

Alternative High School to relocate within HHS

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

Holyoke Alternative High School, currently located at 430 E. Denver St., will relocate to the northeast corner of Holyoke High School by Nov. 30.

Reporting to the Re-1J School Board at its Nov. 3 meeting, Supt. Bret Miles said the district would be looking to put more than \$12,000 into the current building to bring it into compliance.

There doesn't seem to be justification for continuing to put money into a building the district doesn't even own.

Moving to HHS has been an agenda item at both the September and October Alternative HS parent meetings, Miles said. Additionally, Alternative School director Clark Ginapp has conducted individual interviews with each of the 12 current students to determine if moving to the main building would be a deterrent to the program.

Miles said the building owner is working with the district, with the lease agreement allowing the district to give 15 days notice when they plan to move.

Miles said he feels the cost for the relocation will be minimal, and the long-term benefit will be great. Next year when the grant moneys are reduced for the alternative school program, it will help there are no additional building costs to maintain.

Alternative High School students will utilize the northeast corner entrance to HHS. They will be in the two corner classrooms which currently house Stefen Betley's class and a custodial office/storage area.

Betley currently uses one of the distance learning labs on the northeast corner of the school, as well as the regular classroom. Plans are for Betley to headquarter his classes from the distance lab, to open the other classroom for Alternative HS. Some rearranging of locations will be necessary to accommodate other classes which utilize the distance learning lab.

The custodial office/storage will relocate from the northeast corner to the ag computer lab, a small room off the woods classroom. The ag computers will move into the woods classroom.

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Board member Jeff Tharp noted part of the allure for the alternative school for students not performing well in the traditional school environment is that it's located elsewhere.

Miles responded over half of the alternative school students are taking classes at HHS anyway. He said from all indications, the students are willing to give it a shot. Alternative High School will be looked at as a different approach to education rather than a different location from HHS.

Additionally, the English as a Second Language teacher and counselor are two examples of personnel which will be more accessible than when the school was off-site.

Miles said the main message is this was looked at from a financial perspective. They feel relocating to the HHS building still meets the criteria for the program.

Board president Kendon Olofson acknowledged it's probably a necessary move to maintain the program.

Bleak economy, budget projected at regional meeting

Reporting from the Oct. 22 regional meeting of the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB), Olofson said it was a rather bleak meeting. The state of the economy and the state of the budget are bleak, and there's lots of work to be done, he added.

Dan Kafka said this is the first time actual percentages have been used in noting projected budget decreases in revenues. He cited the importance of giving a clear message to the public while going through the upcoming budget process.

Supt. Miles added one of the key pieces is the consensus of legal opinion around Amendment 23.

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Again emphasizing clear communication with the community, Kafka highlighted the importance of building relationships, building trust and building integrity.

Kafka added the board needs to seriously consider the message it sends to its legislative representatives. In the past, he noted boards were afraid to appear partisan. "But being partisan isn't part of it now. We need to speak out."

Tharp pointed out the legislature is looking very seriously now at words such as consolidation and collaboration of resources.

On a different subject at the recent regional meeting, retiring board member Kendon Olofson was recognized by his peers when he was presented the McGuffey Award for his eight years of committed board service. He humbly acknowledged what an honor he considers this.

Other business

In other business Nov. 3, the Re-1J board:

—approved Harvey Eurich as volunteer high school girls' basketball coach for 2009-10.

—approved first reading of the policy titled "Superintendent Evaluation Instrument."