

Parameters adopted to guide 2013-14 school budget draft

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

Reviewing prior budget discussion, Holyoke School District Re-1J Board of Education approved parameters for 2013-14 to set the direction for drafting the new year budget.

Adoption of the parameters was approved at the May 7 board meeting. Budget options will be reviewed at the May 21 meeting.

Ten budget parameters for 2013-14 follow:

—The preliminary budget will be built using a student count of 585, with no increase or decrease from 2012-13.

—The preliminary budget may include a portion of the fund balance as revenue as long as it does not exceed \$200,000 or decrease the projected ending fund balance below the \$1.2 million target. The board will review options based on using \$150,000 of reserve, half of the projected available amount, to see how it impacts meeting budget priorities.

—Personnel expenditures are the top priority. Steps should be funded, as should the increased PERA employer contribution.

—The district needs to increase health insurance contributions so employees do not have a negative increase and at least one plan is fully funded.

—The district shall continue to evaluate class sizes and adjusting internally to needs while making lowering class size in the primary grades as the top priority for new full-time equivalent employees.

—Providing extended learning opportunities is a top priority for any new funds targeting the most at-risk students.

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—Explore options to add additional ESL teachers and support staff.

—The board understands that capital projects are a priority but will allow some flexibility in 2013-14 to reduce the capital expenditures if needed.

—Maintaining the technology implementation schedule is a budget priority.

—The district shall continue to explore and evaluate innovative approaches to increasing revenue in an effort to offset the need for ongoing budget cuts.

New second-grade teacher hired

Kortney Firme was hired as a second-grade teacher for 2013-14. She earned her bachelor's degree from Wayne State College in Wayne, Neb.

Firme has five years teaching experience, all in the first grade. That includes three years in Gretna, Neb. and two years in Virginia Beach, Va.

In other personnel action at last week's meeting, the board approved 2013-14 probationary and non-probationary teacher renewals, as well as notice of employment for classified employees.

A 15-minute executive session with Superintendent Bret Miles was held for personnel discussion prior to any action.

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Probationary teacher renewals were approved for Nicholas Balog, Allie Billings, Nicole Churchwell, Carly Daniel, Cutter Garrison, Wendy Grothman, Sharon Jones, Tarah Kasdorf, Maury Kramer, Christina Martinez, Miko Martinez, Karen Pieper, Kelsey Reimink, Crystal Rigel, Luke Thomas and John Zilla.

Contracts for 2013-14 were approved for the following non-probationary teachers:

John Baumgartner, Cindi Beavers, Yesenia Bencomo, Kimberlee Bennett, Stefan Betley, Heather Bieber, Ashley Clayton, Marcia Dalton, Scott Dille, Kerri Gardner, Andrea Kammer, Natalie Krogmeier, Laura Loutensock, Summer Maloney, Chandra Parker, Kristie Pelle, Angela Powell, Sandra Rahe, Kari Sandquist, Lynn Schneider, Rhonda Smith and Theresa Tharp.

Classified staff recommended for employment in 2013-14 include secretaries Tancy King, Brenda Krueger and Lori Thompson; HR/payroll clerk, Joan Price; budget and finance director, Sharon Thompson.

District technology coordinator, Perry Ingram; maintenance/repair, Stan Kreider; grounds, Dusty McConnell.

Custodians Darcy Garrison, Jack Garrison, Elva Montes, Guadalupe Montes and Albino Nuñez; transportation, Robert Jacobs, Kimberly Young, Mark Groshans, Fletcher Hinck, Dave Johnson and Scott Murray.

Paraprofessionals Terri Biersdorfer, Karla Cruz, Tracey Cordova, Amy Deaver, Dorothy Drake, Aydaly Juarez, Natali Juarez, Nancy Miles, Leticia Penzing, Nancy Pillard, Christy Shafer, Wendy Weatherly and Jason Wendling.

Educator effectiveness work updated

Progress made by the leadership team with the teacher evaluation policy development was shared by Miles at last week's meeting.

He reported that 50 percent of teacher standards will be weighted by element rather than by standard and that the individual/collective split will be 70/30.

Miles also noted the recommended criteria from the leadership team for the 50 percent student learning outcomes data.

It includes 25 percent classroom-based measures, 5 percent TCAP growth, 5 percent Northwest Evaluation Association growth, 5 percent UIP goals, 5 percent school performance frameworks and 5 percent graduation rate.

Leadership team members were scheduled to share final recommendations with their groups this week. At the May 15 meeting they were to finalize the data sources and review the rest of the policy in preparation for a presentation at the May 21 board meeting.

Curriculum Consortium moves forward

An update of the collaborative work of 11 districts was given as they form a consortium to implement the state sample curriculum and the new Colorado academic standards.

Principals and superintendents from the 11 districts were scheduled to meet May 9 to review the expectations and agreements developed for this project.

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Immediately on the agenda will be soliciting feedback from teachers as to the sequence of units in the state sample curriculum.

Miles noted that while there are many unknowns to the new curriculum and to the collaboration of teachers next year, they are much better off than writing curriculum themselves or trying to meet the expectations of the new standards in isolation.

Other business

In other business at the May 7 meeting, the Re-1J board:

—noted a retirement reception on Tuesday, May 21 from 3:45-5 p.m. in the elementary school cafeteria for Mary Austin, Kristie Ham and Cathy Sullivan.

—voiced support for the Safe 2Tell safety resource program and will bring approval of a membership renewal to the May 21 meeting.

—heard the Colorado High School Activities Association legislative committee report from Jon King, with highlights from a recent rules meeting reported by athletic director Sandra Rahe.

The rule change that passed at the recent meeting is for wrestling. Thirty-one points are allowed during a season. Duals were dropped from one point to a half point to encourage more dual competition.

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