

It is always a great day to be a Wildcat!

The Blair-Taylor School District is very fortunate to have such amazingly supportive communities in which to live and grow. Students and staff feel very proud to have such a beautiful building in which to learn, and now that the dust has settled, we have begun focusing on some other aspects of education. In July, we wrote to area businesses asking for individuals to join in a discussion about the following items: **employability skills, The Wildcat Way, and a potential Hall or Wall of Honor/Fame.**

During our discussion of employability skills, area business leaders provided information about what they felt employability skills should look like as we prepare our kids to be career and college ready. The following employability skills were developed:

COMMUNICATION SKILLS: writing skills, including penmanship; interviewing skills, including body language; respect; appearance; manners; questioning skills; listening skills; ability to communicate and converse in person, not just through technology

WORK ETHIC: initiative and experience through working at an early age, hard worker, on time, self-directed, detail oriented, coachable, ability to think past the first steps, team worker, resourceful

PERSONAL VALUES: value driven, dedicated, passionate, humble, attitude, ethical, has integrity, grateful, empathetic, trustworthy, honest

KNOWLEDGEABLE AND INFORMED: knowledge about the company they are interviewing or working for

The Blair-Taylor Middle-High School has been working for a number of years on teaching students **THE WILDCAT WAY** and what it means to be respectful, responsible, have integrity, and be successful in all classes and in all areas of the school building. Through some very hard summer work and first semester work by teachers, we are now extending the Wildcat Way learning traits into the elementary school; however, the United Campus traits now include: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, HONESTY and SAFETY. We would like to extend these traits into the community as well, so that students know what is expected of them and the community can support them as they grow in these traits. Once again, we are looking for leadership and support from area business leaders as we move the WILDCAT WAY expectations into our Blair-Taylor Community.

We have many reasons to be proud of our community and its residents. Now that we have a united campus, we have the opportunity to publicly recognize former students or community members who have supported the education of our children. Through these meetings, we will begin a conversation about what we would like to recognize in a “Hall of Fame/Honor.” In addition to our wall of honor/fame discussion, we have also begun the process of crafting a vision for creating a veteran memorial to recognize our veterans or Blair-Taylor grads serving in the military.

We want to thank our community members for taking time out of their busy schedules to help our students learn and grow in and out of school. It truly takes a community to raise a child.

Sincerely,
Jeffrey S. Eide, Superintendent



From the Desk of the 7-12 Principal...

It is hard to believe that we are nearly halfway through the school year. It seems like just yesterday that we were planning for Homecoming! It sure was nice to begin this year in a beautiful, completed building! As the year continues to fly by, there are several things to note.

Dates of Spring State Assessments

The **Wisconsin Forward Exam** has been developed to replace the Badger Exam, which replaced the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam to assess English language arts and mathematics skills for students in grades three through eight, science knowledge and skills for students in grades four and eight, and social studies knowledge and skills for students in grades four, eight and 10. The testing window for all students in Wisconsin to be evaluated using the Wisconsin Forward Exam is March 28th through May 20th. We will establish an assessment schedule for students based on several factors, such as optimal testing times of the day, comfortable settings for testing, adequate breaks between assessments, and individual student needs. Once the schedule is set, we will send information home, so that you can help prepare your child to do his or her best.

The **ACT Aspire** assessment is given to ninth and tenth grade students to assess their knowledge and skills in the areas of English, reading, math, science, and writing. A student's performance on this assessment will help predict how he or she will perform on both the ACT and ACT WorkKeys when they reach 11th grade. These early high school assessments will help identify students who need extra help to learn skills they will need for the ACT and, more importantly, for career and college experiences after graduating. The ACT Aspire test window is April 25th to May 27th.

The **ACT Plus Writing** exam is given to all eleventh grade students in Wisconsin to assess reading, math, English, science, and writing. The ACT can be used by students for a variety of purposes, including college admission, scholarships, course placement, and NCAA eligibility. Eleventh grade students will also take The ACT WorkKeys, which contains the following subtests: Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information. ACT WorkKeys helps students identify areas of strength that may be applied to future careers. ACT Plus Writing will be given statewide on March 1st. ACT WorkKeys will be administered on March 2nd.

