

Promethean board demo rates 'wow' reaction

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

“Wow” was the response of Holyoke Re-1J Board of Education members after a demonstration of Promethean board instruction from JR/SR high math teacher Lynette Hudiburgh.

Having worked with the new technology since August, Hudiburgh showed sample lessons from an algebra class when she demonstrated the Promethean board usage at the Dec. 14 school board meeting.

Board members were fascinated with the technology which gave immediate answers and lots of options for hands-on teaching of concepts.

Hudiburgh showed lesson plans she put together from a Promethean Planet website and shared lessons which students enjoy and relate to. Board members became students as they engaged in the activities prepared by Hudiburgh.

Currently, the district has 14 Promethean boards, thanks to a Morgridge Family Foundation grant. District technology coordinator Perry Ingram took a four-day class in Georgia to become a certified Promethean board installer.

JH turnaround plan process explained

A specific action plan is in progress for the accreditation requirement that Holyoke JH have a turnaround plan. Supt. Bret Miles noted data driven dialogue has been held with a junior high team and leadership team, and solutions have been identified.

Administration has written a draft plan identifying three needs: improved writing, time to focus on critical thinking skills and improved vocabulary/non-fiction reading.

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Solutions in the plan include: implementation of the Every Child a Writer program K-12; adjustments to curriculum to identify Essential Skills; and addition of academic vocabulary to the curriculum and explicit instruction of vocabulary.

Draft plan review will go through the junior high and leadership teams, as well as the standard of excellence and accountability committees. The turnaround plan was scheduled for approval at the Dec. 21 board meeting.

Foundation board establishes mission

After meeting monthly for almost a year, Re-1J Foundation, Inc. held a work session with the school board after last week's meeting.

Foundation board members attending the session were chairman Michelle Van Overbeke, Troy Killin, Rena Schneller and Tom Bennett.

Van Overbeke noted Supt. Miles has been present at their meetings, as has foundation board member Glenn Huwa.

This foundation was started around 1996 but was not at all active. Last year a board was established, and their first meeting was held in December of 2009.

The foundation has set its mission to advocate, promote and fund initiatives designed to partner with the school district to improve student performance and advance quality educational opportunities for all children.

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The foundation board intends to identify a few major categories aligned with their mission. They'll have a brochure printed to better promote their availability and function.

When details are defined, they'll be wanting to share their focus with the community to encourage donations to assist education of Holyoke students.

Mill levy set at 39.062

A total 2010 mill levy of 39.062 mills was approved for certification at last week's meeting. This includes 27 mills for total program, .312 abatement levy, 4.250 mills in bond redemption and 7.5 mills in the voter-approved override.

This year's abatement levy was up .292 mills. This and the 7.5 mill override represented the increase from the 2009 levy.

Total assessed valuation for the district is \$44,566,430, down \$11.3 million from the 2009 tax year valuation.

In further financial discussion, Supt. Miles highlighted budget changes. Mill levy override revenue led to a new capital projects line, new technology line and doubling of teacher supply lines.

Student count was projected at 580, but actually came in at 578 for a small change in budgeting. Miles pointed out the total program funding formula was down a little this year.

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The beginning fund balance will be up \$17,000 from what was originally projected, Miles added. A 2009-10 audit report was scheduled for the Dec. 21 board meeting.

CASB convention reviewed

Board members recapped sessions which they attended at the recent convention of the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB).

Jeff Tharp noted the keynote speakers were good. He said while sharing discussions with other districts of similar size and issues, he did not hear the word consolidation, but did hear a lot about collaboration.

He also attended a larger-district presentation on complete standards-based education approach and sessions on advance placement and re-engaging students.

Linda Jelden enjoyed a session on coaching parents through their child's ninth grade year and one by a district that has implemented a teacher pay for performance plan.

Jelden and other board members said they especially enjoyed the session with students, including two HHS students, Briar Bergner and Yesenia Coronado.

Kris Camblin told about a session on understanding the law and developing communication with legislators. Through input in other sessions, he related this district has a good board president in Dan Kafka.

Jon King said his best class was the one with the local students. He also attended a session on

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communications and one reminding the proper etiquette of being a board member.

Kafka cited a session which emphasized it's a good thing to take all pieces of accreditation, testing and report cards and put them in one system. Continued improvement is the gist of the JH turnaround plan through the accreditation, he added.

A comment from the convention he hadn't previously thought about is that undocumented folks can't go to college. Regardless, he said, "We have a community of people, and it's in our best interest to educate everyone the best we can."

Kafka emphasized the importance of making sure the district's core beliefs and values are stated over and over again in the decision-making process.

Other business

In other business Dec. 14, the Re-1J board:

—noted there will be no local board meeting Tuesday, Jan. 4, but an area-wide meeting is scheduled that night in Haxtun.

—scheduled a board retreat for Saturday, Jan. 8.

—reviewed Section A board policies, noting the school wellness policy will return after the health advisory committee has reviewed it and an accreditation policy will also return for further discussion.

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Section B policies on board governance and school administration will be reviewed in a board work session in February.

—acknowledged gifts totalling about \$600 to the HS softball team for state-tournament lodging.

—approved application for Type V substitute teaching authorization for Anne Kinnie and Amanda Houghtelling.