In November, Mr. Herrick moved into the principal position at Ogden International School on the north side of the city. In a letter to our community, Herrick said that “the decision to leave Hancock was an incredibly difficult one to make. The privilege of serving as your principal and partner for these last few years has been the most formative and important experience of my professional life.”

He went on to say, “Ms. Puentes and Ms. Garfield are ready and capable of leading this school community and will continue to refine our current practices, while seeking and developing innovative solutions to the next round of challenges.”

Ms. Puentes accepted the interim principal position. In a letter to the community, she stated, “As a former Hancock teacher, Dean of Students, and Assistant Principal, I am now honored to continue this work as your new Interim Principal. Our vision and mission is personal to me, not only as an alumni of this community but now as a parent of a student here. If we want to empower our students to be confident in themselves as learners in top-tier institutions, then we need to ensure our practices allow them the space to think critically, while providing them with opportunities to engage in authentic collaboration with their peers.”

In order to move from interim principal to principal, the Local School Council needs to offer Ms. Puentes a contract offer for four years. They will decide soon.

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Hancock’s Shakespeare Slam Team Advanced to Final Competition

The team, coached by Ms. Baranoff and Ms. Nugent, advanced to the final round of the competition, which will take place on December 9 from 6-9 p.m. at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater at Navy Pier. The competition involves teams performing works by and inspired by Shakespeare.

Photo courtesy of Ms. Baranoff

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Hancock Has a New Principal

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December 2019

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September Heat Article

“September had some of the most hottest days and while in school, it was one of the worst feelings. I remember being in class and I started to feel really dizzy and weak and began to lose focus in class. It was hard for me to concentrate in the work and I just wanted to go home.”
— Joselyn Posada

“It was so hot that I felt myself dehydrating.”
— Tonantzin Contreras

“I never knew that testing in high temperatures can actually result in lower test results. This is an issue that has been around our school with air conditioning and I have noticed that it is difficult concentrating when the temperatures are high.”
— Aldo Vazquez

“Something that stood out to me was that although Hancock is a selective enrollment school, it doesn’t have the basic necessities a Selective Enrollment school should have. During the hot weather, it affects my concentration. It affects my ability to learn. I start feeling distracted, tired, distraught.”
— Lizbeth Hernandez

“Students were more focused on going home, losing interest in class due to the extreme heat.”
— Rachel Arroyo

“Though we may need to pull through the heat for a couple more years, it’s great we’re getting a new building. I feel uncomfortable/annoyed at the heat which was made worse at times due to the over crowded classrooms. I find it odd though how some places in the school get hotter than others. I also feel sympathy for the teachers in the hot classes that have to stay more time.”
— Carmen Hermosillo

“The September heat made it hard for me to stay focused and on task. Personally when overheated, I felt ill, which made the school day very uncomfortable”
— Brianna Casto

Teens Need Better Sleep Habits

"I get less than 7 hours of sleep almost every night and still maintained a 3.7-4.0 GPA. The little sleep makes me tired throughout the day and makes it harder to focus in class. Along with that comes stress, frustration, and often meals skipped. It's not that teens 'don't know why they get little sleep,' we know why and it's just difficult managing work and time."
— Brianna Negron

"A positive way my amount of sleep has helped me is giving myself more time to get any homework or any assignments done. We don't want to go to school the next day being called out on for not doing homework."
— Julissa Rios

"The amount of sleep I have gotten has affected me negatively. Sometimes, in the mornings, I am in a very bad mood because I have to wake up. Often times, I have a hard time staying awake in classes too"
— D.C.

"I believe that the amount of sleep I have gotten affects me negatively. Sometimes, in the mornings, I am in a very bad mood because I have to wake up. Often times, I have a hard time staying awake in classes too"
— Kaitlyn Miranda

"The amount of sleep I get varies from night to night and it isn’t consistent. The negative affect that I get from the amount of sleep I get is that I always feel tired and since, I’m tired it’s harder to stay concentrated in class."
— Andrea Rentería
Are You Creating Your Own Loneliness?

"I myself have done it few times where I go on my phone and next thing I know I spend like 3 hours straight on it. It makes me feel like I wasted my day when I could've done something much more productive. I am going to work on that."

-- Daniela Medina

"Not too long ago I myself took some time off of social media. It was the best decision I've made. Within that time, subsequently, I became more productive. The hours in my day lasted longer, and stress left my life."

-- Fatima Navarro

"On average, I spent around 3 hours on social media a day. and though 3 hours is a long time, to not do anything but sit around using my phone, I would still not ever delete my social media apps. Like most people, I use social media on a daily basis, I use it so much that it has become a part of my daily routine. It is now as vital to my boredom and entertainment as food is to living. Many of us have become so hypnotized by social media, that deleting out apps would undoubtedly create torture on ourselves."

-- Maria Carlos

"While I only have two apps related to social media: Snapchat and Tumblr, I feel both have a heavy presence in my life which restrict me from performing other engaging activities."

