

Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education, April 16

District recognizes student achievements and community partnerships, passes funding resolution

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education recognized the achievements of many members of the student body and the contributions of local organizations and businesses during its April 16 meeting.

Student and community recognitions

Prairie Winds Elementary School Principal Aileen Finnegan introduced the sixth-grade chess club, which placed second in the state, competing against sixth- to eighth-graders for the honor.

Lewis-Palmer Middle School Principal Seann O'Connor introduced eighth-grader Patrick Best, who competed in the Colorado National Geographic Bee in March. He was one of 11 from the Pikes Peak area to participate. Best had also participated in the Knowledge Bowl.

Lions Club President David Prejean presented Lewis-Palmer High School student Isabel Taylor and Palmer Ridge student Emily Schuler with scholarships.

Palmer Ridge Robotics Team coach/sponsor Ashley Pollard updated the board on the team's activities. A team member explained the mechanics of the competition. The team was selected by the third-place alliance and finished in fifth place in regional competition. Pollard also thanked the community and sponsors Rosie's Diner, Synthes, Tri-Lakes Women's Club, and Monument Hill Kiwanis for their support.

Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wageman introduced representatives of several community organizations and thanked them for their support of the district. These included:

- Barb Betzler and Susanna

- Peters of the Tri-Lakes Women's Club
- Haley Chapin and Ed Paulovich of Tri-Lakes Cares
- Tommie Plank, president of the Historic Monument Merchants Association
- Rob Hoette, grand knight of the Knights of Columbus
- Harry Brandon, president of the Monument Hill Kiwanis Club
- Heather Steinman, executive director of the Tri-Lakes YMCA
- Becki Tooley, trustee from the Town of Monument Board of Trustees
- Nikki McDonald, mayor of the Town of Palmer Lake
- David Prejean, president of the Tri-Lakes Lions Club

Each individual mentioned the ways in which his or her organization supported the school district over the years through grants, fundraising activities, provision of community service opportunities to students, and appreciation of the value the schools provide to the community.

Each representative was given a certificate by Superintendent Karen Brofft and board President Mark Pfoff. Pfoff said that the district is very fortunate to have such generous and supportive partners.

Resolution to restore funding

The board passed a resolution to request that the Legislature abide by Amendment 23 and give restoration of education funding priority over TABOR refunds to taxpayers. Many districts across the state have passed similar resolutions, which will be delivered to legislators by representatives of the Colorado Association of School Boards.

Policies approved

The board approved operational policies on public conduct on school property (involving the definition of controlled substances to include marijuana products) and the procedures overseeing educational research projects and surveys.

Student fees update

Director of Personnel and Student Services Bob Foster explained proposed changes in student fees for the next school year. Fees for participation in hockey and swimming would see the largest increases, due to the expense of ice and pool time.

Foster showed fees for the same activities in nearby districts, pointing out that District 20 uses ice on the Air Force Academy grounds for no charge and schools in District 20 have their own swimming pools.

Foster also pointed out that some state requirements, such as helmet reconditioning for football, cause unavoidable increases in fees.

Foster assured the board that parents and coaches had discussed the increases and preferred them to the alternative of constant fundraising activities.

Preliminary 2015-16 budget review

Wageman provided information about district revenues for the coming year, including a projected increase of \$272 per pupil from the state, \$70,200 cash in lieu of land, and an additional enrollment of 133 by Oct. 1.

Wageman also explained profits from the Nutritional Services department. Beginning this year, the district declined to accept federal funding for high school lunches, believing serving sizes to be insufficient, resulting in many students leaving campus to purchase lunch. At this time, the department continues to see



Above: President David Prejean of the Tri-Lakes Lions Club presented scholarship checks to Lewis-Palmer High School senior Isabel Taylor, left, and Palmer Ridge High School senior Emily Schuler. Photo by Harriet Halbig



Above: The Prairie Winds sixth-grade chess team includes, from left, sixth-grade teacher and coach Peter Wise, Ryan Locke, Amelia Saffold, Ethan Markowitz, Keiran Berry, Chris Mills, and Brett Barton. Photo by Harriet Halbig.

profit at the high schools and that profit is being used to replace aging equipment.

The district has decided to continue to accept funding for middle school lunches for the coming year.

Citizens' comments

Rhonda Young, representing the Lewis-Palmer Education Association, thanked the board for its openness and willingness to discuss concerns of the teachers.

Heather Jacobson, a Lewis-Palmer Elementary School parent, expressed concern about non-renewals of contracts at that school due to the resignation of

the school's principal during the year. Jacobson requested that the teacher evaluations be reviewed.

To view supporting material such as wording of policies, please go to lewispalmer.org, board of education, board of education information, April 16 meeting agenda.

The Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month in the district's Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting will be held on May 21.

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District Accountability Advisory Committee, April 14

Committee reviews 2015 budget, discusses Unified Improvement Plan

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D-38 District Accountability Advisory Committee reviewed the district's Unified Improvement Plan and received a summary of the budget for the coming school year at its April 14 meeting.

Director of Assessment and Gifted Education Lori Benton explained that all data in the improvement plan is an aggregate of the entire district's performance, including performance of students from Monument Academy. The district does not have oversight over improvement planning for the charter school.

The district continues to be accredited with distinction, meeting requirements for academic growth and academic growth gaps, and ex-

ceeding requirements in academic achievement and postsecondary and workforce readiness.

The few weak points in performance involve academic growth at the elementary level in math among students with disabilities, those on free/reduced-price lunch and students needing to catch up, and writing among students with disabilities. The improvement plan is to explore online math intervention and use digital tools that allow teachers to address a student's individual weaknesses.

At the middle school level, reading is rated as "approaching" among English learners, students needing to catch up, and students with disabilities. Writing is a weakness among students with disabilities. The plan is to administer

assessments several times during the year to monitor progress. Programs such as Reading Across the Curriculum serve to emphasize the importance of this skill.

At the high school level, reading among students with disabilities and math among students with disabilities are rated as "approaching."

The plan now includes an additional document evaluating the gifted program.

District 38 is among the top three scoring districts in the state. Because of overall high scores, it is sometimes difficult to achieve the required rate of growth (45 percent median growth percentile for the population at large, 55 percent median growth for gifted students).

In explaining plans for improvement, the document states that

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