In January, grades 5-8 competed in a spelling contest within their classrooms to determine the top four spellers at each grade level. The place-winners were as follows: Grade 5 - Collin Hillman (1), Maurya Parter (2), and Carly Keenan (3); Grade 6 - Darrin Rios (1), Kaleb Kastler (2), Michael Chapman (3), and Seth Sklar (4); Grade 7 - Bayly Gobien (1), Megan Palumbo (2), Morgan Carapelletti (3), and Christopher Ogden (4); Grade 8 - Danielle Johnson (1), John Vavrecan (2), Jessie Giberson (3), and Jessica Killian (4).

On Friday, January 28, the grades 6-8 classroom winners then competed in our school’s Local Scripps Spelling Bee to determine the top three contest winners from Hinsdale Central School. The winner -- Megan Palumbo (shown below with her parents) -- also went on to represent HCS on February 3 in a written Spelling Bee, competing against students from other schools.

The top three finishers at Hinsdale Central School are shown ABOVE left to right: Megan Palumbo (first), Danielle Johnson (third), and Bayly Gobien (second).

The top 20 finishers on the written test were then slated to represent their respective schools in the WNY Scripps Oral Spelling Bee in March. The WNY event is sponsored by The Buffalo News.
Notes from the Superintendent:  

College and Career Readiness (Part Two)

This is a continuation of last month’s news article on getting students ready for the transition to college and a career. As we look for reform in education on the elementary, secondary, and college levels, we recognize the demand that school graduates be ready for collegiate studies as well as successfully entering good careers of their choice. Being ready means more than the ability to fill out an application and arrive on campus (whether locally or out of town) with a check from Mom and Dad and the requisite notebooks and computers.

Just ‘getting by’ with minimum levels in high school won’t be enough for college and career success; we talk about these demands with our secondary students in classrooms and offices constantly. It is part of our mandate as educators to let teens know that jobs of the past which required only a basic high school diploma are disappearing, being replaced by those which demand at least a two-year college degree and a very good command of math, science, communication, and technological skills. Competing locally, nationally, and internationally, our students will be faced with a far more demanding reality than even their parents were twenty years ago. Minimum wage jobs won’t sustain them as single or married adults with the prices of homes, fuel, taxes, clothing, and transportation rising all the time.

Community colleges report that anywhere from 30 to 50% of freshmen students arrive at their doors unable to do college-level work. As part of their ‘open door policy’ the students are accepted but put into remedial classes which are non-credit bearing. What does that mean for these students? Virtually, that they have no chance of getting a 2-year degree in two years. More often than not, it takes nearly three years, if they do graduate at all. The sad part is that parents or the students themselves are paying for an extra semester (or more) of tuition with no added value to show for it. So from a cost-savings point of view only, it is obvious that working hard in high school, taking the necessary academic courses, and preparing mentally for the continuation of a rigorous course of study has big benefits. New York State is looking at changes in requirements for graduation, perhaps an extra math and/or science class, and the possibility of requiring students to take a college level class during their four years in high school if they are not in a vocational program which leads to some type of industry certification.

In last month’s newsletter article, I mentioned what staff development is being done within these walls to assist teachers in analyzing test scores, strengths, weaknesses, and learning gaps their students might have. This is true for our secondary staff as well, looking at middle school testing as well as Regents examinations, five of which are needed for graduation. Teachers work with students during the day in Academic Intervention Services sessions, extra help during their preparatory periods, and after school. Students who are failing two or more classes are required to attend Study Center from 3 to 4 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. A certified teacher is there to assist and guide students during that time and transportation home is provided after 4 p.m.

Again, I would like to make some suggestions for parents of teens during this important time of adolescent development and transition to adulthood:

- Middle school is a particularly tenuous time, full of bravado and at the same time self-doubt. What young teens need to know is that the important adults in their lives are not going to give up on them, no matter how trying and difficult they become! Showing an interest through conversations, turning off the game toys and other electronics and doing things as a family, attending school events including extracurricular activities can all be part of the important job of parenting these adolescents.
- Stay in communication with the teachers your teens have, and on a fairly regular basis. Yes, grade reports are sent every five weeks but you may need to have more contact than that. Check out the school website, look for the link which says “E-Mail A Teacher…”; send a note if you have a question or concern. Many teachers have web pages (under FACULTY) which also have links to practice tests, resources, etc.
- While at the HCS website, check out the “Parents Make a Difference” links under the PARENT section; these are monthly newsletters -- even veteran parents can learn a thing or two!
- Please see story on Castle Learning on page 3. This resource (Castle Learning) on our web page is a wonderful site which students can use as added instruction to bolster their knowledge in the various subject areas. It goes beyond just test practice, but gives further explanations and tips. Have your son or daughter try it out and look over their shoulder at what this provides -- you’ll wish this was around when you were in school!