Good Attendance is a Key to Success

Preparing for life after high school takes a great deal of work. Being in school on time daily gives students the best opportunity for successful preparation. It can be difficult to catch up with school work after excessive absences, which can cause students additional stress. Being in school on time not only gives students the best opportunity for academic success, it also prepares students for future employment opportunities where excessive absences could result in loss of a job.

Our student handbook, found on the middle and high school pages of the Blair-Taylor website, provides details about the attendance expectations for students. It is important to note that a student who has five or more unexcused absences in a semester may be referred to the county district attorney. *Please remember to call the office (989-2525) or send a note within two days when your child is unable to attend school, so that he or she will not be recorded as unexcused.* Excused absences in excess of 15 days may result in the requirement of doctors' notes to excuse further absences.

Graduation is Coming Soon!

Mark your calendar if you haven't already! Graduation will take place on **Saturday, May 28th, at 1:00PM** in the middle/high school gymnasium. Doors will be opened at 11:00AM. Everyone is welcome to attend. Graduates receive their gowns when they arrive at the school and turn them in before receiving their diplomas. Families are welcome to take pictures with their graduate before he or she returns the gown.

The school board requires that all students present their portfolios. Stay tuned for information about the presentation schedule. Parents and other family members are encouraged to attend the presentation, as they are a wonderful reflection on a student's experience in high school and plans for the future.

Senior Awards Night takes place the Sunday before graduation. This year it will take place on May 22nd. The time will be determined. Traditionally, it follows the baccalaureate service in the auditorium. All seniors are invited to attend.

8th Grade Recognition - Thursday, June 2nd

Another important event is the Recognition Event held in honor of the eighth grade students as they prepare to transition to high school. This event will take place on the last day of school, Thursday, June 2nd, at 2:00PM in the auditorium. Students are asked to dress up. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Dana T. Eide
Middle/High School Principal



From the Desk of the Elementary Principal...

As we enter 2016 and approach the midpoint of the school year, I find myself reflecting on how fast the school years come and go. Our students grow and learn at such an incredible rate. On a personal note, my own children are growing up way too fast, and I'm sure there are many parents reading this article who would say the same about their own children. No matter how busy our lives get, it is so important to cherish each and every stage of our students' lives, hold them accountable when appropriate, compliment them when appropriate, celebrate with them, teach them manners, and most importantly, spend time with them.

It's been an honor continuing to get to know all of the wonderful students and parents at Blair-Taylor. We have amazing students, parents, and an unbelievably talented and caring staff. Although we do have a great school community, we continually strive to become even better. This year, we have continued teaching behavioral expectations and used data collection to make appropriate changes to maximize students' academic and behavioral success. We have begun Cycle 2 of PAWS (Personalized Academic Work Study) to allow intervention or enrichment time for each individual student, according to individual needs. Our staff has continued working as a professional learning community to hone their skills regarding best practices in relation to curricular resources, teaching, and learning.

As we continue the school year, I want to remind everyone that we are a team working together. Please communicate your thoughts and/or concerns regarding your child's success at school with their classroom teacher or myself. Please allow your child to be on a routine each day, and please continue reading with your child each night. Reading with or to your child each night pays huge dividends over time!

The Wildcat Way Kickoff

Blair-Taylor Elementary students are continuing to learn what it takes to be a Wildcat. The Wildcat Way is being responsible, respectful, safe, and honest. The reason behind The Wildcat Way is to promote a school environment that is conducive to all students' learning. In many cases, there is a direct correlation between behavioral success and academic success. Students who are behaviorally successful have a higher chance for academic success. Therefore, on January 4th, 5th, and 6th, all students were given a formal lesson with examples of how to properly

respond to various situations in different environments. Students also modeled expected behavior in each of the following environments:

- Hallway/Sidewalk
- Lunchroom/Commons
- LMC
- Restrooms
- Events in the Gym
- Bus
- Auditorium
- Offices
- Playground
- All Technology

Please take time to talk to your child about what they learned on January 4th, 5th, and 6th.

Wisconsin Forward Exam

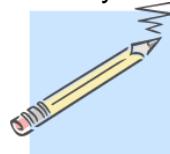
Beginning in the spring of 2016, Wisconsin students in grades 3 through 8 will take the Forward Exam. The new custom assessment will be administered in English language arts and mathematics in grades 3 through 8, in science in grades 4 and 8, and in social studies in 4, 8, and 10. High school students in grades 9 through 11 will continue to take the ACT suite of exams.

