

School district certifies increased student count

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

Holyoke School District will be funded at 588.5 pupils for the 2011-12 budget year. The certified count for the Colorado Department of Education was approved at the Nov. 15 board meeting.

The certified count is up 10.5 from last year and up 19 from what was included in the preliminary budget. While the increase in student numbers is good, it doesn't offset declining per-pupil revenue from the state, reported Supt. Bret Miles.

Because of the increased student count, the school district will no longer be averaging previous years' counts but will strictly use this year's count.

Supt. Miles cited other data from the district demographics. Fifty-seven percent of students are white, 41 percent hispanic and two percent other. Twenty-three percent of the student population is classified as English language learners and 48 percent of all students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

In his summary, Supt. Miles pointed out student achievement goals are more difficult to reach when students are impacted by poverty and are learning a second language.

However, he noted there's no reason to lower goals but rather to continue to adjust strategies and resources for the student population.

District looks to end year with close to \$97,000 fund balance increase

With additional revenue and less expenditures from what was budgeted for 2010-11, Holyoke School District is looking at about a \$97,000 increase to the fund balance for 2011-12, reported Supt. Miles at last week's meeting.

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When the district compared projected revenue, it included the use of \$144,000 from reserves.

Actual numbers will be reported in the audit at the Dec. 6 meeting, but the beginning fund balance for 2011-12 looks to be \$1,764,000.

Increased revenue in the amount of \$68,774 for 2010-11 is the result of many influences. Most noteworthy are the \$17,000 net gain from loss of equalization payments and Ed Jobs money, transportation reimbursement up \$10,000, BOCES special education up due to the high cost reimbursement and other local revenue up \$22,912 as impacted by the Morgridge Grant and an insurance rebate.

Projected expenditures for 2010-11 were underspent by \$24,480, and another \$3,700 is expected after a food services adjustment.

Supt. Miles noted the \$24,480 actually represents less than half of one percent of the budget.

Buildings finished the year overspent with salaries tied to Ed Jobs money except at the high school where some items were underspent. Most notably was the post secondary education classes saving nearly \$13,000 from what was budgeted.

District operations was under budget due to several underspent categories including textbooks (\$13,000), legal fees (\$6,800) and special ed out-of-district placement (\$10,000). Transportation was also underspent because of \$11,000 left on salaries and \$7,700 on repairs.

Supt. Miles noted the expenditure side is very close to budget and there are few changes on the revenue side which would affect how they budget this coming year. Grants and formula funding based on expenses were the largest variables with revenue.

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“Overall, I am pleased with the final accounting and how close we were to budget, given the changes we experienced through the year,” said Miles.

Communication of these year-end numbers to the board indicated where Miles anticipates the totals to be. He noted the purpose of an audit is to verify this information.

2011-12 final budget considerations in review

Budget is now a year-round process, where it used to be a seasonal function, noted Miles. With legislation changes and tighter budgeting, revisions are constantly in consideration.

With the anticipated numbers from 2010-11, the Re-1J board was given several 2011-12 budget proposal options for the staff to bring back to the Dec. 6 meeting.

Miles was asked to bring recommendations for top and secondary priorities that can be addressed with additional funds. He will also provide information to determine what will be spent this year and what may be held in contingency until the spring.

The 2011-12 final budget looks to include a \$1,764,000 beginning fund balance and end with an estimated \$1,630,667 balance.

Supt. Miles noted the governor’s proposed budget cut to K-12 education looks to be \$89 million, which will result in an estimated 2.5 percent or \$100,000 cut to Holyoke, without cost increases.

Expenditure increases being considered for 2011-12 include an additional special education paraprofessional, professional development needs, elementary school and custodial supplies,

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Christmas bonus, return of capital projects spending that had been reduced and restoration of textbook budget.

Board member Kim Killin emphasized the board and district are looking at what they can do to potentially alleviate some of the stress the budget has put on.

After discussion at the Dec. 6 meeting, a final budget vote will occur at the Dec. 20 board meeting.

Other business

In other business at the Nov. 15 meeting, the Re-1J board:

—approved second reading of Section G policies on personnel.

—adopted a revised resolution for bank authorization.

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