Pocantico Hills School District

Communications Committee

Recommendations & Updates

December 2013

Committee Members

Dr. Valencia F. Douglas, Superintendent & Committee Chair

Lauren Amsterdam, Committee Co-Chair, Parent & PTA Executive

Sheila DePaola, Administrative Intern & Teacher

Gina Downes, Secretary to the Superintendent & Parent

Wayne Cobham, SWBOCES Technology Representative
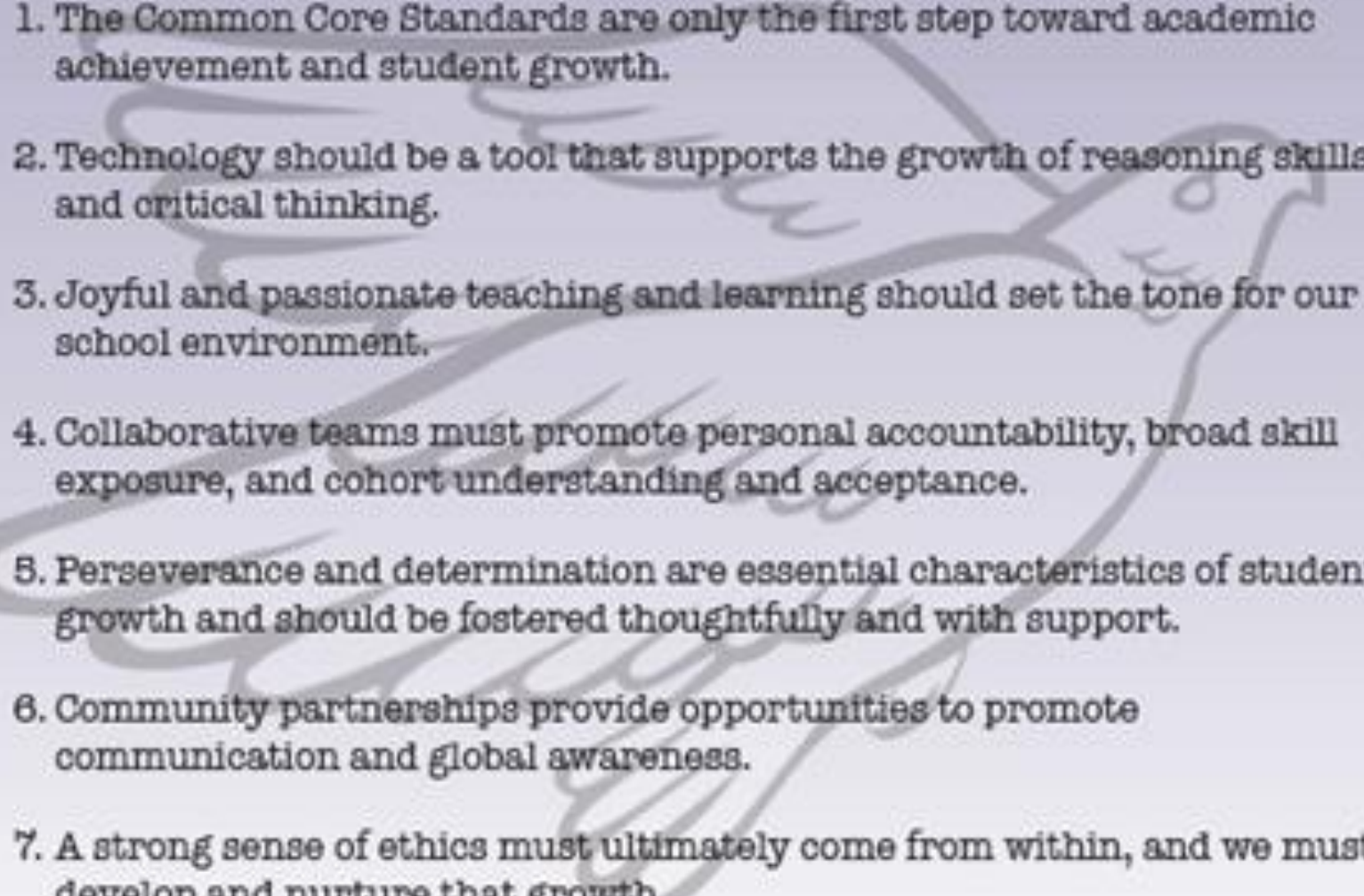
Debra Keiser, SWBOCES PR Representative

