

School standards reports highlight Re-1J agenda

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

“Standards” was the buzz word that kicked off the Nov. 16 meeting of Holyoke School District Re-1J Board of Education.

From the Standard of Excellence Committee report by teacher Andrea Kammer to information on the transition to standards-based report cards by teachers Lynn Schneider and Laura Loutensock, the focus on quality education in Holyoke was apparent.

Kammer reported the district Standard of Excellence Committee meets monthly. They’ve looked at Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) data and have started reviewing 2010 achievement results.

Surveys and studies have been targeted, and Supt. Bret Miles noted appreciation for this group, because the target for performance excellence is such a long one.

Kammer noted the seven areas the group is studying in the Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence Framework.

They’ve read through the leadership criteria and will start on strategic planning. The remaining five areas include customer focus; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; workforce focus; process management; and results.

Miles noted the Baldrige Award originally recognized excellence in business. Over the years, it evolved to the nonprofit sector and now to the education sector. It still follows the business model, he pointed out.

The Baldrige Criteria for Performing Excellence provide a systems perspective for understanding performance management. They reflect validated, leading-edge management practices against which an organization can measure itself.

With their acceptance nationally and internationally as the model for performance excellence, the criteria represent a common language for communication among organizations for sharing best practices.

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The criteria are also the basis for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award process.

Elementary grades transition to standards-based reports

Third grade teacher Lynn Schneider reported the first and second grades came up with a standards-based report card to use throughout the year last year.

The goal was for third grade to implement the standards-based card this fall, as that's what parents are now used to seeing. The reporting method was tweaked this summer and fall, based on input from parents.

While the format is very similar to the first and second grade reports, Schneider said the main changes were made in the criteria listed for assessing reading, language arts and math.

She pointed out vocabulary is a big focus in third grade, the language arts focus is on writing and multiplication was added to the math criteria.

Additionally, there's a behavior assessment on the cards which adds to the student report.

Schneider said the report card has been easy to use, especially with the writing assessments. The only disadvantage is they're not able to use GoEduStar, the student information system. Consequently, grades have to be entered by hand, and parents can't get online to see progress.

It was noted from the previous board meeting on Nov. 2 the district technology committee's

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survey showed support for a new student management system.

Schneider cited a key advantage to the standards-based report card. For instance, if a third grade student is doing fourth grade math or second grade reading, the report card reflects skill progression from where the student is.

Fourth grade teacher Laura Loutensock said the fourth grade teaching staff definitely buys into the standards-based report card. Rather than implementing it this year, they're working to prepare it so it will be ready in the fall.

Elementary principal Kyle Stumpf pointed out the goal is to do both traditional and standards-based report cards in fourth grade for the last quarter of the 2010-11 school year. This will give the opportunity to get feedback from parents.

October student count certified at 567.5

The Holyoke School District student count for 2010-11 was certified at 567.5 as a result of the October count. The averaged pupil count for funding purposes is 578, reported Supt. Miles.

He added the budget was built on 580, and two students will not hurt the budget.

Additionally, Miles said in June the district was looking at a Per-Pupil Operating Revenue (PPOR) of \$7,168. That's now looking to be more like \$7,300, but the numbers could still change before the end of the calendar year.

Supt. Miles noted the district also enrolled seven new students within three days after the

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October count day. No funding will be received for those students this year. However, Miles noted other students were counted here and then left the district.

Some alternatives for student count are being considered, and they appear to be scary, said Miles. Alternatives include going to a fall and spring count, averaging daily membership in a week and average daily attendance.

In a full report to the board on the 2010-11 pupil count, Miles summarized the numbers. He noted there are fewer students (down 17 actual students), but no change to the budget due to averaging.

Miles also noted the district continues to become more diverse and continues to have more students eligible for free/reduced lunch.

Implications cite diversity brings more challenges, one of which is home language. Additionally, economically disadvantaged students tend to require more support in reading and basic skills.

Further, all students are expected to meet the standards, and students need different support to get there.

Policies reviewed

Continuing their review of board policies, the school board looked at those in Section I on instruction, K on school/community/home relations and L on education agency relations.

Policies will be further reviewed in December, with proposals to return in the spring. The board

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anticipates and desires public input on the policies on school calendar/school year and teaching about controversial issues.

Supt. Miles noted further time will be spent on the post-secondary enrollment policy and any others the board would like to spend more time on.

Other business

In other business at the Nov. 16 meeting, the Re-1J board:

—rescheduled the Dec. 7 board meeting to Tuesday, Dec. 14 at 7 p.m.

—approved five nonresident students including Garrett Bueltehl from the Wray school district and LaKyla Moore, Olivia Floripe, Isavell Floripe and Jake Floripe from the Julesburg district.

—reviewed a request from Phillips County commissioners for support of local administration of Colorado's social services system. The board expressed interest in receiving more information when the time comes.