

- and Kilmer, to address geography.
- Keep pre-kindergarten on site and centralize preschool.
- No room for centralization to hap-

- pen.
- Limit population at site-based preschools to not impede on K-6 classes. Send overflow to a central

location. After the discussion, 13 individuals voted for site-based preschools, 24 voted for a hybrid, and two supported the

centralized option.

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Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Board of Education, Dec. 18

Board acts on near-term growth solutions, hears security update, discusses future bond issue

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education passed a plan to address near-term growth in the district, discussed a new bond issue, signed a contract for a superintendent search in light of Superintendent Karen Brofft's plan to re-

tire, and approved the district's annual audit at its Dec. 18 meeting.

Near-term growth solutions

Following a discussion at the board's special meeting and work session on Dec. 3 (see article on page 1 of this is-

sue), the board was presented with a report from Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wangeman with alternative solutions to the capacity problem among the district's facilities.

Following several meetings and discussions with elementary and middle school principals, Wangeman said that a great deal of data had been collected, including security concerns, data from Metrostudy regarding demographics and anticipated growth, and consultation with the architects and engineers for the proposed new elementary school.

Brofft said it would be impractical to do redistricting before 2020 and that the Thoughtexchange polling completed on Dec. 16 indicated that parents do not favor the centralization of preschool services. (Thoughtexchange is an online survey that was made available for 12 days earlier in the month.) (See D-38 Deliberates article on page 8.)

Wangeman presented a proposal that modular classrooms be installed at Lewis-Palmer Middle School, Bear Creek Elementary School, Kilmer Elementary School, and Lewis-Palmer Elementary School.

Each modular would contain two classrooms with a restroom for each classroom, Wi-Fi, cameras, and swipe-card access for security reasons. A major objection to the use of modulators had been security concerns if students would need to go from the modular to the building during the school day. Fencing and lighting would also be provided.

Wangeman said that the middle school has room for up to five modulators, but the population increase of 280 students would put a strain on the common areas such as the library and lunch facilities. She therefore suggested the placement of two modulators at the middle school.

Because of growth, Wangeman said that Bear Creek Elementary needs additional space for its preschool. Prairie Winds and Palmer Lake Elementaries had repurposed rooms in their schools to accommodate preschool growth, as had Lewis-Palmer Elementary.

The first option was to place two modulators (for preschool) at Bear Creek, one at Kilmer for sixth grade, and one modular for two traditional classrooms at Lewis-Palmer Elementary, in addition to the two at the middle school. (New building codes make it impossible to move the modular classrooms from Grace Best to another location.)

The fourplex at Lewis-Palmer High School, currently used as a senior center, could be used but not moved.

If more than two modulators were placed at Bear Creek, the playground would need to be moved.

Prairie Winds Principal Aileen Finnegan said that teachers support the use of modulators. Site-based preschools are heavily favored. Modulators also create support for k-6 services, as teacher spaces had been repurposed as classrooms.

Finnegan said that preschool registration opens on Jan. 15, so it is urgent that a decision be made.

Option two would move the Bear Creek preschool to the modular at the high school. The deliberation indicated

that parents don't want their youngest kids at the high school.

Wangeman explained that the initial cost of each modular would be \$102,000 to \$108,000, or an approximate one-time expense of \$709,000. Once installed and equipped with security, the modulators would be leased by the district. This would meet the district's needs until 2021, according to Metrostudy's analysis. It would also avoid the need to redistrict.

The board approved the first option.

Security update

Chief of Safety and Security Dennis Coates reported that there were three goals for his department last year:

- Improvement of physical buildings to include restricted access, alarms, and cameras that could be monitored remotely.
- Maintenance of preparedness and communication.
- Attention to the well-being of staff and students.

Coates said that one position was added in his department this year.

Some activities included upgrading of high school cameras, training in reunification if a school is evacuated, promotion of the Safe2Tell program allowing students and others to express concern about an individual or a situation, threat assessments, new drills, and attention to the Claire Davis Act, a law requiring that school districts be proactive in protecting students.

Upcoming activities will include cameras installed in the middle school over Christmas, cameras in the elementary schools to be installed during the summer, and improved backup communications to deal with poor cell reception at Bear Creek Elementary, Lewis-Palmer High School, and the stadium.

Coates said that some additional thoughts included:

- Monitoring of mental health. Many parents in the district, but not all, take care of this for their own families.
- Traffic—too many cars in parking lots when students are there.
- Vape pens are being used every day in the schools, sometimes even in class. When detected they are confiscated.
- Increased use of drugs and alcohol by a wider demographic of students.
- Overcrowding.
- Mentioned RAD (real alternatives to alcohol and drugs) program at the Y, providing a place for kids to go in the evening.

Superintendent update

Brofft said that she would recognize many schools for their awards this year at the January meeting of the board but stressed that all schools in the district are doing well and showing strong scores on assessments.

She detailed the results of the Thoughtexchange survey. The question was what should the district learn from the bond/MLO defeat in November. Most common comments:

- Ballot language was unclear on exactly what the funding would be used for.

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COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS FOR EDUCATION & OVER-CROWDING IN D38

D38 proposed an expensive bond/MLO costing over \$65M over the life of the loan to address over-crowding. **There is a solution to D38's capacity issues — with no new property taxes or MLO's — which will help create 900+ new seats for D38 students.**

Instead of increasing property taxes, D38 has approximately \$2M in reserves from the recent sale of a school site and funds allocated specifically to buildings. D38 should put these funds towards a building on Monument Academy's new school site. This investment in a **D38 public charter school** will help create new elementary seats, middle school seats and high school seats — **with no new property taxes to D38 taxpayers.**

SOLUTIONS WITH NO NEW TAXES:

+ 900 new classroom seats

+ Solves capacity problems

+ Maintains quality local education

+ No additional property taxes to D38 taxpayers

DO THE MATH:



New taxes/\$65M+ new debt/MLO costs = 600 seats @ \$108,000/seat



No new property taxes/\$2M existing D38 funds = 900 seats @ \$2,222/seat

D38 TAXPAYERS FOR EFFICIENT, EXCELLENT & RESPONSIBLE EDUCATION