

- LED lights are replacing existing lights both in- doors and outdoors, with outdoor lights expected

to be 12 times brighter. The LED lights have an 11-year guarantee and are expected to pay for themselves in 18 months.

- Principal Elizabeth Davis highlighted non-academic extracurricular activities as an integral part of the student's experience at MA. Beyond athletics, MA has a chess club

and participates in Odyssey of the Mind, Match Wits, and Battle of the Books. Board President Scott Saunders noted how much better extracurriculars are than they were in past years.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, May 10 at the Monument Academy library at 1150

Village Ridge Point. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Information on the MA School Board, including schedule, minutes, committee and finances can be found at www.monumentacademy.net/school-board.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.



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D-38 Deliberates, April 16

Community members discuss safety, mental health priorities

By Harriet Halbig

Local residents and School District 38 staff and students came together on April 16 to discuss school safety and security in the wake of the February school shooting in Florida. Also on hand to answer questions and concerns were the district's school resource officers and the chief of safety and security. The meeting was held in the commons of Lewis-Palmer High School.

The format for the discussion, as for previous discussions on the subjects of long-term facilities planning and the use of Grace Best Education Center, was to arrange tables for eight individuals and a trained facilitator, with the overall discussion led by Carrie Bennett, who noted comments from attendees and timed the discussions. Bennett

encouraged all to speak and listen with respect.

The discussion was divided into two segments, the first dealing with mental health resources and school climate, and the second dealing with safety training and physical safeguards.

Bennett explained at the outset that security is a "wicked" problem, meaning that there are no simple solutions and priorities and trade-offs must be considered. The stakes are very high, she said, but even schools that do all the right things have to deal with risk.

District Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wangeman explained what the district is now doing to ensure safety and what they wish to add, including cameras at the high schools and the addition of several armed individuals and gun-sniffing dogs.

For details on this issue, see the April DAAC article at www.ocn.me/v18n4.htm#daac.

Following the group discussion on mental health resources, attendees offered the following comments:

- There is an increasing need for mental health resources.
- There is a concern about liability for being understaffed in this area.
- Mental health problems may be a result of family relationships.
- Be cautious not to fund something you may have to defund later.
- If counselors are added to staff, be sure they are supported by staff.

- Counseling at the elementary level should be preventive.
- Need to address the stigma of mental health.

The group then discussed crisis and safety training and physical safeguards. Attendees offered the following comments:

- We need to understand the cost benefit vs. the potential threat of violence.
- Has there been research regarding the effectiveness of drills and training?
- We want proper training and positive interactions between individuals.
- Do physical changes such as mantrap entries make people feel safer or increase the feeling of threat? We must not encourage an erosion of trust.
- The realism of drills is critical. They should not be announced.
- One individual suggested a video of an active shooter situation with age-appropriate dialogue.

Bennett made a list of priorities on poster-size sheets and gave each attendee two stickers to use to express their priorities. One such poster was near the stage and the other near the exit. Attendees also were encouraged to fill out a sheet explaining what their priorities are and why. These sheets would later be provided to the Board of Education for its consideration.

Harriet Halbig can be contacted at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

District Accountability Advisory Committee, April 17

Committee elects new co-chair, hears communication and budget updates

By Harriet Halbig

The District Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC) of Lewis-Palmer D-38 held its final meeting of the 2017-18 school year on April 17. Among the items covered were the election of a new co-chair for next year, a budget report,

an update on district communications, and brief reports from each school on this year's activities

Board liaison Tiffney Upchurch was absent due to a family emergency.

Committee Co-chair Anne-Marie Hasstedt ex-

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