The Wisconsin Forward Exam has replaced the previous test known as the Badger Exam. The test window for the Wisconsin Forward Exam is March 28th—May 20th. There will be additional information from DPI in the coming months regarding preparation for this assessment, including practice tests to be released during February of 2016.

I can assure you that our staff and students will be well prepared for this online test platform as additional information comes from the Department of Public Instruction.

For additional information regarding the Wisconsin Forward Exam, please visit the following link:
<http://dpi.wi.gov/assessment/forward/sample-items>

Lynn S. Halverson, Blair-Taylor Elementary Principal



Elementary Report Cards will be sent home on February 1st.



School Counseling News

Hilary Walters, 7-12 Counselor
989-2525, ext. 204; walteh@btsd.k12.wi.us

FAFSA Night

On **Monday, March 2nd**, from **5:00 - 7:00 pm**, Blair-Taylor will be offering a FAFSA Completion Event at the High School for senior students and parents. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is used to apply for federal student aid programs such as grants, work-study, and loans. It is also used to determine some state aid and financial aid offered by colleges and universities. A college access advisor from Great Lakes will be on hand to answer questions and help students and parents complete their FAFSA applications. Try to have your taxes filed by this date if you plan to attend the FAFSA Completion Event. You will need to refer to the following information to complete your FAFSA:

- Your social security number
- Your driver's license (if any)
- 2015 Federal tax returns (student & parent)
- 2014 Federal tax returns if 2015 returns are not complete (student & parent)
- Knowledge of current savings and checking amounts

Senior Exit Interviews

All seniors graduating this May will participate in a Senior Exit Interview, where they will showcase their portfolio and share their high school experience. We are looking for 10-15 local business professionals and/or community members to sit in on the interview process. The interviews are tentatively scheduled for the week of May 4th and will primarily be conducted during the school day. Please contact Hilary Walters, school counselor, if you are interested in participating in this experience.

Senior Awards Night

Senior Awards Night is scheduled for Sunday, May 22nd, at 6:30pm in the high school commons/auditorium. Awards Night is a special night at Blair-Taylor High School. We are amazed each year by the generous contributions our local communities make to assist students in continuing their education. Several non-monetary awards are also presented at this event as well. This is a chance to recognize those who put forth their talents in the classroom and in other activities. Seniors should notify Mrs. Walters no later than May 16th of any awards, scholarships, or grants they have received if they want them to be recognized at the banquet.

Scholarships

Seniors are encouraged to check the Blair-Taylor High School website (<http://www.cms4schools.com/btsd/high/scholarships.cfm>) for up-to-date scholarship information. **NEVER** pay for a scholarship search!!



2015-16 ACT Schedule

Test Date	Registration Deadline	\$39.50	(Late Registration) + \$25.00
February 6, 2016	January 8, 2016	January 9–15, 2016	
April 9, 2016	March 4, 2016	March 5–18, 2016	
June 11, 2016	May 6, 2016	May 7–20, 2016	

Students need to login to www.actstudent.org to register for the ACT. Students planning to apply to Marquette or University of Minnesota-Twin Cities will need to take the writing portion of the ACT as well. Students applying out of state are encouraged to check with admissions guidelines of their particular colleges. Free ACT Prep is available to: www.number2.com www.knowhow2gowisconsin.org www.march2success.com

In accordance with state testing requirements, all Blair-Taylor juniors will be taking the ACT (free of charge) on March 1st, 2016. This exam will take place at the school during the school day. Students should put forward their best effort on this exam as it can be used as an official score for both 2 and 4 year college options. **On March 2nd, all juniors will take the ACT WorkKeys assessment**, which will measure foundational work skills essential to career success.