Christina Domato, Teacher

Terry Hongell, Teacher

Nathaniel Smith, Parent

Stefanie Bartell Zednik, Parent

Guiding Principles

1. The Common Core Standards are only the first step toward academic achievement and student growth.

2. Technology should be a tool that supports the growth of reasoning skills and critical thinking.

3. Joyful and passionate teaching and learning should set the tone for our school environment.

4. Collaborative teams must promote personal accountability, broad skill exposure, and cohort understanding and acceptance.

5. Perseverance and determination are essential characteristics of student growth and should be fostered thoughtfully and with support.

6. Community partnerships provide opportunities to promote communication and global awareness.

7. A strong sense of ethics must ultimately come from within, and we must develop and nurture that growth.

Background

As we continue to implement the Strategic Plans, the next phase of the process was to form the District Communications Partnership Committee.

Four Meetings- May 15th, June 12th, July 8th and October 31st

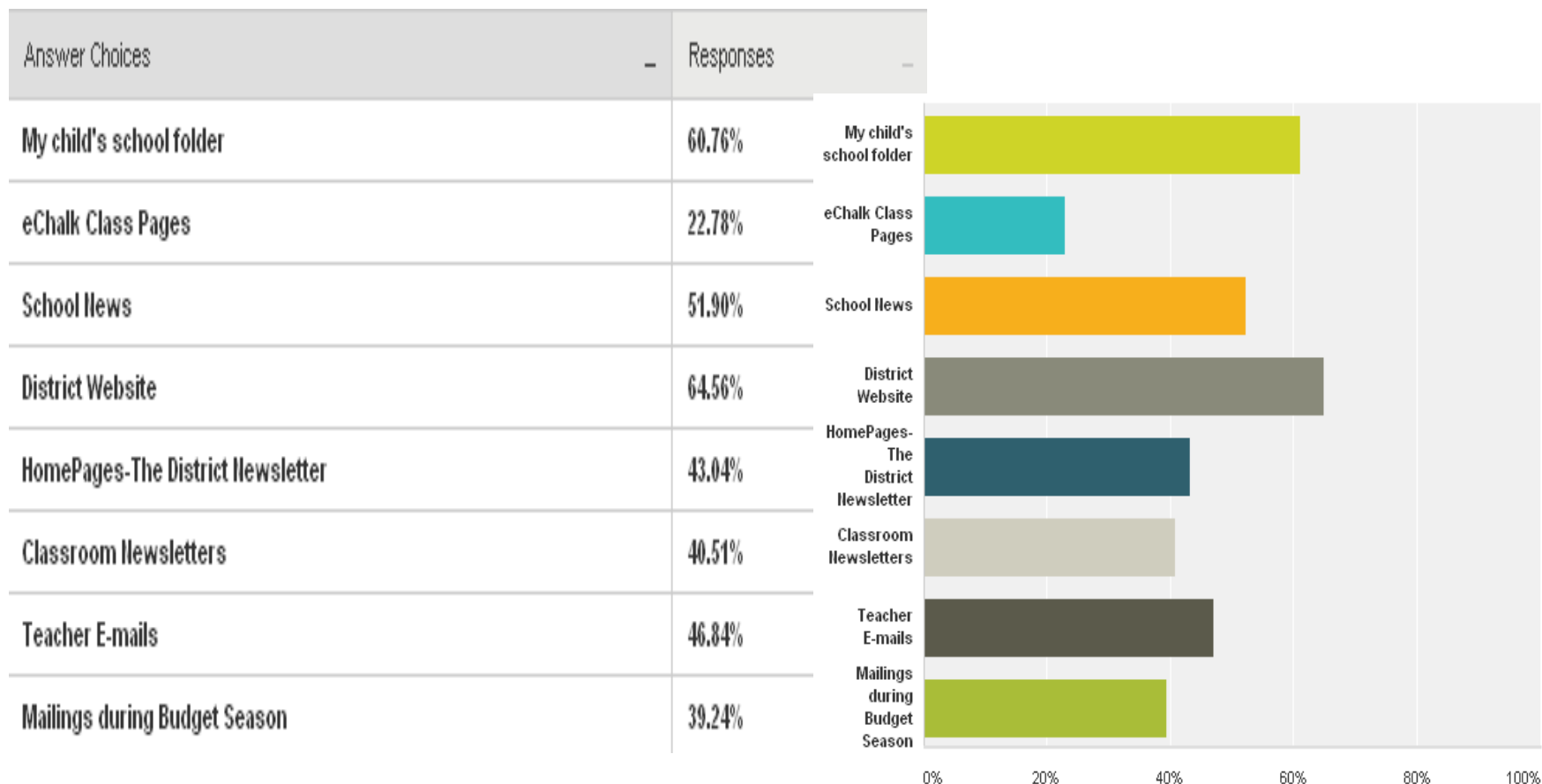Developed & Distributed an online Communications Survey

