



Above: Superintendent KC Somers shares a congratulatory elbow bump with Commander Jon Hudson of the Monument Police Department. *Photo courtesy of District 38.*



Above: Palmer Ridge senior Caroline Bushnell was recognized for her election as vice president of Key Club International, an organization sponsored by Kiwanis to teach leadership skills to high school students. *Photo courtesy of District 38.*

Strategic Plan—ensure high-quality instruction and relevant educational experiences for all students—Goal 2

The board discussed the district's mission statement and reviewed talking points that would enable the district to communicate with the community about the goals and methods of the district, especially those citizens who do not have students in the schools. Taylor and Upchurch worked together on this initiative.

Taylor said he would like the public to know the differences between requirements and expectations for public, private, and charter schools.

Somers commented that we now work in a system that is compliance driven. We give ourselves permission to call out contradictions, and teachers have some leeway to meet requirements. We need to think about what constraints we can remove in order to try

new things.

Taylor agreed that public schools have more constraints than charter or private schools.

In determining how to gauge the success of the district's actions, the board discussed how students should be prepared to enter the world of higher education and the workforce by developing a list of desirable skills such as communication (written and verbal), teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, and leadership.

The board also agreed that it would be valuable to survey graduates immediately after graduation and a few years later to determine whether the district's methods are successful.

Chief Academic Officer Lori Benton answered questions regarding assessments, curriculum, and other aspects of the district's programs. Some aspects that she addressed were investment in professional development, creating multiple pathways for students through career and technical education and other co-curricular activities, and expanded use of technology at all grade levels.

The board approved minor changes in the district boundaries. The state requires that boundaries be examined every four years to ensure that they are relatively equal in population and contiguous. Redistricting was based on demographic figures from 2018.

The Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education generally meets on the third Monday of each month at the district's Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St. in Monument. Due to the winter break, the December meeting will be held on Dec. 14. Seating is limited due to virus regulations. Meetings are livestreamed on the district's Facebook page, accessed through lewis-palmer.org.

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Lewis-Palmer District 38 District Accountability Advisory Committee, Nov. 10

Committee hears about Palmer Ridge High School, Special Education activities

By Harriet Halbig

The District Accountability Advisory Committee of Lewis-Palmer District 38 held a virtual meeting on Nov. 10. In keeping with tradition, the committee was introduced to the campus of one school in the district and then received reports on board and legislative matters and activities in the Special Education (Exceptional Student) Department.

Principal Terry Bramschreiber reported on his tenure at Palmer Ridge High School, where he has been principal for a little over a year. He said that as a previous principal at Discovery Canyon he had much exposure to the activities at Palmer Ridge, as they were founded a year apart and shared many athletic competitions.

Palmer Ridge now has a population of 1,217 students. Its philosophy includes emphasis on an active professional learning community, innovative teaching, social and emotional well-being of students and staff, and community engagement.

The school offers many pathways to students including advanced placement classes, Project Lead the Way with instruction in engineering, several on-line programs, DECA (distributive education clubs of America), offering training and competition in the area of entrepreneurship, Ridgeline training in

media, and a new course in cybersecurity. Students also have the opportunity to attend classes at Pikes Peak Community College for college credit and some classes taught on campus by teachers certified to offer college credit.

The school had a 15% lower budget this year and has tried to maximize use of CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act) funding and weigh repairing versus replacing items in the school.

Bramschreiber explained the challenges of maintaining school spirit during the coronavirus pandemic and maintaining high-quality instruction during hybrid learning in addition to building relationships with students when personal contact is limited.

Board of Education and legislative update

Board Liaison Tiffiney Upchurch reported on the Board of Education's continuing emphasis of applying its strategic plan to all actions. *For details on the Strategic Plan, see <https://www.ocn.me/v20n11.htm#d38>.*

The November election resulted in three issues that will affect school funding. The first of these was the repeal of the Gallagher Amendment, which had enforced a balance between residential tax and commercial tax rates. The current rate of taxation on residences is a little over 7%. Had Gallagher continued, the rate would have fallen below 6.5%. Proposition EE regarding a tax on tobacco products including vaping products is expected to yield \$1.75 million in 2021-22 to fund expanded preschool, eviction assistance, and tobacco education. Proposition 116 lowered the personal income tax rate from 4.64% to 4.55%.

She also reported that the board was able to give staff members a bonus in their November check.

Special Education update

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