

his campus. The school still gets Career and Technical Education credit while seats are opened up at BLPA. Some students may finish high school with an associate degree and kids get a chance to explore different interests as well as self-advocate and be responsible.

If the student gets a C grade or higher, BLPA covers the tuition; if the class is at the high school, BLPA covers the textbooks. It's cheaper to do on the high school campus than if the students go to the community college. BLPA offers four courses on its campus using either visiting professors or its own staff. CE gets students both high school and college credit. A college semester is counted as a full year of high school credit, and the GPA is weighted on a 5.0 scale.

BLPA also supports the ASCENT 12+1 program, which extends CE for a fifth year. To do this, the qualifying student does not receive their diploma after four years and must declare a degree plan and be selected by the principal or counselor. The student would receive their diploma after their fifth year.

BLPA also offers a career start program through Pikes Peak Community College to allow students to explore fire science, health careers, design, welding, zookeeping, cybersecurity, etc. This program is for students who are not on a college pathway but want trade skills and certificates to enable them to go straight into the job force.

Wilkinson discussed how to tell if CE is a good fit for a student. Students can take the College Board ACCUPLACER test, use their PSAT or SAT scores, or take an EdReady test as many times as they need. Wilkinson also serves as their counselor, advising them each to review interests, confirm career or college pathway, select courses, etc.

#### Preparing for assessments

MA Secondary School Assistant Vice Principal Marty Venticinque, who also serves as director of assessments, reported on his efforts to schedule assessments. He noted that a bill (HB21-1161) was working its way through the Legislature to lighten the load on the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) tests. The bill, which was later passed by the Legislature, signed into law on March 16 by Gov. Jared Polis, and conditionally approved on March 26 by the U.S. Department of Education (USED), alternates which grades take which assessments.

Under the plan approved by the USED, schools

and districts will be required to administer the CMAS assessments in English language arts to all students in third, fifth, and seventh grades. CMAS math assessments must be administered to all students in fourth, sixth, and eighth grades. The USED did not approve Colorado's request to suspend all science tests this year, so schools and districts must administer science tests to students in eighth grade. CMAS science will not be given to students in fifth and 11th grades, as they normally would, but CDE must publicly report the SAT Analysis in Science subscore this year. Social studies tests, which are required only in state law, will not be given this year.

Venticinque said that window for taking the tests has been extended and there is a provision for parents to opt in for subject area assessments for which they are not scheduled. He expects the CMAS tests to take place in April and the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) tests to take place in May. No remote testing is allowed. Parents can opt out of state tests via an online form with a new option to specify if COVID-19 concerns are a reason for doing so.

#### Athletics

Venticinque also reported that athletics and extracurriculars are under way. Boys basketball made it to the championship this year but lost to the team they had beaten last year. Girls basketball won their first two games then was hit with a quarantine and are hoping to reschedule. He said the Matchwits team was about to start competition, girls volleyball team members were doing volunteer workouts, then track and field would start followed by girls soccer.

He also noted that there was an oral agreement to have cross country and track and field next year at the high school. He is also looking into to golf as an option. Board members suggested he survey eighth-graders who have committed to continuing to ninth grade to gauge their interest.

#### Board policies

The MA board considered and approved several board policy updates:

- 1515 - Teacher Representative to the board—wording changes of “may” to “should” and “will” to “shall.”
- 1516 - Personal and Property Search Policy
- 1517 - Internet Use Policy—minor changes as requested.

- 1525 - State Assessment Refusal Policy—updated in anticipation of coming assessments.
- 1526 - State Assessment Administrative Policy MA board policies can be found at <http://bit.ly/ma-bd-policies>.

#### Highlights

The following items were highlighted at the board meeting:

- Elementary School Principal Charlie Richardson reported that all staff had completed diversity training with MA's lawyer, Brad Miller.
- Herrera reported that the League of Charter Schools held its virtual conference. Board member Misty McCuen attended and provided a briefing on the training she received.
- Herrera said that Matt Dunston had procured a new bus for the school, which will be used to shuttle students between campuses and to help transport students to athletic events.
- A large quarantine at both campuses in the previous week caused frustration for parents and administrators. MA submitted a letter to state and county health organizations asking for regulators to engage with schools to help alleviate the burden.
- Miller confirmed that the governor's mandates have the effect of law that public health has quarantine authority. He said that MA doesn't have the latitude not to follow the guidelines and that the county can close schools.
- The board unanimously recognized Marc Brocklehurst and promoted him to the newly created chief financial officer position.
- The board agreed to continue holding its meetings solely by Zoom for the final two meetings of the year.