District Survey

- ❖ Survey was released in August

- ❖ Link was sent home in SCHOOL NEWS

- ❖ Ended with a prompt to register for a custom account in BlackBoard Connect

- ❖ 81 people participated in the survey which was removed from the district website in October

How do you keep up to date with school events?

(Check all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses
My child's school folder	60.76%
eChalk Class Pages	22.78%
School News	51.90%
District Website	64.56%
HomePages-The District Newsletter	43.04%
Classroom Newsletters	40.51%
Teacher E-mails	46.84%
Mailings during Budget Season	39.24%

How would you like us to communicate with you regarding the school and community? *(Check all that apply)*

| Answer Choices	Responses
Text message	45.68%
Standard mail	29.63%
E-mail	91.36%
ConnectEd automated phone call	46.91%
Facebook	11.11%
Home phone voice mail	35.80%
Cell phone voice mail	34.57%
Notes and letters sent home with students	46.91%
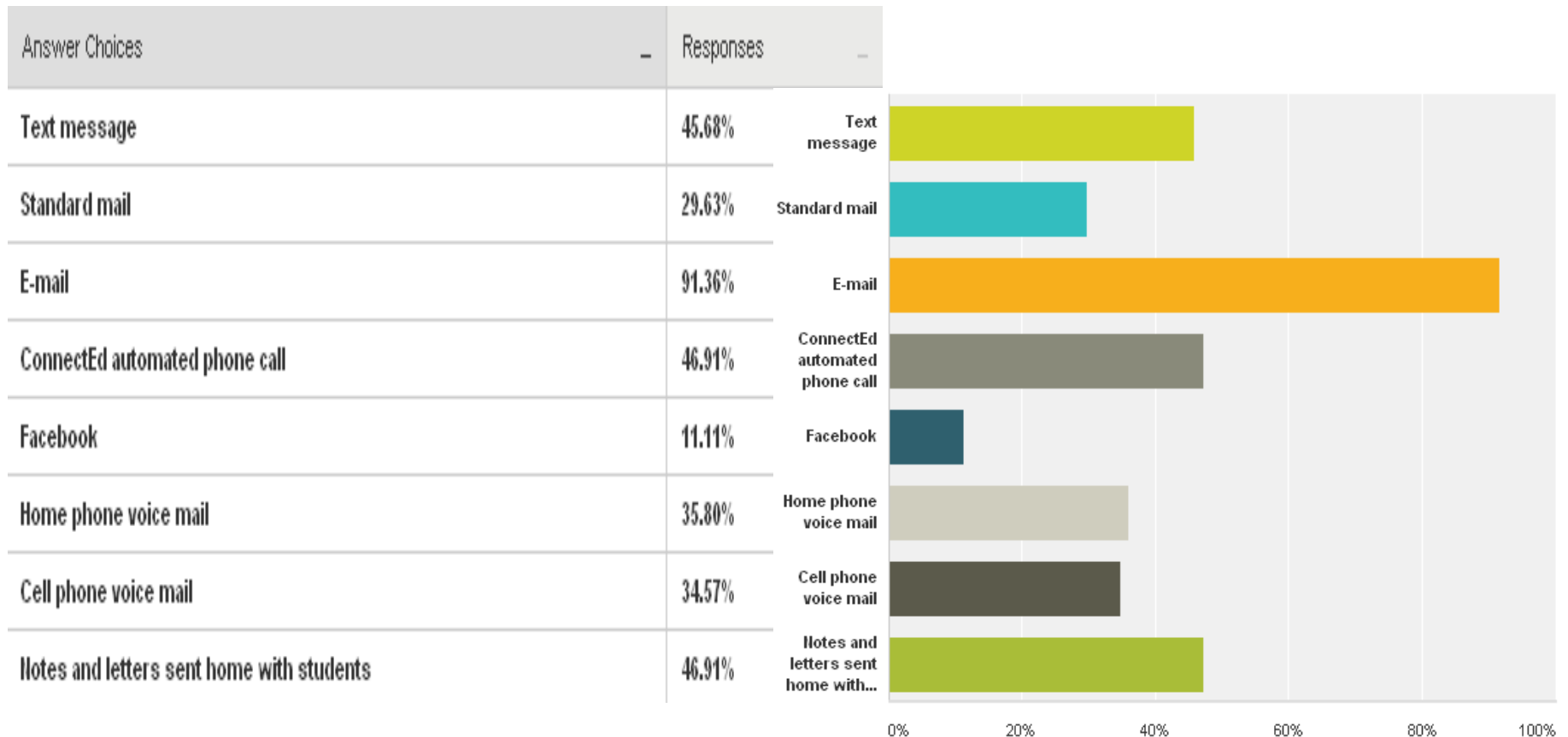
Which, if any of the following communications would you want to receive from the school? *(Check all that apply)*

