

source must be considered. Some revenue, such as that resulting from COVID sources, is short-term and cannot be designated for continuing uses such as salaries. When considering some expenditures, such as new curriculum, it must be determined whether this is a new purchase or a replacement of a

previous curriculum. Long-term planning involves examination of trends in such areas as population growth and state funding. Treasurer Ron Schwarz suggested that in the interest of transparency, perhaps the terminology on the budget could be clarified in lay terms. For ex-

ample, instead of designating available funds as “unassigned,” it could be designated as “savings.” The board approved several policy revisions and passed the consent agenda. ***** The D-38 Board of Education usu-

ally meets on the third Monday of the month at the district learning center, 146 Jefferson St. Monument. Due to the holiday break, the December meeting will be on Dec. 13. *Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me*

Monument Academy School Board, Nov.11

Monument Academy high school principal resigns

By Jackie Burhans
The Monument Academy (MA) school board met on Nov. 11 at the east campus music room to discuss the resignation of the high school principal, hear updates on the phase 2 project, and recognize a member of the MA community. Parents spoke during the public comments on both topics. The board met in executive session after amending it to include a discussion of confidential student information regarding a parent grievance.

Principal resigns mid-year
Board President Ryan Graham, speaking for himself and not the entire board, said he was notified on Nov. 5 of the sudden resignation of MA's beloved east campus principal, Julie Seymour. He said she was an integral part of MA for the past 12 years



Julie Seymour

and that all are saddened that she left. She served in the role of teacher at the pre-kindergarten and middle school before moving into administration. He said the board is aware that when a key leadership person resigns in the middle of a school year, there will be rumors and accusations. He said he had numerous conversations including speaking directly with Seymour to ask if there was anything the board could do to get her to reconsider. She emphatically stated no and said that her res-

ignation was for personal reasons, he said. In discussing the plan going forward, Chief Operating Officer (COO) Merlin Holmes indicated that he planned to hire an interim administrator who would work with the two existing assistant principals to manage the campus for the rest of the year. He indicated he did not want to use the term principal, in part to avoid looking like they would be replacing Seymour or setting the expectation that the position would be permanent. Holmes noted that the best time for hiring is in February and March when the pool of applicants would be larger.

During public comments a parent noted that she was not alone in her sadness over Seymour's resignation, saying she appreciated her sincerity as a person and her compassion and fair-mindedness as a leader. She noted that Seymour and the Exceptional Student Services (ESS) team helped to create an atmosphere which nurtured students with learning disabilities who were on individualized education (IEP) or 504 plans. She expressed concern that she had heard that a teacher had resigned in November and was told by the teacher that the COO had talked him into staying by agreeing to the stipulation that the teacher would not have to meet so much with ESS parents which he did not find productive. She said she would have spoken with Seymour about her concerns but now was turning to the MA board to bring it to their attention.

Phase 2 update

Holmes, in his COO report, noted that the phase 2 survey results showed that the top two priorities are for more academic space and a competition-size gymnasium. Additionally, respondents would like an athletic field and a performing arts auditorium. A separate survey of fifth grade families drew 100 responses which were spread widely among staying at the west campus for sixth grade, moving to the east campus, and some still unsure. He said the temporary use of moduls could be considered to keep sixth grade at the east campus. He reported continuing to work on the five-year budget challenges as part of the financing investigation. During the public comment section, a parent thanked the board for seeking parent input and said that the east campus has the capacity to add 25 to 50 students at the high school level without moving sixth grade back to the west campus. She said that to increase the budget, MA needed to increase enrollment and would not be able to add more high schoolers until phase 2 is built. She said there is room to grow in grades K through 5 and asked the board not to block that growth by moving sixth grade back. She also noted that current sixth graders have access to advanced electives, enriching clubs, and sports as well as teachers who specialize in subject contact and who can offer structured support times. She said that MA's image would suffer by regressing and backsliding. She also said that adding sixth grade back to the west campus would put further strain on the car line,



CHRISTMAS EVE

AT TRI-LAKES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

5 PM*

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP
WITH HOLY COMMUNION
*NURSERY PROVIDED (4 AND UNDER)

7 PM* and 9 PM

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP
WITH HOLY COMMUNION
*NURSERY PROVIDED (4 AND UNDER)

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