-- Erik Toledo

"Deleting part of my regular routine, forever? Nope. I will consider leaving the social media world for 3-4 months in order to find myself. I wouldn’t delete media forever because it’s part of teenage culture and it’s built in my life already. I can’t imagine deleting apart of my life. As mentioned before, I am looking forward for a social media detox to get back on my feet."

-- Kasandra Bahena

"This made me realize that I do procrastinate more on my homework when just ‘taking a break’ and scrolling through my feed or snapchat stories. Deleting Facebook in 2017 was a decision I don’t regret doing, but it’s going to be hard to ignore the instinct to check up on other peoples lives."

-- Mariana Vaca

Block Schedule

"Having a block schedule has allowed me to participate in the school’s soccer, volleyball, and track team, without having to spend long nights working on homework. Having a traditional schedule does not give teachers and students the chance to go over and complete a lesson in class. Having 8 classes a day also makes it more difficult to memorize the topics that were discussed in each class."

-- Brayan Villa

"I have more time in class to do my work, teachers have more time to explain the material, and there is no type of rush. Classes are longer and sometimes students get distracted or stranded in their own thoughts. A block schedule gives you more time to complete your assignments. This is highly beneficial for students who take multiple AP courses."

-- Jaqueline Ruiz

"I believe the block schedule we have at Hancock is beneficial for both teachers and students. The block schedule, indeed, allows for students to have more time to complete their assignments. Sometimes its a disadvantage because knowing this, teachers give you way more work. Having more time obviously means you would do it."

-- Fernanda Padilla

Tell us whatchoo got to say!

Believe it or not—Hancock cares whatchoo think and do.

Submit your writing, photography, or art!

See Mr. Salazar in 201.
Chess Team Wins!

Congratulations to Hancock’s Chess Team, coached by Mr. May, for winning third place in the high-school sectionals!

Oswaldo Virto - Co-coach of chess team
Victoria Delgado
Osvaldo Carnalla
Ricardo Monroy
Manny Giron
Izellah Ortiz
Ray Gorz
Alejandro Rios
Nathan Solis

Photos courtesy of Mr. May and Chess Team

Hancock Needs More Mental Health Days  By Melanie Ceballos

Is Hancock doing enough to take care of their students’ mental and emotional health? Many students at Hancock take Honors and/or Advanced Placement classes while also participating in extracurricular activities, which results in academic stress. Hancock should dedicate at least one day every month to doing activities to help students deal with academic stress. Some examples can be pottery, sewing, playing sports, meditation, and anxiety-decreasing exercises.

Students are always doing something. According to an interview in the KQED MindShift podcast, one student shared, “I do sports then I do homework then I eat dinner and go to bed.” A student’s life is packed with school and extracurricular activities that they never have time for anything else. Another person interviewed stated, “Even if you have time, your friends are usually not free because they have busy schedules too.” Schools are so demanding that students can never find time to de-stress and take care of their mental and emotional health on their own.

Personally, I attend Hancock and feel like I never have a moment to breathe. This year I am taking 5 honors classes and 2 AP classes while also participating in cross country. I wake up at 6:30 a.m. every day, take the bus to school, go to cross country practice from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., then go home to eat, shower, do homework, and sleep. Not only do I have practice every day during the season, I have races almost every Saturday. The fact that I am busy almost every day of the week doing something related to school is too much because I never have time for myself or friends or family.

I know many other student athletes struggle with this issue of feeling overwhelmed because students today feel obligated to meet and exceed their parents’ expectations. Not only do parents want their kids to excel in sports, but they have high expectations for their academic success. Students can take...
Mental Health Days
from page 4

4 AP classes in one school year, and some of the students that do this still go a step further to participate in sports. Students sit all day in classes just to go home and sit more while completing their homework. This negatively affects a students’ mental and emotional health. Yes, there are clinics that can help students with this, but these tend to have a price tag and many families are not willing or able to pay. Schools should feel responsible for caring for their students’ mental and emotional health as much as they worry about their academic success.

Overall, being a student or a student athlete can become very tough, which is why there should be days in the school year that are dedicated to mental and emotional health. Hancock has had one day like this before where we could go to the gym and play sports, go to the art teacher Ms. Rosenbaum’s room to make pottery, or going to the English teacher Mr. Splinter’s room to sit and talk, but these days should be more consistent. Both teachers and students would benefit from these days. One day every month is not too much to ask for if it’ll benefit the students in the future. Right now Hancock has made a group to support students in AP classes with limited space. We need to follow this example to help all of our students.

What ideas do you have?