Continued on Page 2
VFW “Voice of Democracy” Place Winner

By Nick Abraham, VFW Member

Hinsdale Central School Sophomore Crystal Rosier (AT RIGHT) won second place in the annual Veterans of Foreign Wars “Voice of Democracy” writing and speaking contest. She will receive cash prizes and a Certificate of Merit at the Cuba VFW Post’s Annual Awards Banquet in February.

Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy Contest has been the VFW’s premier scholarship program. At the start of each school year, more than 100,000 high school students compete for more than $2.5 million in scholarships and incentives. Students compete by writing and recording a broadcast script on an annual patriotic theme. This year’s theme was “Does My Generation Have a Role in America’s Future?” Prizes and scholarships are awarded at the post, county, district, state, and national levels. Department (state) winners receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, DC to tour the city, meet our nation’s leaders, be honored by the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary, and receive their portion of national awards, the top scholarship being $30,000.

Students in grades 9-12 wishing to participate in the 2011 Contest can contact Nick Abraham at 968-0608 in May or June.

Castle Learning Online . . .

By Juliann Fair, Resource Room

Castle Learning is an online tool which helps students easily prepare for any subject and review for any Regents Exam independently. This innovative tool allows students to choose specific topics or units to work on. Students choose the number of questions they would like to complete, answer format, and area of difficulty. In an instant, a group of questions is generated. After the student answers a question, there is instant feedback. If the student answers incorrectly, a hint is provided along with the option to click on any word in the question to get a definition. After each question, the correct answer is given along with an explanation and a list of relevant defined vocabulary.

Castle Learning is a great resource at your finger tips! Try it out at castlelearning.com or access it through the HCS website. If you forgot your password or are having trouble logging in see Mrs. Mikowicz.

What: Pancake Breakfast to Benefit the HCS Senior Class

When & Where: Saturday, March 19, 8–10 a.m., at HCS café

Cost: $5 per person. Breakfast includes pancakes, sausage, muffins, orange juice and coffee. Purchase tickets from any senior or at the main office. You must present a ticket for admission.
Three Attend Leadership Training

The annual Cattaraugus-Allegany Middle School Student Leadership Workshop was held at Cattaraugus-Allegany BOCES this past month. The students chosen to attend and represent Hinsdale Central School at this year’s program were Torey Cassidy, Daniel Macomber, and Bayly Gobien.

Presenting again at this year’s conference was Ed Gerety, who teaches principles and skills essential to the development of leaders. He stresses “gratitude, attitude, and a belief in yourself and others. His powerful message inspires youth to be effective leaders in their schools and beyond.

There were three parts to the presentation that conveyed the central message of the workshop. The first part focused on the importance of communicating. Students had to choose the most important person in their life and thank them for their support. The students were given paper, envelopes, and time to construct a letter to share their feelings with this individual. Next, students were shown the importance of setting goals and attaining dreams. Each student was given poster board to create their own personal “Dream Board.” Photos and positive words were taken from old magazines to illustrate their goals and dreams. Lastly, these young leaders met as a district to discuss their school. They had to talk about changes they would like to make to improve the overall atmosphere of the building.

By the end of the presentation, the students realized the positive influence they could have in their community. These three young leaders will help guide HCS toward success for years to come.

French Scholastic Club for February

8th Grade (90+ Average)
Nicole Carey
Shawn Carpenter
Samantha Cordova
Savannah Evans
Derek Follett
Jesse Giberson
Danielle Johnson
Zach Tingley

9th Grade (92+ Average)
Alyssa Boone
Blake Geiger
Ashlee Putt
Michael Williams

10th/11th Grade (94+ Average)
Matt Davis
Kaitlyn Karnuth
Jessica Killian
Kaitlyn Layman
Courtney Lentz
Jacob Wesolowski
Johnathan Vavrecan
Zachary Wilber

Christmas Caroling for Senior Citizens

Some members of the HCS Chorus performed a brief concert of winter music and carols for senior citizens at the Underwood Manor just before Christmas. Listeners were very appreciative, and there were even a few happy tears shed for our young performers. Thank you, chorus, for spreading some holiday cheer in the community!
MINUTES

- Approved minutes of Business Meeting of December 22, 2010 and Workshop Meeting of January 12, 2011

FINANCIAL

- Approved Warrants for A-Fund
- Approved Warrants for C-Fund
- Approved Warrants for F-Fund
- Approved Warrants for Capital Fund
- Approved Budget Status
- Approved Treasurer’s Report for December 2010
- Approved Extra Classroom Activity Fund
- Budget reports on Operation & Maintenance, Transportation, General Support and Debt Service