Compass Testing

COMPASS Testing is available at the following locations; call to make an appointment:

LA CROSSE

400 Seventh Street North, Academic Resource Center,
Room 200, La Crosse, WI 54602
608.785.9566
Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri., 9:00 am
Tues., Wed., Thurs., 1:00 pm
Wed., 3:30 pm

INDEPENDENCE

36084 Walnut Street, Independence, WI 54747
715.985.3392
1st Thursday of the month 1:00 pm
3rd Monday of the month 6:00 pm

BLACK RIVER FALLS

24 Fillmore Street, Black River Falls, WI 54615
715.284.2253
1st Thursday of the month 5-8 pm
3rd Thursday of the month 9-12 pm

Blair-Taylor will also be offering the Compass in March (date yet to be determined).

Practice Compass can be found at:

www.compasstestquestions.com
www.compass-sample.com

www.act.org/compass/sample

**Students who participate in the free and reduced lunch program are encouraged to see Mrs. Walters for a fee waiver for the ACT and Compass.



School Delays and Closings

The Blair-Taylor School District collaborates with surrounding school districts regarding decisions related to school delays and closings. Student safety is our main consideration in making a decision to close, start late, or dismiss early.

If we choose to have a late start, a two-hour delay is our standard procedure. On a late start day, there will be no morning Early Childhood, 4 year-old kindergarten, or Head Start programs. A late start call is made if we feel it is likely that weather conditions will improve as the day progresses.

Our second choice is to close school for the day. In cooperation with the National Weather Service, we choose to cancel school if we feel the weather will not improve throughout the day.

The third option is an early release from school. This decision is made on days when we are already in session and the weather changes. In most cases, an early dismissal will be at 1:00 p.m.

We try to make our decision for a late start or cancellation by 6:00 p.m. the night before. The local radio and television stations are notified of our decision. In addition, we also use school messenger to notify parents. If we close school or have a late start, we normally put out a general message that will be sent to the primary parent/guardian in our student information system. If we close early, we will send a message to the primary, secondary, and emergency contacts in our student information system. Our reason for this is because we do not know who the primary pick up is after school; therefore, we send the information to all contacts we have for the student. For this reason, it is very important to keep your child's emergency contact information, including telephone numbers, up to date in our student database.

If a decision is made to close school for the day or to close early due to inclement weather, all after-school practices and evening events will be cancelled.

Decisions to close school are made based on the best information we have early in the morning or during the school day. Making decisions on previous evening weather predictions can be difficult as weather patterns vary within a weather coverage area. We want to make a late start or closing decision as early as possible, knowing parents may have to make childcare arrangements for the day.

Blair-Taylor School Board Members

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The school board meets at 5:30 on the third Monday of each month, alternating between the community center in Taylor and the board room in the K-12 building.



Child Development Day Screening: February 25th

Each year, the special education department, in conjunction with Western Dairyland Head Start and various agencies, conducts pre-school screenings. All children should be screened at least one time prior to kindergarten. Vision and hearing should be checked twice before kindergarten. Child Development Day is held for students and parents to learn about child development and for the child to be screened for potential need areas. This year's Child Development Day will be held on **February 25th, 2016**. To set up a screening time, please contact 608-989-9835.



OPEN ENROLLMENT

Wisconsin's inter-district public school open enrollment program allows parents

to apply for their children to attend school districts other than the one in which they live. Applications may be submitted to up to three nonresident school districts. Students in 5-year-old kindergarten to grade 12 may apply to participate in open enrollment. Open enrollment for prekindergarten, 4-year old kindergarten, and early childhood education is limited. Parents should call their resident school district to find out if their preschool-aged children qualify for open enrollment.

The open enrollment application period for the 2015-16 school year is from **February 1-April 30, 2016**. **The application period closes at 4:00 p.m. on April 30, 2016**. Late applications will not be accepted for any reason.

Parents may apply in one of two ways: On-line (recommended) at <http://oe.dpi.wi.gov>. Although on-line application is recommended, paper applications may be obtained from the Dept. of Public Instruction and must be delivered (hand delivery is recommended) to the nonresident school district. Applications may also be picked up at the school offices. If you have any questions, please call the Blair-Taylor School District Office at 608-989-2881.



ELECTION OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

There will be a School Board election for three positions on the Blair-Taylor School Board on Tuesday, April 5, 2016. All regular polling locations will be open.

One position is up for election in District I (the former Blair District). This position is currently held by David Smikrud, and he has not filed for re-election. Three candidates have filed for election to this position: George "Joe" Clark, Kevin Lisowski, and David Thompson. Because we have three candidates who have filed for one position, there will be a **Primary Election on Tuesday, February 16, 2016**. All regular polling places will be open. Voters will vote for one candidate in the primary.

