Year-end reports from both Holyoke JR/SR High and Holyoke Elementary were presented by principals Susan Ortner and Jennifer Kral at the June 16 meeting of the Re-1J Board of Education.

Additionally, revisions for building handbooks were presented and approved for 2009-10.

Significant data was reviewed last week as principals summed up the building goal success for the year, NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) academic reports and the PBS (Positive Behavior Support) discipline reports for 2008-09.

In response to the data, Ortner noted next year's sixth graders will have longer afternoon blocks for language arts.

Addressing specifically the sixth grade move from the elementary to the JH, there was a small decrease in academics from end of fifth to beginning of sixth grade year, but there was growth from fall to spring in the sixth grade, and gaps closed.

Ortner pointed out with transition there's historically this type of report. That's typically been seen in the seventh grade as students transitioned from the elementary school. This past year, there were two grades in transition—both sixth and seventh. Data shows they did close the gap in a similar manner that other grades did.

Historic longitudinal growth from the NWEA summaries was reviewed for grades 2-10 by both Kral and Ortner, and this year's growth was highlighted for each grade level, each subject area.

Ortner noted current summer school enrollment with 12 JH students attempting to recover 20 HS credits, and eight HS students attempting to recover 13 HS credits. Compared to last year, there's quite an increase. In the summer of 2008, four JH students recovered two credits in three classes and eight HS students recovered 14 credits in 11 classes.

Discipline reports showed number of referrals for elementary students dropped from 134.33 to 67.52 per 100 students from 2006-07 to 2008-09, Kral pointed out. In 2007-08, there was only 18.08 referrals per 100 students. Referrals were logged by both grade and location.

Response to intervention showed improvement from the previous year in the JR/SR High, reported Ortner. The 2008-09 data showed 93 percent of the JH/HS students were in the green zone, with 0-3 write-ups. This is eight percentage points above the 85 percent average.

Four percent of students were in the yellow zone with 4-5 write-ups. In this zone, 10 percent is the norm. And in the 6-12 write-ups red zone, four percent of Holyoke students in grades 6-12 were in there, with five percent being the norm.

Elementary handbook
sees minor changes

Changes for the elementary school handbook for 2009-10 included a new statement about using technology such as cell phones for instructional purposes, a definition for cyber-bullying, a new paragraph on public concerns and following the chain of command and a district internet usage agreement page.

Each grade level's lunch time will be included in the handbook, as will the parent portal address for checking grades and attendance. Kral also pointed out the addition noting the oldest child calls home when school is already in session and will be closing early.

Other changes include the school calendar, district website on the title page and an updated civil rights guarantee statement.

Dress code is biggest change
in JR/SR High handbook

Principal Ortner cited dress code as the biggest change in the 2009-10 handbook. Several statements were added to the dress code section. Hair must be out of the eyes, and both eyes must be visible at all times. Pajama pants and slippers are not allowed.

The length of shorts, skirts, dresses or skorts was changed to be at least as long as the student's extended fingertips while standing straight, arms at sides. Previously, it was fists instead of extended fingertips.

To promote use of technology and 21st century skills in teacher-guided educational activities, electronic devices may be utilized as part of an educational activity when instructed by the classroom teacher. These devices will not be allowed during the passing period between classes unless during an emergency.

Policy will now state no electronic devices of any kind will be allowed in in-school suspensions.

JH students (grades 6-8) must earn a total of 34 units of credit in JH to move on to HS. The HS graduation requirements were clarified to note students must earn 13 credits each year in order to advance to the next grade level.

Putting what's been practiced into written policy for academic lettering, students must attain a 3.5 GPA or better during the spring semester of a school year and again the following fall semester to earn an academic letter.

Information regarding closed campus for all JH students will be changed to reflect the adjustments that were implemented in November of 2008.

School closure info will be changed to reflect current practice. Those notified of school closures or early dismissals will be Star 92.3, KATR, KOA and KUSA-TV.

A statement on course selection and scheduling will be changed to note students are expected to adhere to their schedule for the entire school year. A definition of cyberbullying will be added to the section on bullying, and the civil rights statement will be changed based on the recommendation of district legal counsel.

A statement will be added to the locker section to note student responsibility for keeping their belongings locked up in their lockers and not on the floor, commons area and classrooms.

Interquest Detection Agency and drug dog search info will be deleted and several additional fees will be included in the fee list for JR/SR High students. The table of contents will be replaced with an index and other minor editorial changes will be made throughout the handbook.