

First-day student count up in Holyoke School District

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

School officials are cautiously optimistic about the increased enrollment numbers for the start of the 2009-2010 school year. Enrollment increased by 32, according to first-week attendance in Holyoke School District Re-1J.

Total school enrollment was 592 as of Tuesday, the beginning of the district's second week of school. That includes 299 in grades K-5, 282 in grades 6-12 and 11 at Holyoke Alternative High School.

The first week of school one year ago, enrollment was reported at 560, including 10 in the new Alternative High School.

For state funding purposes, the actual student count is linked to the Oct. 1 enrollment, not this first-week count. The funded full-time equivalent (FTE) student count covers an average of the student numbers for five years. It also counts kindergartners and special education preschoolers as half students.

First-week counts in the district dropped steadily from 2001-2007, but stayed steady last year and increased this year.

Student count in grades 9-12 at HHS is 163 this year, down six from last year's first-week count of 169.

Last year's K-5 enrollment was turned in at 273, while this year there are 299 students, for an increase of 26.

Last year's fourth grade class was the largest in the district with 53 students, followed closely by the kindergarten and first grade classes with 52 each.

This year, three classes have 55 students enrolled to share largest-class honors. They are the kindergarten, first grade and fifth grade classes.

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Smallest classes are the senior class with 32 and third grade, seventh grade and eighth grade, all with 37. Average class size is 45.

Enrollment in individual grades during the first few days of school for 2009-10 follows:

Kindergarten 55, first grade 55, second grade 53, third grade 37, fourth grade 44, fifth grade 55, sixth grade 45, seventh grade 37, eighth grade 37, freshmen 47, sophomores 40, juniors 44, seniors 32 and Alternative High School 11.

Enrollment for the first week of school in past years compares as follows to the 592 count this year: 560 in 2008, 560 in 2007, 572 in 2006, 622 in 2005, 658 in 2004, 658 in 2003, 668 in 2002, 686 in 2001 and 660 in 2000.