

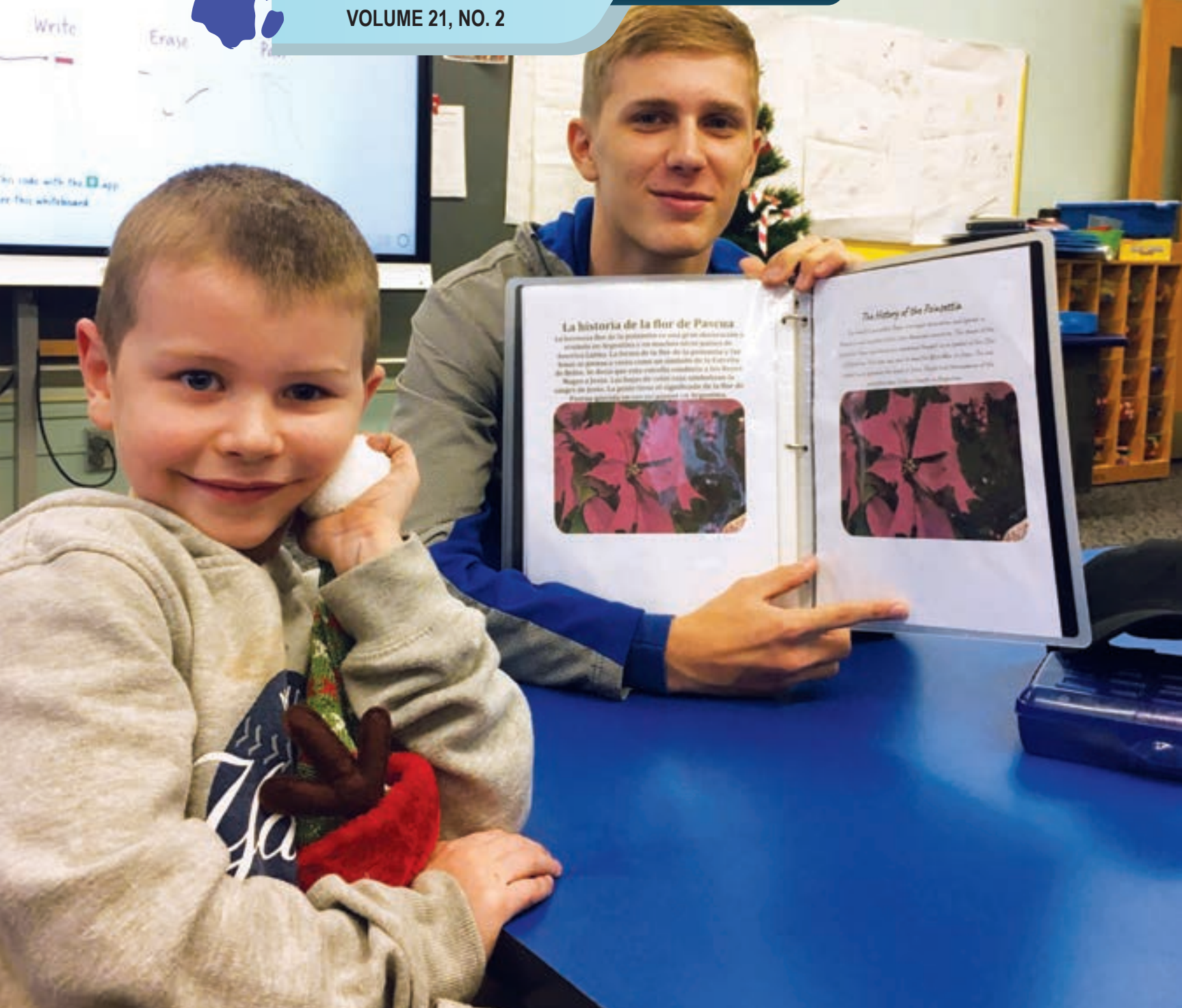
# WILDCAT.

## HANCOCK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

### NEWS

WINTER 2018  
VOLUME 21, NO. 2

[hancock.stier.org](http://hancock.stier.org)



The Wildcat Pledge: We nurture and empower each learner's unlimited capacity to become a responsible citizen with a promising future.  
Our Vision: Striving for excellence as an innovative, advanced and reflective school community.

## Superintendent's Message

Hello, friends. Please accept my warmest wishes for a safe and healthy conclusion to the winter season.


Here at HCS, the Board of Education and I are hard at work preparing the 2018-2019 district budget. From a strategic perspective, our dual charges while undertaking this critically important process are to provide the best, most comprehensive and relevant instructional programs to our students at the most affordable price to our taxpayers. More specifically, our mission statement—the Wildcat Pledge—and our vision statement provide guidance, direction and structure to our decision-making process.

Effectively managing the program efficiency/price affordability balancing act is becoming increasingly difficult with each passing year, given our heavy reliance on New State Aid as a revenue source and the complications posed by the property tax levy limitation cap. That said, the Board and I remain eternally optimistic and we are enthusiastically committed to drafting, and ultimately proposing for voter approval, a cost-effective and comprehensive spending plan dedicated to equipping our students with the requisite skills necessary to realize their full potential in the 21st century.

In closing, recent events in Parkland, Florida, have yet again called increasing attention to the very important topic of school safety. At HCS, we remain deeply committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all of our students, staff and community members on a daily basis. I strongly encourage you to read the, *Keeping our Students and Staff Safe*, segment of this newsletter.

Thank you for your ongoing support and please stay in touch!