Not All Poems
by Eveny Tinoco

Not all poems are sappy and depressing
Just the ones you’ve read
You know sonnets filled with confusion
I know words spilled onto paper and turned into a masterpiece
Words that were dying to escape
Fighting a fight between rosy cheeks
Words that could never exit teeth and tongue
Words that were finally snatched out of the poet’s throat
and exposed to brand new eyes
They formed beautiful lines
Ones that made you think about them all day
Other lines that made you realize the whole world is falling apart right in front of you
As you dread and force yourself to read about a rivalry between the Capulets and Montagues to better your education
Is when I read poetry about Sandy Hook and what happened between church pews in Sutherland Texas
I read poetry that makes cocoons form in my stomach and by the time I reach the last line of the poem they will have turned into butterflies
Not all poetry is sappy and depressing
Just the poems you’ve read
Our current generation ignores the fact that failure is a positive aspect, resulting in the opening of new opportunities.

Looking back at the article “Empathy”--published by Invisibilia--we realize why failure is commonly ignored. Our mood changes are a big part of us that signify how failure makes us feel. Our mood does change as we begin to second guess our decisions because on our first attempt, we failed. The article highlights the struggle we face in society now. Failure outrages us, makes us feel like everyone is against us. We lie to our peers because we don’t want pity from them. We do not look for help and decide that living with failure is a lifestyle: a trend that will never end.

As a senior in high school, I can refer to my past three years as failures. Failures that made me who I am now. Junior year, I decided to take AP English Language, a writing course. I thought I was good at writing over the years. Once I began that class, I realized I wasn't. During the first semester, I received Ds and Fs on my writing assignments. For some time, I decided to not care anymore. I constantly asked myself, “What is driving me to receive these grades?”

At that point, I gave up. It was a long period in which my ignorance did not let me see the bigger picture: I had flaws that instead of working on, I ignored. Second chances were given to me, but my mindset always rejected the idea of trying again.

Over the years, I constantly questioned my ignorance towards failure. I believed it was me just being lazy. I believed that was my problem until I realized that my mindset always made me believe that I could not do better because as I saw others succeed on their first try. I contemplated the scenario of failing again and again in my head every day because I didn’t want to encounter failure again. After many months, I realized that fear is something we overcome once we face it. I began to rewrite those essays I failed. I failed a couple more times. After three tries, I finally received the A on my personal essay--which I never imagined receiving.

Yes, receiving the A was a huge accomplishment, but the overall accomplishment I made that year was learning that once I don’t fear something, I begin to enjoy it. Now as I sit in my journalism class, I enjoy having time to write about my past obstacles. I believe that by facing my fear of failure, I gave myself the chance to be the writer I am now.

Because fear is a human instinct, there is no “right solution” on how to avoid it. The fear of failure is always going to be something we will come across during our lifespan. What will impact us is the decision we make, letting failure bring us down or letting it be a lesson. Fear is something we are born with; failure is built upon us over the years, which later shapes us to be who we are.

Failure can lead to disappointment, but it can also give us the strength and motivation to do better. If it wasn't for failure, we would not know our strengths and weaknesses. Fear can help us overcome our weaknesses, leading to the opportunities in school and at our jobs. As we encounter rough patches, we should always take failure as a life lesson.

Do you accept failure?
What have you done with your moments of struggle and failure?
Is there a moment when you have to give up or move on or do you keep going?
Chicago Teachers Union Strike by Mateo Chavez
Although Illinois did not hold elections this November, other states saw surprising results. In Virginia’s 2019 Election, Democrat Attorney General Andy Beshear won in a narrow victory. Mr. Beshear was ahead of Gov. Matt Bevin by 5,100 votes with 100 percent of the precincts counted, according to The New York Times. It was a big deal since democrats haven’t won Virginia in 20 years. Attorney General Andy Beshear said, “It’s a message that says our elections don’t have to be about right versus left. They are still about right versus wrong.”

In Kentucky’s statewide race, voters rejected Incumbent Governor Matt Bevin and elected democrat Andy Beshear. Daniel Cameron, a republican, won the attorney general’s race and has become the first African American to do so in that state, according to The New York Times.

In Virginia Ghazala Hashmi, a democrat, is the first Muslim woman elected to the Virginia senate. Meanwhile, in Arizona, Regina Romero won Tucson mayor’s race, becoming the first woman and first Latina to lead that city, all according to The New York Times.

The reason Illinois does not hold an election in 2019 is because we are even number state in elections. Illinois follows the Congress calendar which elects during even years, while states like Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey and Virginia all elect their Congressional leaders in odd-numbered years. Nevertheless, Hancock students led efforts to recruit voters for the 2020 election. Social Studies teacher Ms. Chapman helped the Signature connect with some of these activists.

“If You Can Vote in 2020—Vote!”

by Richard Castelan and Mateo Chavez

“People need to vote more. If you want more equality, then vote for people that will help that become a thing. The laws here affect everyone. If you can’t hear some people’s voices, you have to give them a voice somehow. Voting shows what people want or what they need. I want to see if politicians stick to their word because if they start changing what they said, then I would feel like my vote was wasted.”

—Eileen Garcia

“I think everybody should vote. It really could change the way the election goes, flip the tide over to the other party. Our voting system needs some reforming. I think that we should do something about it as quickly as we can.”

—Alexis Mata