

Lake.

Board and legislative update

Board of Education Liaison Tiffney Upchurch reported that the board's recent actions included a one-time compensation of \$1,000 for each full-time employee and the refinancing of bonds, which will result in savings to taxpayers.

Upchurch reported that the board has approved an investment-grade audit of electricity use from Schneider Electric.

The district was notified that the per pupil revenue for the current year has been reduced by \$64.04 to \$7,598 per pupil. This change in revenue resulted in adjustments to the annual budget.

A Parent Advocacy Network is being created at the state level and Upchurch encouraged all to participate, cautioning that a long-term commitment will be involved.

The board has selected owner's representatives to investigate the condition and use of Grace Best Education Center. The representatives from Anser Advisory and Cooperative Strategies will form a steering committee composed of community members, parents, staff, and students to handle Requests for Proposals for any work proposed. Applications for the steering committee can be found on the district website, lewispalmer.org.

Upchurch stressed that the current users of the building, including Bearbotics from Palmer Ridge and the Homeschool Enrichment Academy will not be evicted from the building, but other uses of the facility will be explored.

Teachers are expected to receive vaccinations for COVID-19 by the end of February. Nurses and some staff members with pre-existing conditions have already been vaccinated.

The state legislative session opened Jan. 26 but will

be postponed until February due to the virus. Gov. Jared Polis hopes to increase the per pupil revenue by \$900 for the 2021-22 school year.

Superintendent KC Somers also mentioned that, in addition to service on the Steering Committee, there will be additional opportunities for community engagement in the Grace Best project.

Safety and Security update

Chief of Safety and Security Dennis Coates reported that, since his last report, door alarms have been installed on many facilities. There had been a particular concern at the high schools which have several entrances and students often leave during their lunch period.

Scanners are being installed at the entrances of each school so that students can scan their ID when they enter or leave. This allows the school to be aware of who is present and allows them to refuse entry to those who have been suspended or those who should be under quarantine. The scanners are being installed at the middle school first.

Emergency drills continue, taking care to ensure social distancing. Cohorts are maintained during these drills to prevent exposure to COVID-19 among students who otherwise would not be in contact.

Bear Creek Elementary and Prairie Winds Elementary have installed 3M film on glass near their entrances. This film makes it much more difficult to break the glass. The film was funded by grants.

Regarding student mental health, Coates said that there are increased emails directly to counselors in addition to the use of Safe2Tell to anonymously report concerns. Students are spending an increased amount of time on social media, which is increasing concern.

The district has received a \$642,000 grant from the Department of Homeland Security to link the district into communication channels of first responders such as

the Sheriff's Office, police, and fire departments. In this way, the first responders can be notified about situations in the schools before they arrive. This project should be completed by August.

Budget review

Chief Financial Officer Shanna Seelye reported on the mid-year budget review, including funding from the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. This funding was applied to provide equipment to make distance learning possible, personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, and personnel.

A percentage of this funding was provided to Monument Academy and to St. Peter Catholic school.

Most recently, the ESSER funding was used to fund training for synchronous learning at the secondary level that began in January, allowing students to attend class in real time from home interacting with their teachers and peers.

Seelye also reported that, due to conservative budgeting for this year, the shortfall in enrollment was absorbed without difficulty, but the lower per pupil revenue (a decrease of \$64 per pupil) will be compensated through the use of reserves.

Priorities for this year are compensation of staff, K-5 literacy, deferred maintenance, and security upgrades.

The Lewis-Palmer District 38 District Accountability Advisory Committee meets five times a year. All meetings this year will be held virtually. The next meeting is on Tuesday, Feb. 9 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

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Monument Academy School Board, Jan. 6 and 14

Board sets 2021 goals, reviews vision

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board held a special meeting on Jan. 6 to review board training requirements and set goals for 2021. At the regular board meeting on Jan. 14, the board passed a revised budget, reviewed the MA vision statement, and considered creating a chief financial officer role.

A special meeting to discuss marketing strategy on Jan. 27 was canceled due to scheduling conflicts.

Board training

Board President Melanie Strop referred the board to a list of Colorado Department of Education (CDE) training requirements for the Colorado Charter Schools Program (CCSP) grant that MA is receiving. The board is required to complete 12 charter school board training modules this year along with board fundamentals events, topic-based webinars, specialized governing board training, and sessions at either the Colorado or national charter school conferences. MA Chief Operating Officer Christianna Herrera noted that there will be site visit next fall around October and that the modules need to be complete by then. She asked that board members report back after completing each module, reporting on what they learned. This will be great preparation for the site visit, she said.

