

School Board to reorganize Tues.

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

Election results were just coming in as Holyoke School District Re-1J Board of Education met Tuesday, Nov. 1.

The current board will canvass the election at the Nov. 15 meeting, then new members will take their oaths of office and the board will reorganize by electing officers.

Board meeting start-time switches to 7 p.m. with the return to standard time last weekend.

Linda Jelden, Dennis Herman, Michelle Van Overbeke and Jon King were elected to four-year terms. Jelden and King are starting their second terms, while Herman and Van Overbeke are new board members.

Supt. Bret Miles is pleased that Jay Knutson and Andrea McCallum have agreed to replace Herman and Van Overbeke on the district budget and facilities committee.

Supt., board evaluations reviewed

“We believe Mr. Miles more than meets the expectations of the board,” summarized board president Dan Kafka when noting the superintendent evaluation process is complete.

Jeff Tharp added the board is very pleased with the direction the district is taking and the focus on student achievement that Miles brings to the district.

Comments on the public summary evaluation also cite the board feels Miles demonstrates

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strong and balanced leadership in his role as superintendent and he is goal driven and innovative.

Website improvements and some facility issues are noted as district needs, and some recent changes and attention in these areas are in progress.

The rating scale used by the board involves a 3 for exceeds expectations, 2 for meets expectations and 1 for does not meet expectations.

Ratings for five domains ranged from 2.5-3.0 and averaged at 2.75. The five domains for evaluation include instructional leadership, leadership/personnel management, budget development/management, facilities management and community outreach.

Key deliverables in each domain are updated each year. Supt. Miles shared his recommendations for changes in deliverables for the 2011-12 evaluation instrument.

Kafka pointed out some of the issues in the superintendent evaluation also reflect on the board. As a result, the board completes a self evaluation to show their accountability to their role in leading the school district.

Board members shared their thoughts on evaluating themselves in the areas of student achievement, technology, work environment, budget development, community engagement, facilities, communication, partnerships and board work.

The board has worked hard for transparency in their actions, and meeting that particular goal is significant. Kafka cautioned the board to be diligent and not to become complacent to let this slip away.

Communication norms were part of the self-evaluation discussion, and the board talked about areas which need improvement, as well as areas of success.

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Grading pilot updated with October data

The ultimate goal of the district's grading pilot is to look at the practice in terms of overall student achievement, said Supt. Miles in reporting the Oct. 3-27 data.

Next steps for the grading pilot include looking at a better solution from Infinite Campus for notifying parents about their child's need to attend the after school center and for generating lists for who needs to attend.

Miles said the leadership team is scheduled to discuss data at its Nov. 16 meeting, and next month they'll be looking to add grades to the data collection.

In the October report, Miles said more students in grades 7-12 attended than from the previous month, but fewer students in grades 4-6.

Subject data indicated three-fourths of the grade school students attended the after school center for core subjects. In grades 7-12, 56 percent were there for math and English, which was not surprising.

For October, the grading pilot report looked at students who have been identified for support including IEP (Individualized Education Program), Title I, RTI (Response to Intervention) and ESL (English as a Second Language).

Supt. Miles was pleased to report the data showed the numbers of these students in the after school centers is proportional to the general student population.

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Ineligibility numbers for October were up from September, but much less than a year ago. Miles noted there are two ways to be ineligible: not meeting with a teacher for more than a week to do corrections or having a missing assignment for more than a week.

No elementary school students have refused to serve their time in the after school center. In grades 7-12, as of Nov. 3, principal Susan Ortner said 20 students served 30-minute detentions for one refusal to attend, nine students served one day ISS (in-school suspension) for two refusals, three students served one to three days for three refusals and one student served one to three days for four refusals.

Other business

In other business at the Nov. 1 meeting, the Board of Education:

—accepted the resignation of JR/SR high secretary Tammie Timm, effective Dec. 31.

—received a thorough fall sports and activities report from athletic director Kimberlee Bennett.

—approved the contract with Catalyst Planning Group for owner's representative services for the BEST grant construction project.

—heard first reading and approved 44 policies from Section G on personnel. These policies were ones that had only minor or no changes from the work session discussion Oct. 24.

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—acknowledged appreciation for City of Holyoke personnel Lennie Fisbeck and Jeremy Thompson for assisting the school grounds crew in blowing out the sprinkler system in preparation for winter weather.

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