Respectfully,

  
Terrance P. Dougherty  
Superintendent of Schools  
[tdougherty@hancock.stier.org](mailto:tdougherty@hancock.stier.org)  
(607) 637-1301

## Keeping Our Students and Staff Safe

Maintaining a healthy, safe and nurturing school program on a daily basis is our top priority at the Hancock Central School District. Each day, our dedicated faculty, staff members and community partners remain diligent and intensely focused on proactively managing a secure learning environment before, during and after school hours.

The following is a comprehensive list of our key school safety strategies.

### DURING SCHOOL HOURS

- **Intercom Door Release System (IDRS):** Limits points of access to both the elementary and middle/high school buildings. This system essentially allows HCS to identify and track visitors and their purposes for entry into the buildings.
- **Security Cameras:** More than 20 security cameras are strategically located throughout the physical plant of the school district.
- **Dignity for All Training:** The district is vigorously implementing anti-bullying training for all staff members.
- **Teacher/Administrator Visibility:** School district administrators and teachers work diligently to maintain high visibility throughout the course of the day—especially at student drop-off, change of period, student dismissal, and after-school events.
- **Lock Out/Down Drills:** As a matter of best practice for school safety, the district regularly schedules and practices lock out/down drills.
- **Incident Command Team:** This highly trained team of school district staff members meets no fewer than six times per year and is charged with coordinating proactive responses and scheduling training simulations to mirror major accident events or threats of violence.
- **Community Policing:** The Hancock Police Department, the Delaware County Sheriff's Office, and the New York State Police have increased their visibility in our school buildings on days when class is in session. In addition, the Hancock Police Department routinely conducts property checks as part of its Property-Check supervision program.

### BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

In addition to the list above, the following systems and strategies are also in place:

- **Enhanced Community Policing:** HCS has worked closely with our community partners from the Hancock Police Department to increase law enforcement presence at key school and community events.
- **Delaware County Sheriff's Office:** The Delaware County Sheriff's Office has increased its visibility on school property before and after school hours.
- **HCS Security Staff:** HCS security staff members and administrators attend nearly all large group co-curricular and community events.
- **Custodial Supervision of School Buildings:** HCS staffs maintenance workers on two shifts to support supervision of school property and grounds.
- **Limited After-School Program Building Access:** To the best extent possible, access to the elementary and middle/high school buildings will be limited and supervised while these programs are in session.

From a future-focused perspective, the District remains deeply committed to collaborating with the Hancock Police Department and the Delaware County Sheriff's Office to secure local and third-party funding sufficient to fund a school-resource



*Community partners dedicated to protecting our kids before, during and after school hours. Thank you Hancock Police Department!*

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officer. Moreover, we remain equally committed to securing local funding and third-party fiscal and human resource and Agency support vital to enhancing our provision of proactive mental health services to our students and community stakeholders.

Most important, we will remain vigilant in quickly investigating any and all threats to the safety and security of all of our stakeholders. Please always encourage your child to report their concerns to HCS staff members or administrators.

Working together, we can have a tremendously positive impact!

Respectfully,  
Terrance P. Dougherty, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



## Graduation Rates Up

The Hancock Central School District is proud to report that its high school graduation rates continue to rise, according to data released earlier this month by the New York State Education Department.

NYSSED statistics show Hancock CSD with a six-year cohort survival rate of 94 percent in 2017, up from 87 percent in 2016 and 86 percent in 2015. This means 94 percent of students who entered Hancock High School as freshmen in 2011 earned diplomas by 2017. The state's average was 85 percent.

Hancock's graduation rate also rose in 2017 for its four-year June cohort, the group of students who follow the traditional path to a June graduation four years after entering high school (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior). Eighty-eight percent of those who started as freshmen in 2013 went on to graduate in June of 2017, up 2 percent from the previous year and 10 percent better than 2015.

"The trend is definitely moving in the right direction, especially for a high needs, rural school district," said Hancock CSD Superintendent Terry Dougherty, whose high school topped the state's average four-year graduation rate in each of the last two years (80 percent both years). "These graduation rates are in line with our mission of nurturing and empowering each learner's unlimited capacity to become a responsible citizen with a promising future, as well as our vision of striving for excellence as an innovative, advanced and reflective school community. We have much to be grateful for and much to celebrate!"

For more information on graduation rates and other data related to the Hancock Central School District, visit the website <https://data.nysed.gov> and type "Hancock" into the search engine at the top-right of the page. For the latest Hancock CSD news, visit our website at [www.hancock.stier.org/hancock](http://www.hancock.stier.org/hancock), like our Facebook page and follow us on Twitter @HCSWildcats.

## The Pathway to a College Degree

Hancock Central School District students can earn up to 60 college credits, and possibly a community college degree, before graduation from high school. This opportunity comes through courses offered by Tompkins Cortland Community College via dual-credit articulations with in-house teachers, the CollegeNow™ program, and distance-learning classes offered in the District's distance-learning lab.

District officials have spent years collaborating with various providers to ensure that the programs would be up and running on the first day of school.

"Pulling this off was a total team effort, but a tremendous amount of credit belongs to the Board of Education, many of our high school teachers and staff, and especially to Brenton Taylor, the Pre-K through 12 Principal," Hancock Superintendent Terry Dougherty said. "Mr. Taylor truly was the driver behind the scenes."

With dual-credit courses, Hancock students have the ability to earn college credits while sitting for locally offered courses taught by high school teachers. CollegeNow™ is an online, self-directed course of study, and distance-learning classes are received by HCS students in a state-of-the-art distance-learning lab on the third floor of the middle/high school building. High school staff members will provide supervision and support in the distance-learning lab.

Although enrollment in some courses carries a nominal per-student fee, partly subsidized by the District's general budget fund, the majority of classes are offered to students for free.

