

## School's Phase 2 construction nears completion

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

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Phase 2 of Holyoke School District Re-1J's construction projects is mostly complete and was reported in detail by Superintendent Bret Miles at the Jan. 14 board meeting.

After the original Building Excellent Schools Today grant construction in 2012, there was about \$216,000 remaining.

However, due to the successful award of a second BEST grant, the district needed to hold back \$44,000 for the cash match. Miles explained that about \$172,000 was remaining for other projects.

The district budget and facilities committee prioritized other projects to be completed, and those are now almost finished. Actual cost of those projects is \$140,885.

Projects fell in four tiers: instructional needs, health/safety needs, aesthetics and efficiencies/other.

In the first tier, finished projects include dual light switching, air conditioning for the computer server room, science lab upgrades and elementary classroom doors.

Ceiling fans at the elementary school are being bid out, but that's the only instructional needs project that hasn't started.

Health/safety needs projects that are complete include additional keyless access at the elementary school and old gym sidewalk snowmelt.

The restroom fixtures and stalls project is in progress, with \$50,971 having been spent. The district is in the process of bidding out the restroom partitions to complete the project.

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Metal siding on gables at both schools has been completed in the aesthetics tier for a vast improvement over constantly peeling paint, said Miles.

The sprinkler system project is in progress. The system was installed at the old gym entrance, but the front of the elementary school is yet to be done.

Miles said Robert Jacobs, director of transportation, maintenance and facilities, and Stan Kreider in maintenance were especially pleased that the controls system finished the old project in the efficiencies tier.

Miles acknowledged the work of Jacobs and his leadership. It starts with his initial walkthrough of the facilities and goes through gathering bids, selecting vendors and monitoring completion or in many cases completing the work himself or with his team.

## **First-semester random drug testing reported**

Miles said he met with the random drug testing coordinator, Principal Susan Ortner, Jan. 13 to conduct the audit of records for the first semester's random drug testing program.

He detailed the specific procedures he used for conducting the audit and concluded that policies and procedures for the random drug testing program are being followed in the building with every random sample selected for review. He added that all samples had accurate numbers and appropriate paperwork.

There was no discrepancy between the tested numbers collected by the school and by the testing vendor, Centennial Mental Health.

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One minor change will be made in getting a second set of signatures on copies in the office rather than just the originals. Miles pointed out this is a minor change and didn't contradict any of the operating procedures or policy.

Ortner reported statistics for the first-semester 2013-14 random drug testing.

During the semester, there were three positive THC (marijuana) tests and one positive for ETG (alcohol). Ortner said this involved two students. One student tested positive for THC and ETG. The other tested positive for THC and then on the mandatory retest tested positive again.

Additionally, there were two dilute tests. The "dilute" result is determined by checking the creatinine in the urine. A level less than 20 mg is most likely due to increased water or liquid intake.

Normal creatinine ranges for females are 37-250 mg, and for males, 40-300 mg. The random drug testing policy says that if the sample is dilute, the student is to be retested on the next testing day.

As of Dec. 18, there are 231 students in grades 7-12 enrolled in the random drug testing program, which is required for those participating in extracurricular activities.

Seventy-five tests were completed in the Aug. 21-Dec. 18 time frame. Forty-two students were tested once, 12 were tested twice and three were tested three times.

Ortner said interest about this program has been expressed from three different school districts.

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### Committee work reviewed

Holyoke School District's shared leadership model includes several focused committees with representation from staff, parents and community to provide input and feedback on a wide variety of topics.

At last week's school board meeting, Miles gave a brief report on the committee progress during the first half of the year.

Leadership team has had discussion and ongoing input on the curriculum collaborative project, has done much to update procedures for the gifted and talented identification and has had follow-up conversations about the new teacher evaluation instrument.

Standard of excellence team has been planning for the district perception survey and making changes to the format which will be given electronically this year. They heard a presentation from Kim Griffith of Rocky Mountain Performance Excellence and have done a review of student achievement data and district goals.

Budget facilities committee members have monitored Phase 2 construction, reviewed information about 2013 and 2014 school finance acts and began discussions leading to district budget priorities.

The wellness committee launched a new youth weight room program, shifted discussions on community use of the weight room to the coaches group and are planning a staff wellness program.

Ongoing discussion on the website has been conducted by the technology committee who has recommended to stay with the SchoolFusion contract for now. They are also researching 1-to-1 device programs for recommendation this spring.

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The district accountability advisory committee has reviewed student achievement results and uniform improvement plan designations, is building awareness about statewide graduation requirements and is analyzing the need for a mill levy override.

The superintendent's advisory committee has ongoing discussions on questions from employees.

### Other business

In other business Jan. 14, the Re-1J board:

—renewed Miles' superintendent contract for the period of July 2014 through June 2016. Miles, who is in his fifth year as superintendent of Holyoke School District Re-1J, was thanked for continuing a job well done.

—hired Veronica Nuñez, on high recommendation, as the general paraprofessional at the elementary school for the 2013-14 school year.

—approved nonresident student applications for Jillian Hunter, Jalen Hunter and Jerren Hunter from the Wray school district.

—designated the administration office as the official posting location for board of education meeting notices.

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—discussed attending the Jan. 27 Colorado Association of School Board's Day at the Capitol.

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