

School board talks adult education, new elementary

Written by Samantha Sadlier
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ST. GEORGE — A presentation about the Southwest High School's continued successful presence in Washington County topped the agenda at the Tuesday Washington County School Board meeting.

With about 1,000 students enrolled at the adult-education high school in the district, the plan is to expand its reach to all areas of the county, Jim McKim, the district's director of alternative education, said.

"We want this opportunity for adult education at all ends of the county," McKim said. "We're not there yet but we will be next year."

McKim said the school currently offers teaching locations at its main campus in St. George as well as classes at Purgatory Correctional Facility, and also offers an English as a second language course. The program is expanding to Hurricane High School for the summer and is expanding to Hildale and Enterprise next school year.

Staffing difficulties are present at the school — there is one full-time staff teacher at the school per every 150 students followed by one instructor per 115 students at Purgatory and 50 students per instructor through the ESL program, McKim said.

Adults and students over 16 years old who have dropped out of high school are able to enroll in the program, which is self-paced and computer based, McKim said. It is drop-in attendance, so enrollment can take place at any time throughout the school year, he noted.

Partnering with the School of Life for an educational course, learning life skills also was a beneficial venture for SWHS this year, McKim said.

Although usually targeted to helping students younger than 18 learn life skills, McKim said the School of Life program helped the older students as well.

Students also can graduate from SWHS with their diploma or GED, McKim said. However, because the GED test is becoming more difficult, more students are opting to complete diploma requirements over taking the test.

With 264 graduates last year, the school is preparing to graduate another group in June, McKim said.

"It's so impressive to see the people that come into the program and do well," he said.

Also during the school board meeting, Superintendent Larry Bergeson told the board the land for the Hildale Elementary School has been purchased and plans to go forward and build the kindergarten through eighth grade school building are still on track.

"We're ready to move forward ... and see where it goes," Bergeson said.

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