Answer Choices	Responses
Urgent communications related to public safety	92.59%
Updates about school schedule/closings	83.95%
Updates from your child's teacher(s)	70.37%
Updates and correspondence from the school superintendent	81.48%
Updates about school arts productions, science fairs or other special events	76.54%
Updates about the school budget/voting/elections	83.95%
Updates about school schedule/closings	80.25%
updates related to the swimming pool	70.37%
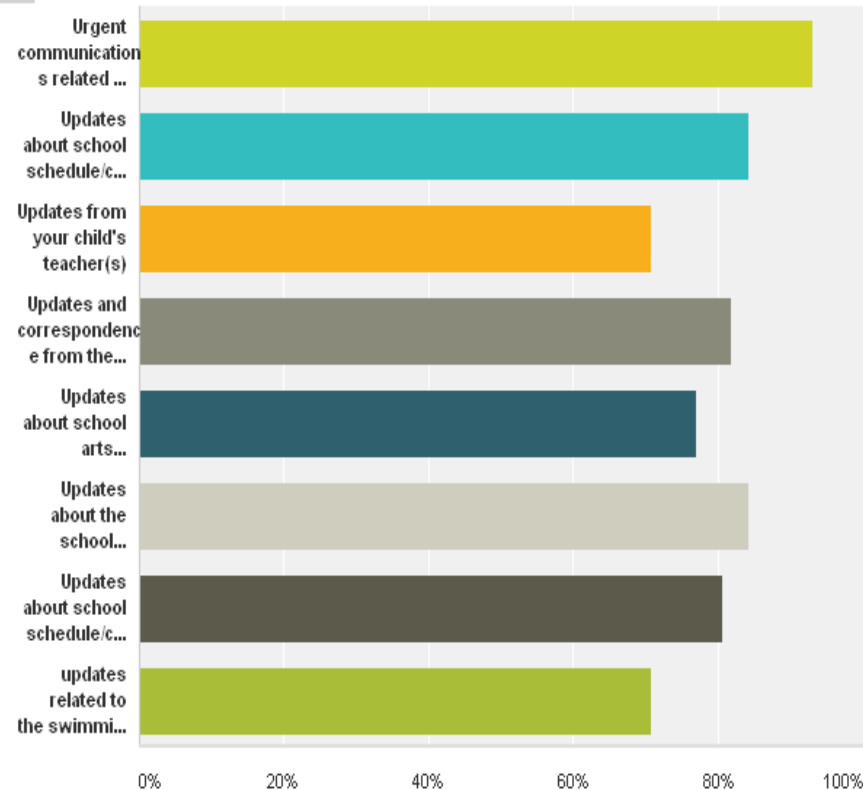
Would you be willing to provide the school with your contact information through any of these media? *(Check all that apply)*
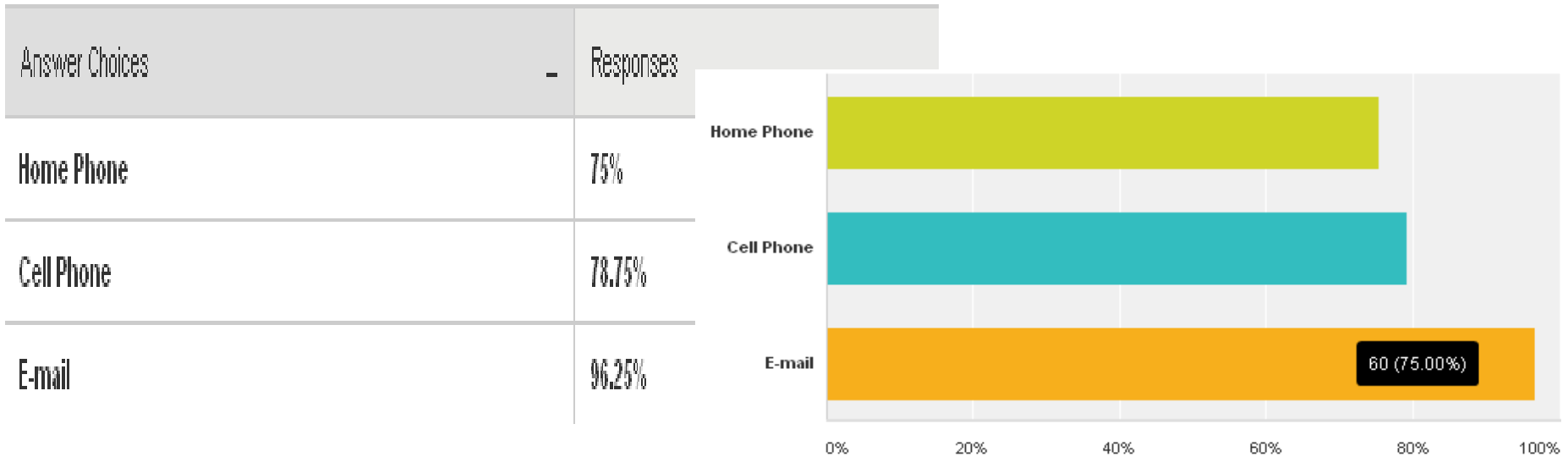
Answer Choices	Responses
Home Phone	75%
Cell Phone	78.75%
E-mail	96.25%