"Our vision is to offer affordable and diverse course offerings through multiple venues in an effort to meet the collective needs of our students and staff," Dougherty said. "Accelerated students—eighth-, ninth-, and 10th-graders who demonstrate a strong desire and motivation to tackle college-level courses—have the best chance of accruing the full 60 hours of college credit over the span of their high school careers."

Dougherty was quick to add that the majority of college credits earned by high school students in Hancock will be transferable to many colleges and universities throughout New York State and Pennsylvania.

"In my opinion, access to affordable higher-education institutions is a pressing civil-rights issue for rural school children," Dougherty said. "With what we are offering, Hancock students will have the ability to start college having earned up to the equivalent of two full years of course credits. The potential cost savings implications are huge."

Dougherty also noted that the District is exploring the possibility of offering adult education and retraining programs for community residents during evening hours.

Dougherty encourages parents and caretakers to consult the District website, [www.hancock.stier.org](http://www.hancock.stier.org), or to call the high school guidance and main office at 637-1306 for additional information, including a comprehensive list of college course offerings.

## Grades 3-8 Assessments

The Hancock Central School District wishes to share the following information to help the community gain a better understanding of Grade 3-8 Assessments and the impact associated with opting out of said state testing.

### TEACHER EVALUATIONS

State assessment tests are not connected to teacher evaluations at this time, but they are crucial in helping teachers gauge student progress. When students don't participate in state assessment testing, this process becomes more difficult as statistics are incomplete and do not represent the school as a whole. As a result, our overall potential and school morale may suffer.

Teacher evaluations are based on the Annual Professional Performance Review and the Marshall rubric, not state assessment testing. APPR is a school-wide growth model that uses a state-approved scale where every teacher gets the same score. The Marshall rubric relies on a state-approved list of up to 60 areas – knowledge of subject matter, planning, lesson design, differentiation, classroom management, delivery of instruction, etc. – classroom observation/evaluation, and pre- and post-observation meetings with administrators.

### COMMON CORE

Grades 3-8 testing is directly related to Common Core, a set of state standards defining what students should know at specific grade levels. Assessment tests are not written by lawmakers but rather educators who work for publishing companies. These educators typically have backgrounds as teachers, administrators or both.

Assessment tests provide the district with valuable information on student progress in relation to Common Core standards. This allows the district to identify what works and what may need to change to help our students meet and/or exceed Common Core standards.

### TEST FACTS

Assessment tests are spread out over six days during the academic year and typically take a quarter of each day or less to complete. There is no time limit, so students need not worry about running out of time to complete the tests. Normal school-day activities follow each scheduled test.

While general scores remain on file for the district, they do not appear on student transcripts and, according to New York State Education Department law, cannot be used to help determine whether a student should be held back a grade. Again, test scores are merely a reflection of our student progress in relation to Common Core standards.

Additionally, test results have no bearing on state aid received by the Hancock Central School District. Regardless of the outcome — good, bad or indifferent — the amount of state aid will remain the same.

### OUR GOAL

The Hancock Central School District strives to achieve a student participation of 95 percent or better in Grades 3-8 Assessments. Again, these tests have no bearing on teacher evaluations, student transcripts or state aid. They provide the district — parents and guardians included — with valuable information regarding student progress in relation to meeting and/or exceeding Common Core standards.

While it is your right to opt your child out of state testing, the accuracy of the Grades 3-8 Assessment results and how they relate to our district as a whole is directly linked to participation numbers. To put it simply, the more students we have taking the tests, the more we stay true to our Vision Statement and Wildcat Pledge. **Vision Statement:** *Striving for excellence as an innovative, advanced and reflective school community.* **Wildcat Pledge:** *We nurture and empower each learner's unlimited capacity to become a responsible citizen with a promising future.*

### RESOURCES

Visit these websites to learn more about the Grades 3-8 Assessments and related topics.

#### NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

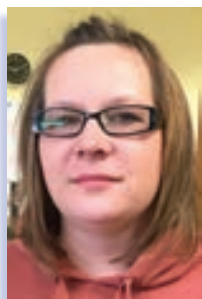
- New York State Education Database (Statistics searchable by school)  
<https://data.nysed.gov/>  
Performance Level Descriptions for ELA and Mathematics  
<https://www.engageny.org/resource/performance-level-descriptions-for-ela-and-mathematics>
- No Changes to Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests in 2017, 2018  
<http://www.nysed.gov/news/2016/nysed-no-changes-grades-3-8-ela-math-tests-2017-or-2018>
- ELA Score Report 2014-15  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/ei/scorereports/ccela-15/ela%20engscorereport15.pdf>
- Understanding the Common Core 3-8 ELA Score Reports  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/ei/scorereports/ccela-15/understanding-ela15w.pdf>
- Mathematics Score Report 2014-15  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/ei/scorereports/ccmath-15/math-engscorereport15.pdf>
- Understanding the Common Core Mathematics Score Reports  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/ei/scorereports/ccmath-15/understanding-math15w.pdf>
- Participation of parents and teachers in school-based planning and shared decision making  
[www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/10011.html](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/10011.html)
- Priority Schools, Focus Districts, Focus Schools  
<http://www.nysed.gov/Press/State-Education-Department-Identifies-188-Priority-Schools%2C-84-Focus-Districts-and-442-Focus-Schools-Under-Federal-Accountability-Requirements%3B-70-Schools-To-Be-Removed-From-Receiver-Status-At-End-Of-2015-2016-School-Year>

**Sources:** Otselic Valley Central School District; OVCSD Shared-Decision Making Team; New York State Education Department.



## HCS Welcomes ...

### MONIKA NOBLE



New Board of Education member. Born and raised in Elblag, Poland, Monika graduated from the University of Economics in Warsaw, Poland, with a Master's in Economics and Foreign Trade. After spending a few summers in the United States, where she met her husband, Monika moved to Hancock in 2002 and started a family.