The other positions are in District II (the former Taylor District). These positions are currently held by Fern Aleckson and Blaine Koxlien, DVM, and they have filed for re-election. Voters will cast a vote for two candidates. There is no primary election for these positions.

The filing deadline for Declaration of Candidacy was January 5, 2016. No other candidates' names other than those listed will appear on the ballot.

All voters in the district are eligible to vote for all positions on the board. A candidate wishing to run as a write-in must live in the polling area (District I or District II) for which they are a write-in.



Upcoming Events: Feb., 2016-April, 2016

Mon., Feb. 1	GBB Home vs WHTL 6pm
Tues., Feb. 2	BBB @ Indee 6pm
Wed., Feb. 3	5 PM - 6:15 PM: 3rd/4th GBB Practice 5:30 PM - 6:45 PM: 1st/2nd Grade BB 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM: 5th Girls N.W. BB 7 PM - 9: PM: Adult BB
Thurs., Feb. 4	GBB Home vs Augusta 6pm and Hoops for Hope WR @ Luther Conf. Championship 7pm
Fri., Feb. 5	BBB Home vs ES 6pm
Sat., Feb. 6	GBB @ Royall (JAG) 3 / 4:30 BBB @ Royall (JAG) 3 / 6:16
Sun., Feb. 7	7 PM - 9 PM: Open Gym
Mon., Feb. 8	BBB @ WHTL 6pm
Tues., Feb. 9	GBB @ MM 6pm
Wed., Feb. 10	5 PM - 6:15 PM: 3rd/4th GBB Practice 5:30 PM - 06:45 PM: 1st/2nd Grade BB 6:30 PM - 8 PM: 5th Girls N.W. BB 7 PM - 9 PM: Adult BB
Thurs., Feb. 11	BBB @ Augusta 6pm
Fri., Feb. 12	No School; GBB @ ACLH 6pm
Sat., Feb. 13	WR Regional Home C-team GBB tourney @ Elmwood
Sun., Feb. 14	7 PM - 9 PM: Open Gym
Mon., Feb. 15	GBB @ CFC 6pm 5:30 PM - 8 PM: School Board Meeting
Tues. Feb. 16	BBB Home vs MM 6pm
Wed., Feb. 17	6:30 PM - 8 PM: 5th Girls N.W. BB 7 PM - 9 PM: Adult BB
Thurs., Feb. 18	Sub District Forensics @ CFC 3:30-9pm
Fri., Feb. 19	BBB @ ACLH 6pm
Sat., Feb. 20	GBB Home Conference Cross-Over Game WR Sectional
Sun., Feb. 21	7 PM - 9 PM: Open Gym
Mon., Feb. 22	BBB Home vs CFC 6pm and 50/50 fundraiser
Tues. Feb. 23	GBB Regional
Wed., Feb. 24	6:30 PM - 8 PM: 5th Girls N.W. BB 7 PM - 9 PM: Adult BB
Thurs., Feb. 25	Sub District Forensics @ CFC Make-up Date WR State
Fri., Feb. 26	GBB Regional WR State
Sat., Feb. 27	WR State GBB Reg. Final 7 AM - 7 PM: 7th Grade Boys N.W. BB Tournament
Sun., Feb. 28	7 PM - 9 PM: Open Gym
Tues., Mar 1	BBB Regional
Wed., Mar 2	6:30 PM - 8 PM: 5th Girls N.W. BB 7 PM - 9 PM: Adult BB
Thurs., Mar 3	GBB Sectional
Fri., Mar 4	No School In-Service Day BBB Regional
Sat., Mar 5	Couleeland Honors Band BBB Regional Final GBB Sectional Final
Sun., Mar 6	7 PM - 9 PM: Open Gym
Mon., Mar 7	Track Starts
Wed., Mar 9	6:30 PM - 8 PM: 5th Girls N.W. BB