PERSONNEL

- Approved LaVerne White as a substitute bus driver
- Approved James Zeigler as a substitute bus driver
- Approved Katherine French as an uncertified substitute teacher
- Approved Nanci Hurlburt as fifth & sixth grade Girls Basketball coach for the 2011 season
- Approved Scott Bauer as the fifth & sixth grade Boys Basketball coach for the 2011 season
- Approved Tyler Campbell as teacher aide

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Approved the Section 504 meeting held on 1/5/11

DISTRICT

- Approved retainer agreement with Richardson & Pullen, P.C. Attorneys at Law
- Approved Mrs. Val Caskey, School Nurse, to perform height and weight measurements, calculate the BMI and determine weight status category; then write the results on the health certificate form under the direction of Dr. David Schulman
- Approved Senior Trip proposal to Ocean City, MD on June 10-11, 2011
- Tabled - First Reading of Policy #2125 - “Board of Education Training Policy”

SUPERINTENDENT

- Reviewed the Governor’s State of the State address and its implications for education funding
- Transportation Sharing with Portville and Olean
- Conference Report
- Business First

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Adjourned to Executive Session

ADJOURNMENT

- Returned to the Meeting and Adjourned

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Be Sure to Sign Up for the Bobcat Blast on March 25!

- Bobcat Blast will be held on Friday, March 25, 2011 for students in Grades 7-12.
- All students must sign up by March 18 to attend. Sign up in Room 56 with Mrs. Winicki. No student will be admitted without prepaying and signing up.
- Permission forms can also be obtained from Mrs. Winicki (Room 56) and MUST be turned in prior to March 22.
- Payment of $10 is due when you sign up, if you didn’t sell Niagara Chocolate Candy.
- The event begins at 3:30 p.m. Friday afternoon and runs until 7 a.m. Saturday. Everyone will stay for the entire night!
- Bowling will be paid for. Other items available for purchase during the event will include: nachos, hot dogs, candy, and soda.
Pre-Kindergarten registration for Hinsdale Central School is set for March 30 and April 1 from 9 a.m. to noon. A copy of the child’s birth certificate, Social Security card, and immunization records are all required in order to register a child. Proof of parent/guardian residency in the district is also a requirement. The preschooler must be 4 years old on or before December 1, 2011. Please call Aprille Girard at 557-2227, ext. 412 to set up an appointment for your child’s screening.

Pre-K screenings will also be conducted from 8:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. both days.

Kindergarten screening will be held on April 27, 28 and 29 from 9 a.m. to noon for children in the HCS District who will be 5 years old on or before December 1, 2011. If you have a child eligible for kindergarten next year, please call Aprille Girard at 557-2227, ext. 412. Please do this as soon as possible so that a packet may be mailed to you. Parents coming for kindergarten registration are reminded to please bring the following information with you on registration day: 1) the child’s birth certificate and Social Security card, 2) a completed immunization record, 3) parent/guardian proof of residency in the district, and 4) completed health records and any other forms found in your packet.

Students who are currently enrolled in the HCS Pre-K classroom will be screened for kindergarten during the school day. Morning students will be screened from 8:15-10 a.m. and the afternoon class will be screened from 12:30-1:45 p.m. If you would like to be here for your child’s screening, please call the guidance office at the number listed above to find out the exact time that your child is scheduled.

For those students who are not enrolled in the Hinsdale Pre-K this school year, please call to make an appointment. The screening times will be from 10:30 a.m. until noon each day.

The elementary Character Education Assembly incorporated guests from Joyful Rescues as part of the character trait “Caring.” The visitors shared with the students on the importance of caring for their pets. To practice the skill of caring, each classroom created a poster of pets using pictures of the students’ own animals. The posters were then displayed and students and faculty were able to cast their vote on the posters they really liked best by donating their change into the can under the posters of their choice. The money collected was then presented to Joyful Rescues by Mrs. Morrow’s third grade class, who had collected the most change (SHOWN ABOVE). The total collected and donated was $68.30. Thank you to all who did a great job of helping us demonstrate and teach our students what caring is all about!
Bowlers Earn Honors

Congratulations to HCS Bowlers Sam Lett and Blake Geiger. They were voted the girl and boy Sportsman Award Winners for the 2010-11 bowling season. According to Gene Jankowski, CCAA Division 3 League Chairman, “Each girl bowler voted for a girl from a different team, and each boy bowler voted for a boy from a different team . . . and they (Sam and Blake) were the winners. This is the second straight season that Hinsdale has swept this award.”

