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# Enrollment up in all G.I. school districts

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By **Harold Reutter**  
[harold.reutter@theindependent.com](mailto:harold.reutter@theindependent.com)

Published: Thursday, August 20, 2009 7:49 PM CDT

Heartland Lutheran, Central Catholic, Northwest Public Schools and the Grand Island Public Schools all are reporting higher enrollments.

Heartland Lutheran and the Grand Island Public Schools are reporting all-time high enrollments.

Lloyd Wagnitz, development director for Heartland Lutheran, said the high school's enrollment is 75 students, an all-time high for the school, whose first school year was 2000-01. Wagnitz said the school's largest grade is its freshman class, with 22 students.

"We're trying to get to 25 kids per grade, which would put us at 100 students," Wagnitz said. He said school officials are hoping that enrollment will rise as the smaller classes in the upper grades graduate with classes with larger enrollments gradually supplanting them.

Superintendent Greg Logsdon said a large sixth-grade class helped Central Catholic's enrollment grow by 10 students compared to the beginning of last year. Total enrollment for grades six through 12 is 314 students.

With 52 students, the sixth grade is the second-largest class in the school, Logsdon said. He said last year's senior class had 40 students. Central Catholic lost two students who moved or transferred, so the school has a net gain of 10 students.

The smallest class at Central Catholic is the senior class with 37 students, so there is an opportunity for the school to grow again next year with another good-sized sixth-grade class, Logsdon said. High school-only enrollment could climb next year if all 48 eighth-graders move up to ninth grade.

Northwest Public Schools has a total K-12 enrollment of 1,424 students, which is up about 24 students compared to the 1,400 students at the beginning of last school year.

Although preschool has not yet started, Northwest Public Schools had another 20 preschool students registered to attend classes at St. Libory, pushing total preK-12 enrollment for the district to 1,444. St. Libory's K-8 enrollment is 97, but its total enrollment rises to 117 when preschool is included.

Northwest High School's enrollment is down eight students, so the gain in enrollment comes from the district's four K-8 schools.

Grand Island Public Schools, the last of the four school systems to begin the 2009-10 school year, is in a



Playground equipment is covered with fourth- and fifth-grade students at Engleman Elementary School. The school is up 17 students over last year, for a total enrollment of 337, the school's largest since Principal Maureen Oman's tenure began. (Independent/Scott Kingsley)

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little different situation than the other three districts. Because its school year just began on Wednesday, district officials on Thursday did not have a firm total of students who physically walked through the schoolhouse doors on the first day.

However, Robin Dexter, assistant superintendent for student services, does have registration numbers and they show that Grand Island's enrollment has grown. Registration, compared to enrollment numbers on Oct. 1, 2008, is up by 390 students.

Dexter, though, does not believe Grand Island's actual enrollment is that much higher than last year's student count. She said district officials have a formula for projecting each year's enrollment. The formula has proven fairly reliable in past years.

Dexter said that equation indicates Grand Island's 2009-10 enrollment should be up anywhere from 185 to 215 students. But because registration numbers were so high, Dexter believes that the formula might have yielded an estimate that is a little on the low side.

When asked how many more students the Grand Island school district might have this year, Dexter replied, "Two hundred fifty students might be a good guess."

Of all the school systems in the city, Grand Island Public Schools has by far the most mobile student population. Dexter said school officials may not get a good feel for actual enrollment until sometime after Labor Day. With more than 8,000 students in the district, Grand Island's enrollment varies almost daily throughout the school year.

That means it may be a few more weeks until Grand Island officials get a feel for whether the district's enrollment is up 185 students at the low end, 215 students for the middle range or 250 students at the high end.

Grand Island Public Schools preliminary registration numbers show that only five schools - Seedling Mile, Stolley Park, Wasmer and West Lawn elementary schools and Walnut Middle School - have lost enrollment compared to last year. The other 13 Grand Island schools have gained enrollment, with most gains in the low double digits. Senior High's enrollment may have grown by triple digits.

Grand Island's 14 elementary schools collectively have 4,425 students, its three middle schools have a total of 1,927 students when alternative middle school students are included and Senior High has 2,164 students registered when its alternative students are included. The district has 432 preschool students, with 372 registered at the Early Learning Center, 30 at Gates and 30 at Lincoln.

The Nebraska Department of Education requires all Nebraska schools to report their official enrollment as of the last Friday in September. This year, that date falls on Sept. 25. That's when the four school systems will report their enrollment. For public schools, the official enrollment is one of the primary factors in determining state aid.

Heartland Lutheran

Total enrollment - 75

Ninth grade - 22

10th grade - 15

11th grade - 19

12th grade - 19

Central Catholic

Total enrollment - 314

Sixth grade - 52

Seventh grade - 41

Eighth grade - 48

Ninth grade - 39

10th grade - 40

11th grade - 57

12th grade - 37

Northwest Public Schools

Total enrollment (Includes preschool) - 1,444

Northwest High School - 699

Cedar Hollow - 352

District 1-R - 173

St. Libory - 117

Chapman - 103

Grand Island Public Schools

Total registration 8,948

Preschool 432

Dodge 461

Engleman 337

Gates 352

Howard 406

Jefferson 325

Knickrehm 248

Lincoln 290

Newell 433

Seedling Mile 110

Shoemaker 280

Starr 258

Stolley Park 216

Wasmer 383

West Lawn 326

Barr M.S. 701

Walnut M.S. 828

Westridge M.S. 381

Alternative M.S. 17

Senior High 2,164

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