The mother of two boys, Monika works as a Budget Officer and Bookkeeper to the Supervisor for the Town of Hancock. She also is a Board Member of the Hancock Youth League, a member of the Finance Committee for St. Paul's Church and a member of the Hancock Fire Department Auxiliary.

"I am beyond excited to join the Hancock Central School District as a member of the School Board," she said.

The Hancock Central School District Board of Education meets at 7:00 p.m. every second and fourth Monday of the month in the District Office, with the exceptions of December, July and August.

### KIM NEWMAN



Grades 5/6 ELA Teacher. Kim is a 2013 graduate of Deposit Central School who grew up in Scott Center, PA. She decided to pursue a lifelong career in teaching as she prepared to graduate high school. Kim then attended SUNY Cortland, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 2017.

"I have always had a love for children and teaching," she said. "Aside from my education, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, traveling, and relaxing at the beach!"

### DAVE DIX



Grades 7/8 Science Teacher. Dave taught science at Hancock Central for 20 years before retiring in June of 2014. During his retirement, Dave kept busy doing things he enjoys, such as carpentry, logging, visiting his grandchildren and, of course, reading. Now he's back at his alma mater (Class of 1968), teaching the next generation of great minds.

"I am enjoying being back in the classroom," he said. "It is a great pleasure to be among the teachers, staff and students. Seeing how much the seventh- and eighth-grade students from 2014 have matured over the last 3-1/2 years is gratifying. Thank you to the staff and students for such a warm welcome!"

### JASON MEAD



Building Maintenance Aide. Jason is a 1998 Hancock Central graduate who lives in the Village of Hancock. He is married and has a daughter in the third grade. Outside of work, Jason enjoys camping and fishing. He is also an avid sports fan, especially football and baseball. Jason's favorite teams are the Atlanta Falcons and the New York Mets.

### DEAN RUSSIN



Public Information Specialist from DCMO BOCES. Dean will help effectively communicate the district's mission and vision. Before joining the DCMO BOCES team in 2017, Dean worked more than 20 years for media outlets such as the Binghamton *Press and Sun-Bulletin*, Elmira *Star-Gazette*, *Ithaca Journal* and *The Daily Star* in Oneonta.

A Binghamton native, Dean graduated from Seton Catholic Central, Broome Community College and Oneonta State, earning college degrees in Communications, Speech Communications and Mass Media while playing baseball for all three schools. His journalism career included 17 years as sports editor of *The Daily Star* and concentrated on print, online and social-media communications.

Dean also serves the Norwich and Sherburne-Earlville school districts as a Public Information Specialist. He lives in Oneonta with his 15-year-old son, Tanner.



## A Guide for Administrators and Teachers when Communicating with Parents

Communication among administrators, educators, parents and/or guardians is the key to student success. Having open and honest communication among school personnel and families is a top priority.

So how do administrators and teachers inform parents and/or guardians that the well-being of their child is always first and foremost on their minds? The answer lies in a few key points that school leaders and educators should always consider when discussing the well-being of any student:

- **School is a safe and nurturing environment.** It's our job as employees of the school to remind families that we will do everything necessary to ensure a safe and nurturing place for the kids of this community to live, work and play.
- **Communication is the key.** Keeping open lines of communication between the school and home is paramount to solving problems. If something is bothersome, reach out to school personnel and discuss the situation via phone, email or in-person. If an immediate response is not possible, leave a message and it will be addressed as soon as possible.
- **Empathy and Understanding.** It's very important for administrators and teachers to show support for families, rather than judgement when an issue arises concerning their child. Together, administrators and teachers can create "plans of action" when a student is struggling. Working together in a partnership is what families and schools are all about.
- **Knowing the students.** It's imperative that, as school leaders, we get to know our students as individuals. Every child is unique, and when we learn about their individual characteristics and talents, we can make connections with them. Building positive relationships can transcend far beyond graduation.
- **Helping Families. Administrators and educators are here to help.** We will work together with families to create "plans of action" when a student is in need. As teachers and leaders, it's our primary responsibility to educate students and act as positive role models. Administrators and teachers are here to assist families in the raising and educating of tomorrow's leaders.

Please remember that communication between home and school is a crucial component to the growth and well-being of all our students. As school leaders, we recognize that families need to feel that their children are being well cared for in school every day. Relationships are invaluable to creating the necessary partnership between school and home that helps our students to thrive and succeed.

## Classy Athletes

Twenty-one Hancock students earned Scholar-Athlete Awards from the New York State Public High School Athletic Association for the 2017 fall sports season. To be honored individually, a student-athlete must maintain an academic average of 90 or better and compete for a varsity team.

Hancock posted the following list of its award-winners on a bulletin board just outside of the gymnasium.

### CROSS-COUNTRY

**Lily Ogozalek, Kelsey Young (MAC), Haylee Zartman**

### FIELD HOCKEY

**Katelynn Bennett, Laycee Drake, Kaylee Gill, Alyssa Makowski (MAC), Kaci Marino, Kaitlyn O'Boyle**

### FOOTBALL

**Patrick Esolen, Christian Sokol, Owen Wormuth (MAC), Tyler Young**

### GOLF

**Brenna Gleim, Ayreck Kellem, Nicholas Locke, Michael Makowski (MAC), Roger Newman III, Nathaniel Westbrook**

### VOLLEYBALL

**Trinity Crawson (MAC), Jocelyn D'Elia.**

Each received a pin and a certificate in recognition of their accomplishments. Student-athletes with (MAC) after their names also earned Scholar-Athlete honors from the Mid-State Athletic Conference.

The NYSPHSAA also recognizes Scholar-Athlete Teams, which boast a combined academic average of 90 or better from at least 75-percent of their rosters. Every Deposit/Hancock varsity team for the 2017 fall sports season met this requirement and received a certificate.