In addition to the other questions, do you have any additional thoughts & suggestions to help improve clear communication from the Pocantico Hills School District?

Adding Community members to blast emails and robocalls.
10/27/2013 9:32 AM   View respondent's answers

The current system works well for me. I receive a phone call very early whenever there is a school closing or meeting.
8/27/2013 11:49 AM   View respondent's answers

I think the automated phone calls from Jay Scotto are the best way to inform us about important happenings. Please continue this practice - it is great
8/27/2013 10:42 AM   View respondent's answers

I do not want to register with Facebook. Otherwise I think all the other options are good. Obviously anything automated is easiest and quickest for school staff. Paper notes tend to get lost.
8/27/2013 3:23 PM   View respondent's answers

The more communication the better. The robo call system for school closing s, etc. are terrific.
8/27/2013 2:09 PM   View respondent's answers

Communications should be timely. Transportation department always waits till last minute in Summer to mail out/communicate bus schedule.
8/27/2013 12:40 PM   View respondent's answers

Texting/calls to cell phone/home phone for important matters.
8/27/2013 11:56 AM   View respondent's answers

Recommendations

❖ Develop a Promotion Pamphlet

❖ Create a School Directory Bookmark

❖ Plan Website Access Workshops & Instructions

❖ Develop the Parent Academic Portal

❖ Blackboard Connect Accepted 2 e-mails per student to be automatically imported by the district.

❖ The system automatically cancels repeated phone numbers and addresses so if a parent has provided their e-mail with 2 students they will only receive one phone call or e-mail.

Where are we?

❖ E-mail addresses have been secured for parents and teachers are using them regularly for focused e-mails

❖ Pamphlet needs to be developed

❖ Work with BOCES to open the Parent Portal through eSchoolData

❖ School Directory Bookmark will be available Spring 2014

❖ Website Webinars will be available Spring 2014