

## District 27J to start night school

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### 27J adds night-school alternative

Night school is now an option for students in School District 27J. And enrollments are being accepted for the limited spots at Brighton Heritage Academy Night School.

Brighton Heritage Night School offers six classes on an alternating block schedule. The classes are between 1 and 8 p.m., Monday through Thursday. A maximum of 30 students can attend School District 27J Night School each quarter this school year.

Generally, students will be between ages 16 and 18. The student may have been expelled, seek credit recovery, and/or is a teen parent or expectant mother.

Attendance will be mandatory - only two absences a quarter allowed for full credit. Classes are held in Brighton Heritage Academy at Eighth Avenue and Bridge.

For more information, contact program coordinator RocAnn Rogers at 303-655-2869. She is in room 105 at Brighton Heritage Academy and also can be contacted by e-mail at [rrogers@sd27j.org](mailto:rrogers@sd27j.org).

The new program is the result of a committee charged with seeking other solutions for students who leave traditional public school before graduating.

Superintendent Rod Blunck initiated the Alternative to the Alternative Committee and charged the committee to explore the issues and the possibilities.

Brighton Heritage Academy Principal Cyndra Foster led the committee and the charge, but she credits School Board Member Rosalie Everson with pushing for it.

The first committee meetings were spent brainstorming, she said. They asked a lot of questions.

Who are the kids we're losing? Why don't traditional schools work for them? What are their needs?

What would make them want to return to school? Will we get participation?

Ultimately, the group of dedicated members who volunteered time to the committee prepared a two-part program for Blunck. Part one was suggested for implementation with the 2007-08 school year, "for most pressing needs," Foster said.

Funding for it is included in the budget before the 27J School Board. The district's per-pupil allocation from the state will recover the costs if 12 or more students participate, Blunck

said.

Part two is a three-year vision of how the program could grow.

"It is important to start small and set the program up for success," Foster said. "That will allow the program to establish roots and a positive reputation for helping students.

"In its first year, many students will be able to come get the education they need and deserve. In subsequent years, it can grow and expand to address the needs of more students and more diverse needs."

The final report and plan addressed the challenges of putting a program together for the coming year: hiring highly qualified personnel, identifying students who will be successful in the program, location, compiling resources and materials, class schedule, course offerings, credit equivalents, meals and budget.

The program also is using the talents of 27J teachers to teach specific classes.

"One of the key elements of this program is the two teachers running it," the report said.

"These people would need to be very innovative and able to work independently.

"Equally important will be choosing students who will be successful in this program. An application must be developed that can screen students to identify students who are committed to finishing their education."

Of the plan, Foster said, "I want to make sure we're realistic; that we create something that kids want to be involved in. Start small and build on that.

"What you can never sacrifice is quality," she said. "It isn't a piece of paper. It's an education."

The Alternative to the Alternative Committee members were Ruth DeCrescentis, director of Services for At-Risk Students; Betty Emanuele, special education coordinator; Cindy Degaugh, psychologist; Janet Wyatt, BHS; Serena Seneca, BHA; Jake Nelson, BHA; and School Board members Rosalie Everson and Valerie Espinosa-Martinez. Staff support was provided by Anita Mariotti of BHA.

"No kids should fall through the cracks," Superintendent Blunck said. "This is part of our commitment to our community."