

Enrollment up

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

While the official school count is subject to change until the finalization date of Nov. 10, preliminary figures presented at the Oct. 6 school board meeting show a sizeable increase in enrollment from one year ago.

Actual students in K-12, as well as other programs such as alternative high school, preschool, BOCES services preschool and GED totals 634. This is an increase of 26 from one year ago, according to Supt. Bret Miles.

The funded count is anticipated to be 575, which is up 11 from what the 2009-10 preliminary budget was built on.

Miles noted he hopes to have the final budget to the board the second meeting in November.

Enrollment in K-12 cites 300 students in grades K-5, 288 in grades 6-12 and 13 in Holyoke Alternative High School.

Summarizing the details of the enrollment report, Supt. Miles noted elementary classrooms range from 16-22 students per class.

JH core class averages range from 14.8-19.7; HS academic class averages range from 7.5-16 students; and HS elective class size averages are in the 8-15 student range.

Student-teacher ratios, including all teachers, are 11:1 at the elementary school, 15:1 at JH and 12:1 at the HS level.

Miles pointed out the use of teacher aides reduces student-adult ratios at the elementary school, especially in reading.

Budget consideration requested for elementary art education

Enrollment up

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

Asking the school board to make art a priority in the district, Phillips County Arts Council (PCAC) representatives Teresa Mailander and Dorothy Ortner addressed the board at last week's meeting.

Mailander asked for 2010-11 budget consideration to reinstate regular elementary school art classes, which were cut for this school year.

"We hope cuts can be made in other areas that are less critical to the academic achievement of our children," said Mailander.

If there aren't sufficient funds to offer regularly-scheduled fine arts classes in all three schools, Mailander noted PCAC strongly recommends that available resources be focused on the elementary students.

In advocating for consistent art education in the elementary school, Mailander cited extensive research substantiating the benefits of exposure to art education for that age group.

A letter from Secretary of Education Arne Duncan brought attention to the importance of the arts as a core academic subject and part of a complete education for all students.

Mailander added, "It's a well-known fact that learning about the visual arts cultivates self-expression, imagination and creativity, as well as critical thinking and problem solving skills."

Acquainting the school board with PCAC's work, Mailander emphasized the group's commitment to providing varying opportunities for exposure to the arts in Holyoke and Haxtun.

She cited the annual concert series, student outreaches, "Arts Where You Are" summer

Enrollment up

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

program, annual art show, community garden and Paquime dancers as some of the opportunities PCAC provides.

Other business

In other business Oct. 6, the Board of Education:

—hired Jessica Deering and Sue Razo as elementary custodians; and Jane Encinias as elementary teacher aide.

—had first reading of two board policy revisions which will be on the Oct. 20 board agenda for final approval. The first updates the leaves policy to properly reflect the change in the Family Medical Leave Act.

The second updates the board bylaws to reflect the new state statute requiring audio tape recording of meetings. This has been a practice in this district for a number of years.

—approved application for Type V substitute teaching authorization for Talia Mayhugh, Laura Schroetlin and Janet Roberts.

—received a complete status update on the Superintendent's Entry Plan and goal accomplishment.

—adopted a resolution recognizing Classified School Employees Week Oct. 11-17.

—reviewed proposed resolutions to be presented at the Colorado Association of School Boards delegate assembly Oct. 16 and 17.

Enrollment up

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

—met the following new teachers: Kate Shoemaker, fourth grade; Mandy Krause, resource; David Bloemker, fifth grade; and Heather Bieber, JR-SR High English.

—held a work session after the regular meeting to review the superintendent evaluation instrument.