# GREAT JOB!

## Wildcat Notes

**Hancock Elementary students** honored local senior citizens with a presentation of Christmas songs during Morning Program. Kindergarten performed, *We Are Santa's Helpers*, first-graders entertained with *Santa Claus is Coming to Town!*, second-graders sang *Rudolph*, third-graders followed with *Frosty the Snowman*, and fourth-graders closed with *Sleigh Ride* for our featured guests.



**Hancock celebrated Veterans Day** by honoring local veterans during Morning Program with a special patriotic presentation featuring songs and dancing. The veterans were treated to a reception of coffee and donuts in the library afterwards.



**Hancock Elementary conducted a Food Drive** in December as staff and students collected non-perishable food items to donate to the Hancock Community Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry. Mrs. Robin Evanitsky and Mrs. JeanAnn Karcher spoke to students about the origin of the Hancock Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry.



**The Hancock Central School Band** performed during a Binghamton Devils' American Hockey League game this academic year. Additionally, the Middle School and High School Winter Concert boasted a full house on December 15. Family, friends and community members joined together for carols and laughs. A total of 64 students make up our Middle School/High School Band and 61 participate in our vocal music program.

**Visit us online** at [www.hancock.stier.org/](http://www.hancock.stier.org/) throughout the year for district news, resources, Tweets and tons of other important information. Click on Ideas for Parents for a new "Idea of the Day" every day and find eTips for parents at both the Elementary and Middle/High School levels. Transportation changes can be made online until 1:00 p.m. each day, too. Go to the District Support tab, click on Transportation and include the drop-off address and/or name of the pick-up person in your email. It is that simple. Upcoming District Events are listed on the site, too, along with weather, school closing information and much more!

## Decking HES with Kindness!

Hancock Elementary was *decking the halls with kindness* this holiday season! Our theme for the month of December was the "season of giving," and right along with that, we have been talking about being kind, respectful and helpful to all! All month, students and staff had the opportunity to catch someone doing something kind, and write it on a handprint, ornament or present. Throughout the month, we assembled these on our bulletin board to make a tree that is *decked* with kindness! We certainly have a school that is full of kind students, teachers and staff!



**A SPARK  
OF  
Kindness  
STARTS  
A FIRE OF LOVE**

# Picture This – Photo Highli



*The Hancock Central School District thanks recently retired Paula Thomas for her many years of outstanding service!*



## KINDNESS CHALLENGE

*Students were encouraged to put others before themselves this past December by participating in the Olweus Kindness Challenge. Each day during the month, students and staff performed random acts of kindness for peers, teachers or members of the community. Students used the hashtag #RAKhcs2017 to spread awareness and a little cheer this holiday season.*

## CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE



*Mrs. Hunt organized our annual Christmas Toy Drive. The Guidance Office collected toys, which were distributed to local families at the Food Bank Christmas giveaway.*

## DISTRICT FOOD DRIVE



*Mrs. Whitt and Ms. White coordinated our district-wide food drive as part of the District Advisory Group, in conjunction with Olweus. National Honor Society students loaded the donations and delivered the generous contributions to the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry.*



*"Untitled"*

Acrylic on Wood

Makenna is an incredibly gifted artist here at HCS. Makenna is constantly working in different materials and always busy working away in the art room. She has been featured in the JAC Student Art Show and sold her first commissioned piece at the Canoe Regatta in Bainbridge.

# Highlights of Happenings at HCS!

## WCDO AWARD



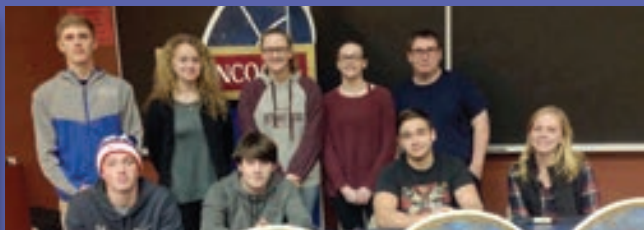
*Deposit/Hancock's Laycee Drake earned WCDO's December Female Athlete of the Month! This award is sponsored by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Agent David Smith. Laycee averaged 20 points and led the Lady Eagles to a top-five ranking among Class D teams in the state.*



*Spanish 4 students shared stories they wrote about how Christmas is celebrated in different Spanish-speaking countries with Hancock Elementary kindergarten students.*

## COLLEGE SPANISH

## ACADEMIC CHALLENGE



*Congratulations to the Hancock Central School District's Academic Challenge participants! Our students placed fifth out of 15 area schools at SUNY Oneonta!*



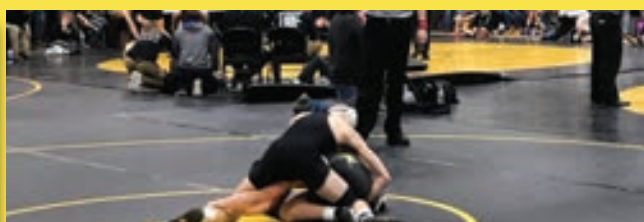
## GIRLS' BASKETBALL



*The Hancock and Greene girls basketball teams came together in solidarity to honor fellow athlete Destyni Twyman (No. 23) of Walton. 12 MAC Schools, 1 Team.*



## WRESTLING



*Varsity wrestlers competed at the Windsor Christmas Tournament in December.*



*Seniors on the varsity bowling and boys basketball teams earned recognition earlier this season.*

## SENIORS HONORED

## Vision, Mission and Core Beliefs

Have state and federal mandates drained the energy and passion from your school district? Are folks feeling powerless, like they've lost control of the organization's destiny? Is morale low?

It doesn't have to be that way.

