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HITTING THE BOOKS: Easton students return to school Sept. 1

Written by Brad Durrell
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The entrance to Helen Keller Middle School, where students will return Sept. 1 for the new academic year.

Students returning to Joel Barlow High School next week will be greeted by a new school entrance sign and some other infrastructure improvements. "People have been waiting for the sign," said Schools Supt. Michael Cicchetti. "It looks beautiful."

At Barlow, there also has been some painting completed, work done on the gymnasium and outdoor playing fields, energy-efficient lighting installed, and a storage room added to safely keep the school's grand piano near the theater.

Soon, work will begin to upgrade the high school's Field A to deal with drainage issues.

In the classroom, Barlow administrators, teachers and staff will continue to focus on student performance, according to Cicchetti, who oversees the Easton, Redding and Region 9 school districts (ER9). Region 9 operates Joel Barlow, which serves both Easton and Redding students.

"We'll be looking backward to see if the curriculum is where it should be to ensure the success of students," he said, explaining this involves analyzing what students are taught during all their academic years.

Some curriculum work was completed during the summer, including in the areas of literacy, science and language arts. "Literacy is the cornerstone of our work," Cicchetti said. "Student success in all areas is based on literacy skills."

The first day of school in ER9 is Wednesday, Sept. 1. As of late last week, the three districts expected to have a combined 3,298 students walk through their doors the 2010-11 school year.

The breakdown by school is 983 students at Barlow, 672 at Samuel Staples Elementary (Easton), 662 at Redding Elementary (Redding), 594 at John Read Middle (Redding), and 387 at Helen Keller Middle (Easton).



The new sign at Joel Barlow High School. (Photo by Liz Skalka)

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