	7 PM - 9 PM: Adult BB
Thurs., Mar 10	BBB Sectional GBB State
Fri., Mar 11	GBB State
Sat., Mar 12	BBB Sectional Final GBB State
Mon., Mar 14	SB Starts
Wed., Mar 16	6:30 PM - 8 PM: 5th Girls N.W. BB 7 PM - 9 PM: Adult BB
Thurs. Mar 17	BBB State
Fri., Mar 18	BBB State
Sat., Mar 19	BBB State TR @ UW Stout 9am
Mon., Mar 21	BB Starts 5:30 PM - 8 PM: School Board Meeting
Tues., Mar 22	3:30 PM - 7:30 PM: Parent/Teacher Conferences K-12
Wed., Mar 23	6:30 PM - 8 PM: 5th Girls N.W. BB 7 PM - 9 PM: Adult BB
Thurs. Mar 24	SB Home vs ES 5pm
Fri., Mar 25	Easter Break No School
Sat., Mar 26	TR @ UWL 9am
Mon., Mar 28	Easter Break No School
Tues., Mar 29	BB @ WHTL 5pm SB @ WHTL 5pm
Wed., Mar 30	6:30 PM - 8 PM: 5th Girls N.W. BB 7 PM - 9 PM: Adult BB
Thurs., Mar 31	3:30 PM - 07:30 PM: Parent/Teacher Conferences K-12
Fri., April 1	BB Home vs Indee 5pm SB Home vs Indee 5pm
Sat., April 2	HS Solo/Ensemble @ CFC
Tues., April 5	BB @ CFC 5pm SB @ CFC 5pm TR @ Holmen 3:30
Wed., April 6	7 PM - 9 PM: Adult BB
Thurs., April 7	BB @ Fall Creek 5pm SB @ Fall Creek 5pm
Fri., April 8	BB @ Augusta 5pm SB @ Augusta 5pm
Wed., April 13	7 PM - 9 PM: Adult BB
Fri., April 15	No School In-Service Day BB Home vs ACLH 5pm SB Home vs ACLH 5pm
Mon., April 18	BB Home vs Loyal 5pm SB Home vs Loyal 5pm 5:30 PM - 8 PM: School Board Meeting
Tues., April 19	BB @ MM 5pm SB @ MM 5pm
Wed., April 20	HS Large Group @ WHTL 7 PM - 9 PM: Adult BB
Thurs., April 21	TR @ WHTL 5pm
Fri., April 22	BB Home vs ECI 5pm SB Home vs ECI 5pm
Mon., April 25	SB @ ECI 5pm
Tues., April 26	BB @ ES 5pm SB @ ES 5pm
Wed., April 27	7 PM - 9 PM: Adult BB
Thurs., April 28	TR @ MM 5pm
Fri., April 29	BB Home vs WHTL 5pm SB Home vs WHTL 5pm
Sat., April 30	Prom 8-12

SCHOOL DELAYS & CLOSINGS

Student safety is the prime consideration in making a decision relating to school delays or school closings. Normally, one of three decisions is made. The first may be a late start. In this case, a two-hour school delay is our standard procedure. On these 'late start' days there will be no morning Early Childhood, 4-year old kindergarten, or Head Start programs. The second decision we may take is to close school for the day. The third decision is an early release from school, normally at 1:00 p.m.

We realize that parents have to make childcare arrangements for the day. Therefore, we will try to make school delay or closing decisions by 6:00 a.m. if possible.

If a decision is made to close school for the day or to close school early due to inclement weather, all after school practices and all evening activities and/or events will be cancelled.

Listed below are names of the media stations that will be carrying our emergency school closings.

WWIS	99.7 FM	BRF
WHTL	102.3 FM	Whitehall
WKBT	CH 8	La Crosse
WEAU	CH 13	Eau Claire
WXOW	CH 19	La Crescent
WQOW	CH 18	Eau Claire
FOX	24/48	La Crosse/Eau Claire
WAXX	104.5 FM	Eau Claire
WAYY	11.50 AM	Eau Claire
WECL	92.9 FM	Eau Claire
WEAQ	790 AM	Eau Claire
WBIZ	100.7 FM	Eau Claire
WKTY	580 AM	La Crosse
WIZM	14.10 FM	La Crosse
Z93	93.3 FM	La Crosse
WTRV	95.7 FM	La Crosse

SCHOOL MESSENGER

A communication system (phone and/or email) used to deliver information to parents and/or guardians as soon as possible.