Re-engage, recharge and reinvest your faculty, staff and community. Articulate a new mission, vision and core beliefs. Set strategic targets. Articulate priorities, allocate resources, plan and execute.

You don't have to accept the status quo. You can create a better future for your school community.

In two intense, high-energy, engaging and enjoyable meetings, Prism facilitates your team to generate a compelling mission, vision and core beliefs. With that as a foundation, the team sets performance targets, agrees to long-term strategies and identifies immediate priorities over two more inspiring days.

Re-energize your district. Retake your future.

According to Superintendent Lesli Myers, Brockport's new mission, vision and core beliefs have "helped revitalize our educators and community."

We begin with the mission statement and work iteratively to the vision and core beliefs.

### MISSION

A mission clearly communicates the primary aim or goal of an organization. It defines the organization's single-most important reason for being and answers the question: Why do we exist?

#### **HCS Mission (The Wildcat Pledge):**

**We nurture and empower each learner's unlimited capacity to become a responsible citizen with a promising future.**

Some question the value of a mission statement. Yet the world's most successful organizations invest in mission statements. For example, Google's mission is to "organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful." As an organizing principal, this mission guides behavior, clarifies decision-making and ensures focus. No Google employee is confused about why they go to work each day. The same is true of Nike, where the mission is "Bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete\* in the world. (\*If you have a body, you are an athlete)."

In most school districts, the mission meanders and lacks clarity. It may include everything except the kitchen sink and extend for paragraphs and hundreds of words.

Imagine the impact on your school district if you had a mission as compelling as Google's or Nike's.

### VISION

A vision is motivational. It describes what the organization aspires to become.

#### **HCS Vision:**

**Striving for excellence as an innovative, advanced and reflective school community.**

A vision's few powerful words can transform how an organization sees itself and acts.

As early as 1977, Bill Gates' vision for Microsoft was "a computer on every desk and in every home." At the time, the idea of the personal computer was nascent and such a vision was absolutely audacious, especially for a start-up. Yet, like any good vision, it compelled Microsoft to unprecedented achievement.

Inspiring extraordinary effort and commitment, a vision should describe a significant reach and may be unattainable. It should provoke high levels of commitment and effort. Visions drive the not-for-profit sector as well. For example, at Oxfam "our vision is a just world without poverty."

What's your school district's vision? Is it compelling? Is it unique to your community's aspirations for itself and its children? Or is it mundane and uninspiring — milk toast?

### CORE BELIEFS

An organization's core beliefs act as a superset of criteria governing decision-making, large and small, on a daily basis. Core beliefs define and create culture and act as touchstones to guide behavior.

Core beliefs govern daily behavior and decision-making, large and small.

Amazon, for example, has more than a dozen "leadership principles," among them:

- **Customer Obsession:** Leaders start with the customer and work backward. They work vigorously to earn and keep customer trust. Although leaders pay attention to competitors, they obsess over customers.
- **Invent and Simplify:** Leaders expect and require innovation and invention from their teams and always find ways to simplify.
- **Frugality:** We try not to spend money on things that don't matter to customers. Frugality breeds resourcefulness, self-sufficiency and invention.

These beliefs permeate the culture and influence the workplace profoundly.

Recently, I led a tactical planning session in an educational organization that had just approved a strategic plan. While reviewing the new core beliefs for the first time, a team member exhorted: "That's an organization I would be proud to work for!"

Around the globe, the most admired and successful organizations have core beliefs. Shouldn't yours?

With a compelling vision, mission and core beliefs, your organization is ready to set performance targets, agree to long-term strategies and identify immediate priorities targets.

For more information, email Sean Brady at [info@prismdecision.com](mailto:info@prismdecision.com).

## Senior Recognition

Congratulations to **Katelynn Bennett**, **Tyler Young** and **Kaci Marino**! The three Hancock High School students earned Senior Recognition certificates for Outstanding Academic Performance this winter. Keep up the good work.



## WHES News

Students in third and fourth grades present a news show titled "WHES News" every Thursday during the Elementary School Morning Program. Students report on school and district activities, such as athletics, class projects and upcoming events. They also report the weather, This Day in History, student and staff birthdays, and anything else they deem interesting. Students work with their teachers to gather the information, write the scripts and rehearse the show.



# Milk Matters...



No Bones About It,  
Kids Can't Do Without It.  
Milk for Strong Bones & Teeth



### HOW MUCH CALCIUM DO YOU NEED EACH DAY?



AGES	CALCIUM (MG)
1-3	600
4-8	800
9-18	1,300

One 8 oz. glass of milk  
has about 300 MG  
of calcium.



For more information, contact the NICHD/Milk Matters  
Clearinghouse at 800•370•2943.

# HCS Emergency Closing Procedures and FAQs When Severe Winter Weather Strikes

## Introduction

Winter weather in the Catskill Mountain Region and Northeastern Pennsylvania can be very unpredictable. When severe weather strikes our area, our number one concern is the safety of all Hancock Central School District students. Specific plans and protocols are in place to ensure that all students and staff members arrive at school safely.

## Decision-Making Process

The decision to close school is made by the superintendent of schools working in consultation with the district transportation supervisor and representatives from New York State, Delaware County, DCMO BOCES, and the Town and Village of Hancock. Information provided by various weather service reports, newscasts, and computer simulations also factor into the final decision-making process. Finally, as needed, the Superintendent of Schools and Transportation Director will drive district primary and secondary roads in order to evaluate travel safety. Variables that factor into the school closing decision-making process include, but are not limited to, amount and type of snow or freezing rain, timing of first snowfall and anticipated end, ability to clear primary and secondary roads and school district parking lots, building conditions, temperature, and wind and wind chill. Depending on a host of circumstances and factors, the District may elect to delay the start of school by two hours until 10:00 a.m., close for the day, dismiss early at 12:30 p.m., or cancel all after-school events at the end of the day.

