within the normal operating budget.

I anticipate that we will see very little change in our overall tax impact from recent years. Last year's mill rate was 10.09. We are proposing a mill rate of 10.01 for this year. I am recommending that we continue to be fiscally responsible and pay down our debt to better our position for future projects and potential borrowing by the district by utilizing the defeasance process as we did last year.

Our schools are the heartbeat of our community and we have great support from **our stakeholders. With the forming of our Citizens Advisory Committee we have the incredible**

opportunity to help develop the direction of the district that will have a positive impact on our students and community for decades to come. This committee, the school board and our community over the next year has the chance to work together in a collaborative effort developing priorities and goals for the district that will guide us as we move forward with our mission of educating and providing opportunities for all children to grow and share their gifts.

However, not all news is good as programs and opportunities also have been lost due to budget constraints. Some of these include:

1. Gifted and Talented Opportunities.
2. In addition, the loss of students due to School choice is real and we need to address it head on. The district loses approximately 175 students that opt to attend another school district while receiving 40 who choose to attend our district. Declining enrollment continues to impact our district as we appear to be down approximately 11 students for the 3rd Friday count. I will do everything within my power to turn this tide and make Horicon a school district that others seek to attend. In this day in age, when competition is real in terms of school choice we must provide competitive programs that will have students and families wanting to be a part of our programs. To provide programs, opportunities and state of the art facilities come at a cost. Much dialogue and focus is currently taking place by a committed group of citizens who have volunteered to serve on our newly formed Citizens Advisory Committee on how we can improve our district through improving our programs and facilities of our schools. A well orchestrated and detailed plan to accomplish this must accompany this goal. I look forward to being a part of these discussions and plans.

I want to thank our employees for their continued dedication to the children of the School District of Horicon. Their commitment and dedication is evident every day and their efforts to help our students daily find their gifts, makes me proud to be leading this district. The journey and demands of our profession are great, but not nearly as great as the rewards when we see the successes and growth of each child.

I'd like to thank the entire Horicon community for the contributions you have made in keeping the School District of Horicon a great place to raise and educate children. I'm honored and excited to be given the trust and responsibility of the position of being your Superintendent and I give you my pledge to daily do whatever it takes to support the programs, staff and students of this district for their own success.

I am proud to be a Marshmen! Horicon Strong – ONE TEAM! Thank you. I would be happy to entertain questions at this time.