

Amendment 66 facts presented to school board

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

An overview of Amendment 66 on the Nov. 5 Colorado ballot was presented by Superintendent Bret Miles at the Sept. 3 meeting of the Holyoke Board of Education.

The citizen initiative is a funding mechanism for the school finance act.

Amendment 66 represents a tiered Colorado income tax increase, with funding to impact Preschool-Grade 12 education.

The proposed increase will raise the income tax from 4.63 percent to 5 percent for income under \$75,000, and raise it from 5 percent to 5.9 percent on income over \$75,000.

If this new income tax rate is passed, it is estimated to raise \$950 million statewide. Miles said it will bring approximately \$1.185 million to the Holyoke School District, which more than restores the negative factor, which currently stands at about \$750,000.

The negative factor is the gap between what the Amendment 23 formula requires and what is actually received by school districts.

Amendment 23 was a Colorado constitutional change passed in 2000, requiring K-12 funding to increase by inflation plus 1 percent from 2001-2011 and by inflation after that. Unfortunately, because of the economic downturn and Colorado's resulting budget crisis, Amendment 23 was not fully implemented through 2011.

Miles said many other schools' funding will turn out right at their negative factor. He said it's now down to four school districts that won't make up the negative factor. In this area, Briggsdale and Kit Carson are two of those districts.

The reason for those districts not making up the negative factor is because of the dramatic shift

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in the finance formula to at-risk and English language learners, said Miles.

For Holyoke, Amendment 66 will provide full-day kindergarten funding, more preschool slots and will include about \$330,000 in special education funding.

Miles cited two websites, one promoting the passage of Amendment 66 and the other opposed to the measure. The “for” website is coloradocommits.com , and the website “against” Amendment 66 is coforrealedeform.com.

The Holyoke board feels people need to study the amendment, understand the impact on the school and look at the impact on their personal income to make an informed decision that suits them best.

Policies reviewed

Sixty-nine policies were reviewed by the board at last week’s meeting, with 53 of those including only minor changes that didn’t impact any practice in the district. Those revisions involved a new reference or minor language change.

Miles recommended that the board take the Colorado Association of School Boards’ changes on nine policies, but asked the board to take a closer look at them.

These nine policies include public conduct on district property, staff conduct, school board member conduct, board member code of ethics, board member conflict of interest, board compensation expenses, code of conduct, weapons in schools and extracurricular activity eligibility.

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The board looked at four new policies and will take the CASB recommendation. These policies include resignation of instructional/administrative staff, discipline and suspension dismissal, electronic participation in board meetings and early literacy and reading comprehension.

Three policies will not be adopted as they don't fit this district. They include recruitment of superintendent, intra-district choice and preschool council.

The reviewed policies will be on the Sept. 17 meeting agenda for first reading.

Foundation project ideas shared

Board members talked about potential project recommendations for the Re-1J Foundation to consider.

A joint meeting of the school board and Foundation board has been set for Sept. 17 when they will discuss new projects that the Foundation could support. Board members were encouraged to have ideas for the joint meeting.

The Foundation has three funds: wellness, academic and technology.

In recent years, the Foundation has supported two Promethean board projects, the track project and a remodel of the HS chemistry lab.

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Other business

In other business at the Sept. 3 meeting, the Re-1J board:

—passed a resolution to cancel the school board election as there are only three candidates for three open positions.

—approved a new assignment for Helen Miller as part-time transportation assistant.

—approved the annual Colorado High School Activities Association cooperative sports designation for boys' golf, girls' golf and girls' softball.

—hosted a new-teacher reception prior to the actual meeting.

Holyoke Enterprise September 12, 2013