Blake Geiger was also the League’s Most Valuable Bowler. Blake finished the season with a 189 average and he is a First Team League All-Star.

Congratulations Sam, Blake, and Coach Schulze!
Dream of Going to College?

The Upward Bound Program at Houghton College is accepting applications from current eighth-grade students to start summer 2011. Upward Bound helps local high school students prepare for and go to college through academic encouragement, cultural experiences and mentoring.

Specific benefits of the Upward Bound Program include:
- travel to major cities
- college visits
- exciting monthly events
- long-term participants eligible for tuition-free courses through Houghton
- summer program on Houghton College campus
- weekly tutoring/mentoring
- AND it’s FREE!

Applications are available on the Web at: http://campus.houghton.edu/orgs/upward%5Fbound/ OR from your guidance counselor. Call the Upward Bound office at 585-567-9493 for more information. Space is limited; apply today.

Reading Buddies

Students in Mrs. Edward’s and Mrs. Jedrosko’s classes have started a reading buddy program. Mrs. Edward’s first graders and Mrs. Jedrosko’s fifth graders meet once a month to read to one another, ask reading comprehension questions, and get to know each other. This venture is proving to be very enjoyable for both grades, as well as beneficial. Students choose books for their partner(s) based on independent reading level and interest. The two classes get together the third Thursday of each month and share in a love of reading. Mrs. Jedrosko’s fifth graders were extremely impressed by the reading ability of their younger counterparts. Mrs. Edward’s first graders cannot wait until we all meet again this month. What a wonderful program this is turning out to be!

3 Place in AdCraft Contest

AT LEFT - Three Hinsdale Central School art students recently placed in the annual AdCraft competition. Shown left to right are: Dawn Bennett, Melinda Drabant, and Logan Putt. Their advertisements are shown on the next page.
AdCraft Place Winners

Three HCS art students recently placed in the annual AdCraft competition. Melinda Drabant’s third place winner is shown AT RIGHT. Dawn Bennett’s ninth place ad is shown BELOW.

Logan Putt's sixth place ad is shown ABOVE and her seventh place ad AT LEFT.
From the Elementary Guidance Office . . .

Our kindergarteners are learning how to solve problems. We are using a rap song and our puppets -- Impulsive Puppy and Slow-Down Snail -- to help us learn our three simple steps to solving a problem.

Our problem-solving steps are actually three questions we ask ourselves:

- How do I feel?
- What is the problem?
- What can I do?

Feelings are a clue that there is a problem. If children are very upset about a problem, they practice ways to calm down. Once they are calm, they can think things through. Children are learning to talk about problems without blaming others. And they are learning to think of many ways to solve problems. Children are natural problem solvers, and they like the feeling of being able to figure things out.

We can encourage children to solve problems by:

- Coaching them through the steps when there is a problem.
- Helping them talk about the problems they are having.
- Encouraging them to think of lots of solutions.
- Talking to them about how things would work out if they tried some of the solutions.

Children will be learning to interrupt in a polite way by saying “Excuse me.” They will also learn how to ignore distractions.

Young children often feel helpless or stuck when they are having problems. They might give up looking when they can’t find something, or they may complain and walk away from a game they really want to play if they don’t get what they want. The Problem-Solving Steps show them that there is something they can do to solve problems.

When your child is having problems at home, try using these steps to help him or her figure out what to do.

Student Council News

The Niagara Chocolate order was a success. We sold just over $2,000 so we will be able to keep the cost for the Bobcat Blast at $10 per person for bowling (see ad on opposite page). The chocolate will be delivered to the school on March 29.

The National Honor Society Induction Ceremony was held on Friday, January 14 in the high school library (see photo ABOVE). New members admitted were seniors Alison Patronek and Dustin Mendell and juniors Ryan Crino and Kaitlyn Layman. Parents and students were honored after the ceremony with refreshments.

Winter Passion was the theme for the January 28th dance held at HCS. There were 42 students that drank punch, and ate chips, pretzels, M&Ms and mini eclairs and danced from 8-11 p.m. The cost of admission was $5.

NHS Members pictured above left to right are: Dustin Mendell, Alison Patronek, Taylor Kent, Ryan Crino, Chelsea Kuhs, Kaitlyn Layman, and Michaela Ginter.

Students are shown enjoying the dance on Winter Weekend.
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<td>Ham Scallop Potatoes Choice of Fruit Milk</td>
<td>Ham Tomato Soup Grilled Cheese Choice of Fruit</td>
<td>Cheese Pizza Vegetable Choice of Fruit Milk</td>
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IN PHOTOS - Cattaraugus County Sheriff’s Deputy Chudy recently visited with Pre-kindergarten students in Ms. Jurewicz’ class. See story on page 7.