

Accountability reports Re-1J mill levy funds well-spent

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

Charged with the task of reviewing the mill levy override project which passed in November of 2010, Holyoke School District's accountability committee reported favorable results.

Chairman Julie Elliott wrote a letter from the committee which was reviewed at the April 9 meeting of the Board of Education.

Elliott noted the committee was charged with determining if the money in the mill levy override project has been spent as was promised to the taxpayers and if the spending had made a difference.

She said the committee conducted an initial review of the ballot initiative and Superintendent Bret Miles' report to the taxpayers. Additional detailed written and verbal information was obtained from the school administration and staff.

Elliott reported the committee is satisfied that the funds have been used as stated in the ballot initiative and that the funds have been well-spent.

2013-14 calendar adopted

The 2013-14 school calendar, with 172 student contact days and 190 staff contract days, was approved at last week's meeting.

Miles reviewed the details of the proposed calendar at the March 19 board meeting, noting commitment to the N.E. Colorado Curriculum Collaborative drove many of the calendar decisions.

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While the calendar includes three less student contact days than the current year, total instructional hours will be down only two at the elementary and up 19 at the JR/SR high. Minutes will be added to the school day to make this happen.

Board member Dennis Herman said at last week's meeting that he hopes the additional minutes add quality time to the school day.

Linda Jelden said she thinks the Holyoke staff will be leaders in the collaborative curriculum effort and that will be a good thing.

The calendar adds a full week spring break and a two-week Christmas break.

Budget/facilities committee reviews priorities, projects

Budget priorities and construction projects were two areas reviewed with the district's budget and facilities committee recently.

Miles said the district looks to be in a much better financial spot than it started the previous three years.

The big question involves the March economic forecast in Colorado noting funding to be \$800 million better than anticipated. People are lobbying for where the funds should go, and Miles indicated the governor's comments say it will not all go to education as other agencies have seen cuts as well.

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Miles highlighted construction projects for consideration in the 2013-14 budget year.

He noted the recommendation from the budget and facilities committee was to organize the priorities into four tiers. They included instructional needs, health/safety, aesthetics and efficiencies.

Recommended projects for this summer in instructional needs are dual light switching at elementary, reinstalling elementary ceiling fans, AC for computer server room, science lab upgrades and elementary classroom doors.

Recommendations for health/safety needs are additional keyless access at elementary school, old gym sidewalk snowmelt and restroom fixtures/some stalls.

Aesthetic considerations are metal siding on gables at both schools and elementary front sprinkler system.

Finishing the old controls system project is recommended for efficiency.

Miles said they hope to leverage BEST grant funds for security upgrades.

Other business

In other business April 9, the Re-1J board:

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—approved the retirement of Title I teacher Cathy Sullivan at the close of the 2012-13 school year.

—accepted resignations from three teachers at the end of the current-year contracts. The three include JH math teacher Sarah Dille, JH language arts teacher Becky Cranwell and HS agriculture instructor Guy Kuntz.

—approved several coaching assignments for the 2012-13 school year: Kuntz, assistant HS track; Jordan Stone, assistant JH track; and Miko Martinez, volunteer assistant HS girls' golf.

—adopted three policies on second reading. No changes were made from their initial presentation and first reading. Policies approved include support staff vacations and holidays, part-time and substitute professional salaries and inter-district choice/open enrollment.

—approved the elementary performance plan, JR/SR high performance plan and district improvement plan as presented last month.

—heard a BOCES board report from Jon King, who noted the auditors indicated the N.E. BOCES is in good financial standing.

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