## Communications Plan

In general, the decision to delay the start of school or to close for the day is made no later than 5:30 a.m. and is subsequently communicated to all stakeholders via the following media no later than 6:00 a.m.:

### Television

WBNG, WNEP, WYOU, WICZ, YNN, WBRE

### Radio

WAAL, WHWK, WDLA, WDNH, WNBF, WWYL, WYOS, WINR, WENE, Magic 101.7, STAR 105.7

### Website

[www.hancock.stier.org](http://www.hancock.stier.org)

### Cell/Telephone

Global Connect automatic notification system, 637-8000. Decisions to dismiss school early or to cancel after-school activities will be similarly disseminated using the communications venues listed above.

## FAQS

**Q: When is the decision made to close or delay school?**

**A:** In general, the following timeline is used to frame school closing and delay decisions:

5:30 a.m.—Preliminary decision is made to close or delay school

5:45 a.m.—Media outlets are notified of school closing or delay

6:00 a.m.—School closing/delay decision is communicated to all district stakeholders

10:00 a.m.—On days when school is in session and weather conditions deteriorate, the decision to dismiss early is made and communicated at this time

12:30 p.m.—Early dismissal time for inclement weather

1:00 p.m.—On days when school is in session and weather conditions deteriorate, the decision to cancel after-school activities is made and communicated at this time

**Q: Who makes the decision to delay or close school?**

**A:** The superintendent of schools makes the decision to close school in concert with the district transportation director, NYS and county officials, and Village and Town of Hancock officials. In addition, select television and computer weather forecasts weigh in the final decision-making process.

**Q: If school is closed, are evening and weekend activities canceled?**

**A:** If the Hancock Central School District is closed due to inclement weather, then all evening activities are canceled as well. On days when school is in session but conditions deteriorate over the course of the day, a decision to continue after-school activities will be made no later than 1:00 p.m.

**Q: As a parent/caretaker, can I keep my child home on inclement weather days?**

**A:** Parents/caretakers are encouraged to use their best judgment to determine what is best for their children. Parents/caretakers are expected to notify the school district of their child's excused absence.

**Q: Are we going to have to make up snow days?**

**A:** The school district builds additional days into the school calendar each year to account for time lost to inclement weather. However, in the event this additional time is exhausted due to extraordinary weather conditions, the Hancock Central School District Board of Education retains the right to extend the school year by scheduling school during vacation holidays such as the mid-winter break in February or the annual spring recess.

**Q: What are the various states of winter weather awareness that may be declared by the National Weather Service?**

**A:** The National Weather Service may make the following declarations when severe winter weather is forecast to present a potential risk to travelers.

**Winter Storm Watch**

Conditions are favorable for a winter storm event (heavy sleet, heavy snow, ice storm, heavy snow and blowing snow or a combination of events) to meet or exceed local winter storm warning criteria in the next 24 to 72 hours. Criteria for snow is 7 inches or more in 12 hours or less; or 9 inches or more in 24 hours covering at least 50 percent of the zone or encompassing most of the population. Use "mid-point" of snowfall range to trigger a watch (i.e., 5-8 inches of snow = watch).

### Winter Storm Warning

A winter storm event (heavy sleet, heavy snow, ice storm, heavy snow and blowing snow or a combination of events) is expected to meet or exceed local winter storm warning criteria in the next 12 to 36 hours. Criteria for snow is 7 inches or more in 12 hours or less; or 9 inches or more in 24 hours covering at least 50 percent of the zone or encompassing most of the population. Use “mid-point” of snowfall range to trigger warning (i.e., 5-8 inches of snow = warning).

### Winter Weather Advisory

A winter storm event (sleet, snow, freezing rain, snow and blowing snow, or a combination of events) is expected to meet or exceed local winter weather advisory criteria in the next 12 to 36 hours but stay below warning criteria. Criteria for snow is 4 inches or more in 12 hours or less covering at least 50 percent of the zone or encompassing most of the population. Use “mid-point” of snowfall range to trigger advisory (i.e., 2-5 inches of snow = advisory).

**Q: What are the various states of winter weather awareness that may be declared by Delaware County?**

**A:** Delaware County may declare the following:

#### State of Emergency

This declaration may be made by the County Chief Executive in the event that conditions are so severe as to require additional resources by the county. Included in the declaration of a state of emergency may be various “orders.” These orders could include road closures for the entire county or for specific roads within the county. Road closure orders are meant to keep non-essential persons off the roads and to help keep the roads clear of motorists so that highway departments can more effectively clear them. The superintendent of schools is charged with determining which district personnel are considered essential and thus authorized to travel on roads that have been ordered closed.

#### Travel Advisory

The County may also issue a travel advisory either in conjunction with the State of Emergency declaration or as a stand-alone “order.” A travel advisory is just that—an advisory to motorists to alert them that some road conditions may be deteriorated in the area and that persons traveling should use caution.

**Unless otherwise stated by Delaware County, the decision to delay or close school remains at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools.**



## Common Core & State Tests

### ELA/MATH

Beginning in 2013, the state assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math for grades 3-8 will be based on the shifts in the Common Core standards.

The tests may seem more difficult, at least at first, as students and teachers adjust to the new, more rigorous expectations.

There is a chance that the scores could drop in the first and second year of the tests. But remember that these tests are an important tool to help teachers see where students need extra support to move on to the next grade level.

Because the instruction leading up to the tests and the tests themselves are different, a drop in student scores should not be interpreted as failure on the part of your child to learn or the teacher to teach.