The national charter school conference is tentative due to COVID travel restrictions. However, the Colorado League of Charter Schools is having an online, virtual conference in March with specific board breakout sessions. There are also Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) training sessions available and at least one must be completed.

Herrera also noted that the board must perform self-evaluations by April. Each board member fills out the evaluation and then reports on the average score at the May meeting. This is considered a "best practice" and will be reviewed at the site visit.

2021 goals

After much discussion, the board agreed to two main areas of focus, which were divided into short- and long-term goals:

- Continue to set MA apart academically. In the short term, MA will continue academic interventions to get kids caught up and fill in any gaps as identified in their UIP. The board will review the internally developed vision statement at its January meeting and vote to approve it at the February meeting. The long-term goals will focus on teacher retention, professional development, and curriculum.
- Keep MA financially sound. In the short term, the board will approve the 2021-22 budget to put MA back into a financial position to boost their reserve fund and will work to increase enrollment by 250 students by September. Also, it will complete required training sessions by June 2021 and review the current administrative structure at the

January meeting, voting to approve any changes in February. In the long term, the board will focus on sound financial principals to continue to meet its bond requirements and focus on any state and federal laws that could affect programs at MA. It will also work to increase parent involvement and complete all future required training and conference sessions.

Revised budget

Marc Brocklehurst, director of finance, presented the revised budget, which included a rescission from the state plus other revenue impacts and expense changes. He noted that the state had decreased per pupil operating revenue by \$64 per student, which impacts both campuses. Shanna Seelye, chief financial officer at D38, is applying for Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, of which \$41,000 would go to MA to be split between campuses.

MA also saw an increase in revenue for the east campus of \$116,000 for the first year of a three-year reimbursement from the CCSP grant. It was not originally included in the November budget because he wasn't sure it would come in. Brocklehurst said some money was shifted from unspent budget line items to the advertising budget to boost it to \$50,000. The total impact of these budget revisions is the net loss lowered to \$691,000, leaving an ending fund balance of \$2.1 million.

The revised budget was unanimously approved by the board.

Vision statement

East campus Principal Julie Seymour presented the vision statement to the board, describing a process that started in 2018. While MA has a mission statement, it needed to have a vision to unite staff and send them forward with a laser-like focus, she said. This work was informed by the book Full Steam Ahead by Ken Blanchard, which discusses the value of a vision statement and identifies its components. In fall 2018 she began the work with now Assistant Principal Carol Skinner, who

helped to lead the entire faculty and staff into the process to achieve consensus.

The first part is the purpose, which answers why MA does what it does. The next part is a picture of the future—a picture of the end result. Then the vision identifies five value words that guide daily behaviors. The five words are: Security, Character, Connections, Growth, and Excellence.

The board unanimously approved the vision statement, which will be displayed on the school web site.

Highlights

The following items were highlighted at the board meeting:

- Recognizing that Brocklehurst has done an exceptional job, the board unanimously agreed to ask the Governance Committee to move forward with putting together an organizational change regarding the chief financial officer position. Sherry Buzzell, director of human resources, will review employment law to determine if this is considered a promotion or a new job that needs to be posted.
- The board unanimously approved an amendment to the staff policy handbook that includes tracking leave to quarter-hour increments.
- The board unanimously approved changes to the 2021-22 calendar, changing Jan. 3 to a day off, with Jan. 4 as a teacher workday and Jan. 5 as the student return day. See <http://bit.ly/ma-cal-2122> for the approved calendar.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, Feb. 11 at 6 p.m. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Meetings may be held in person and/or via Zoom, which will be streamed to the MA YouTube channel. For more information on how to join the meeting in person or virtually or to submit a public comment, see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

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Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education, Jan. 25

Board marks School Board Recognition Month, discusses mid-year budget adjustment and conditions during pandemic

By Harriet Halbig

The District 38 Board of Education celebrated Board of Education Recognition Month on Jan. 25 as it received

gifts and messages from several schools in the form of videos, cookies, and other items. Superintendent K.C. Somers praised the board members for their sacrifices of