

Back to school means trip to country

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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Fifth graders bussed to 100R for classes

Patrick Peterson was a third grader the last time he attended 100R Attendance Center.

Tuesday morning, the first day of classes for Gothenburg Public Schools, Peterson returned to his beloved country school surrounded by cornfields, pasture and a rural home.

Classes in the country for three sections of fifth graders will be temporary—only until workers finish remodeling upper-level classes and the media center at Dudley Elementary which could happen after Labor Day weekend.

In the meantime, fifth graders—the second-largest class at Dudley based on first-day enrollment—will be bussed from Dudley to 100R in the morning and back to the elementary for lunch and afternoon classes in vacated kindergarten rooms.

Kindergartners attend school for half days until Sept. 8.

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Because they live in the country, Peterson said attending classes in town when 100R closed two years ago was a big adjustment for he and his brother Evan, then a first grader, due to the large number of students at Dudley.

“There weren’t as many kids at 100R,” Peterson said.

Asked how he’ll feel leaving 100R for the second time once construction is completed, the fifth grader replied: “It’ll be all right.”

Fifth-grade teachers, who have had to temporarily ready their rooms in a new building, describe the change as an adventure.

“I think it’s going to be fun and a little adventure for the kids,” said Barb Hicken. “It’ll be different.”

“So far so good,” said Becky Costello while Sharon Andres said any big challenges are yet to come.

Student Jacob Jobman said he thinks being bussed to a country school is “pretty cool” and “a good opportunity to come out to learn.”

Classmate Kasey Wellmann said she’d never been to 100R before.

“It’s cool and pretty awesome.”

As she waited in line to have her first-day photograph taken, Julyssa Rocha contemplated

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afternoon classes in the kindergarten classrooms.

“I thought ‘What did we do to have to go back to kindergarten?’” Rocha asked with a laugh
Change is also within the walls of Dudley Elementary.

Because of four instead of three sections of second grade, new teacher Tara Weaver and her students will share space with three special education teachers.

Third-grade teacher Deb Clark has relocated her class to a high school industrial technology classroom down the hall from the elementary while sixth-grade teacher Deb Miller is meeting with her students in a computer lab.

Two other sections of sixth grade are in classrooms in the north hallway of Dudley.



Two sections of fourth graders are in the Community Building. Claudine Kennicutt’s classroom is in a health room while Becky Gibbens is teaching in the District 20 board room.

Colleague Mary Meisinger teaches students in a wrestling/multi-purpose room in the high school.

Media center specialist Ann Matzke will take her media and teaching to each classroom until her newly remodeled room is ready for students.

In early June, Paulsen Inc. of Cozad began remodeling fifth- and sixth-grade classroom pods

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and the media center to boost the number of classrooms from 10 to 12.

A conference room and four small testing areas that could be offices are included in the project as well as two bathrooms with five stalls each for boys and girls.

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