# Don't stress about the test

Some students thrive on test stress; others experience intense anxiety that leaves them physically ill – stomachaches, headaches, etc. – and unable to sleep.

With state standardized tests on the horizon, you can help your child prepare mentally and physically to face the task head on. These tips and techniques may not completely eliminate your child's stress, but they are tools that can empower your child to confront this challenge and others they will face in school and beyond.

- **Get enough sleep.** One study showed that students who got eight hours of sleep the night before a test were three times more likely to answer a question correctly than those who didn't. Adequate sleep – 8-10 hours per night – helps ensure children have the energy and stamina to make it through the test in top form.
- **Eat a healthy breakfast.** Start the day with a meal that includes complex carbohydrates and protein so energy lasts as long as possible. Eggs, cereal and whole-wheat toast give the brain what it needs to help you think more clearly and much longer compared to high-sugar selections. A healthy breakfast can boost memory and help a child be more alert – a definite recipe for test success!
- **Exercise.** Studies show that physical activity helps improve attention and how fast students process information. Exercise leading up to test day can be excellent mental preparation – not to mention fresh air helps clear the head.
- **Have fun.** Encourage your child to do something enjoyable the night before a big test – whether it's playing a board game or riding bikes together as a family. Having fun is a helpful distraction from stress.
- **Write it out.** Writing about test stress can be a great way to conquer it. The idea is to get rid of stress by putting it all down on paper. Suggest your child write for 5-10 minutes about test stress. It can be an empowering way to frame positive thoughts about accomplishments as well, such as "I do a good job on math facts homework" or "I did a really good job on the ELA practice test."
- **Think positive thoughts.** Science shows that thinking positive thoughts can actually help the brain function. Help your child practice this: When you start to feel stressed, take slow, deep breaths and think of something that makes you happy – petting your dog, playing a game with friends, hanging out at the beach in summer – for 10-20 seconds. Remind children that they can use this same technique in the middle of the test if they feel stressed. Taking 20 seconds to relax can help regain focus.
- **Do the best you can.** That's all that is expected of students – to do the best they can on a test. Let your child know there may be questions they don't know the answer to or don't understand. Suggest they skip these questions and move on, coming back later when they can perhaps spend a little more time.

**The bottom line is that taking any test can be stressful, invigorating or scary. But with the right approach, children can feel they are mentally and physically ready to handle the challenge.**

### Opting out doesn't help anyone.

Despite what you may have heard, neither New York State law nor the education commissioner's regulations provide any legal right or mechanism for students – or districts – to opt out of required state

assessments, except for certain exceptions such as those involving students with disabilities.

The state assessments, along with the annual report card for your school district, help parents and teachers know—from one objective view—how well students' achievement measures up to the Common Core Learning Standards.

The test scores also help determine what additional academic help any individual student may need to reach the expectations for his or her grade level.

Districts may not make "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) in the state's accountability system and could lose federal Title I funding if participation in the tests falls below 95 percent.

## HANCOCK CENTRAL SCHOOL

67 Education Lane  
Hancock, NY 13783

### Board Members

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**The Wildcat Pledge:** We nurture and empower each learner's unlimited capacity to become a responsible citizen with a promising future.

**Our Vision:** Striving for excellence as an innovative, advanced and reflective school community.

## Call Me!

With Facebook, Twitter, texting and the countless other communication tools at our fingertips we have certainly embraced all the advantages that come with this new technology. Nonetheless, the best way to communicate within the Hancock School District is to call us.

When you need clarification, additional information, have a pressing question or any commendations or concerns, the best practice is to call the Main Office of your child's school.

Classroom or course specific questions can be directed to your

child's teacher via a call to the Main Office. Email can be effective when reaching out to school officials, but in most cases it is best to use when scheduling a phone call or face-to-face meeting.

The dialogue that can be established via a phone call cannot be duplicated via text or an email. The best place to start for all school related inquiries is your child's principal.

The following communications chart is a tool we hope parents will consult when attempting to contact the School District on the following issues.

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT	1ST CONTACT	2ND CONTACT	3RD CONTACT	4TH CONTACT
<b>Academics</b>	Teacher	Guidance Counselor	PK-12 Principal	Superintendent
<b>Athletics</b>	Coach	Athletic Director	PK-12 Principal	Superintendent
<b>Behavior</b>	Teacher	Director of Pupil Personnel/ PK-12 Principal	Superintendent	
<b>BOE Policies</b>	District Clerk	Superintendent	Board of Education	
<b>Budget</b>	Business Administrator	Business Manager	Superintendent	Board of Ed.
<b>Building Use</b>	PK-12 Principal	Supt. Buildings & Grounds	Supt. Secretary	Superintendent
<b>Cafeteria</b>	Café Manager	PK-12 Principal	Superintendent	
<b>Classroom Procedures</b>	Teacher	PK-12 Principal	Superintendent	
<b>Co-Curricular</b>	Advisor	PK-12 Principal	Superintendent	
<b>Facilities</b>	Supt. Bldg. & Gr.	Superintendent		
<b>Health Office</b>	Building Nurse	PK-12 Principal	Superintendent	
<b>Scheduling</b>	Teacher	Guidance Counselor	PK-12 Principal	Superintendent
<b>Special Education</b>	Teacher	Director of Pupil Personnel	PK-12 Principal	Superintendent
<b>Transportation</b>	Bus Driver	Transportation Director	Superintendent	

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Elementary School Office ..... 637-1219  
Middle/High School Office ..... 637-1305  
CSE Office ..... 637-1315  
Food Service Office ..... 637-1320  
Superintendent's Office..... 637-1301

Elementary School Health Office..... 637-1220  
Middle/High School Health Office..... 637-1310  
Transportation Department ..... 637-5322  
Buildings and Grounds..... 637-1313