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The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 8 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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### Northern El Paso County Home Owners Association, March 13

## Library district CEO gives overview

*By Marlene Brown*

NEPCO (Northern El Paso County Home Owners Association) again used Zoom for its bi-monthly meeting March 13. As NEPCO moves into its 20th year in existence, it continues to promote high quality of life for 49 homeowner association members in the northern end of El Paso County. The area reaches from Douglas County Line Road east to Meridian Road, south to Shoup Road, and west to the Teller County boundary west of Monument and Palmer Lake.

The two county commissioners for the area are:

- District 1—Holly Williams's area includes most of the NEPCO Focus Area.
- District 3—Stan VanderWerf's area includes parts of Monument and Palmer Lake and all the way down the Front Range to Cheyenne Mountain. Most of VanderWerf's area is mountainous and has special needs for transportation, including snow removal and maintenance.

The school districts for the Focus Area are Lewis-Palmer District 38 for the northern two-thirds of the area and Academy District 20 for one-third of the area. The Focus Area communities for House District 20 Rep. Terri Carver and House District 19 Rep. Tim Geitner include Black Forest, Gleneagle, Monument, and Woodmoor. All of NEPCO's focus area is in Sen-

ate District 9 and is represented by Paul Lundeen.

Paul Pirog, vice chairman of the Transportation Land Use Committee, reported that 16 commercial and residential projects have been approved since the first of the year by the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Eight projects are now in the review process through the county Planning Commission and BOCC. Twenty-one new projects are headed for review; many are in NEPCO review now. It has been expressed to the PC and BOCC to be sure to take into consideration the comments made by NEPCO when it comes time to approve projects that are in their system. After a long search, John Lewis of Timberview 2 has been announced as the new chairman of the Transportation Land Use Committee.

#### Guest speaker

Guest speaker John Spears, chief librarian and CEO of the Pikes Peak Library District, reported on the district. With over 700,000 residents in El Paso County and a budget of over \$35 million, Pikes Peak Library District (PPLD) is one of the largest and oldest library districts in the country. The first library established in El Paso County opened in 1885. Monument Hill branch opened in 1975.

Responding to COVID-19 and continuing to

serve the surrounding communities, PPLD went virtual. They continued Adult Education, Food Industry Training, and Creative Services. They use their 3D printers for making face shields and their commercial sewing machines to make medical-grade facemasks. PPLD has an extensive community outreach in the Tri-Lakes area and El Paso County, also working with Pueblo County and other rural branches to provide ongoing education. For more information contact [ppld.org](http://ppld.org)

#### NEPCO urges signing petition to commissioners

The county is considering a recommendation to extend Furrow Road south to Higby Road, which will increase traffic volume immensely. Studies show the number could increase from 900 vehicles/day to 5,000 by the year 2040. The NEPCO HOAs bordering Furrow Road have formed El Paso Safe Streets Alliance to work with county commissioners and provide public support and information. Please urge the county commissioners to expand traffic calming countywide by signing the El Paso Safe Streets petition at <https://ceds.org/epssa/>

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### Woodmoor Improvement Association, March 24

## Updates on developments including the Walters property

*By Jackie Burhans*

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) met on March 24 to hear about upcoming developments and review finances. Board members Connie Brown, Brad Gleason, and Tom Smith were absent.

#### Development updates

President Brian Bush reported on several development initiatives that affect Woodmoor. He said the board is aware of community concerns over the Fur-

row Road extension from Highway 105 to Higby Road. He said several homeowners associations (HOAs) south of Highway 105 are trying to engage with the county to install traffic calming devices. This group is asking HOAs north of Highway 105 to join in that effort. Bush asked the board to consider sending information to residents along with a potential petition to the county.

The El Paso Planning Commission (EPCPC)

recommended approval of the rezoning of ProTerra Properties LLC's Cloverleaf development. See the EPCPC article on page 1. This new development will involve 141 homes east of Lewis-Palmer High School and Woodmoor Park, between the townhomes, on about 38 acres of the former Walters property. It has been approved for rezoning from RS-20000 to RS-5000 square feet. Homes are expected to cost between \$400,000 and \$600,000. This development will be un-