

the principals, not the COO who drives the overall vision, he said.

Dole said MA must acknowledge there have been multiple pain points, not just issues with five months of leadership, from communication to lack of structural accountability and to discipline for students and staff. He talked about getting back on track very quickly. Communication needs to be key, he said, and fear of reaching out must stop. Completing the organization chart is a must, and the board will issue directives to Holmes to do so and will stop the practice of asking people to wear multiple hats. The board recognizes this structural component will take money and is willing to authorize the funds. He asked the audience to remember the challenges MA has overcome and the prospect of breaking ground next year on an expanded facility.

Holmes acknowledged the frustration directed at him. He said he believes in continuous improvement for students, staff, and himself and would work to improve. For those who have been offended, he apologized for not doing better. He said he was open to criticism and gave staff and parents permission to come and talk to him, at a scheduled time, preferring to hear directly rather than through social media. Holmes said MA would create opportunities for parents to get to know new administrators in different formats. He closed by saying that being student-focused and providing a great education to kids is paramount to MA's success.

Graham delivered his own statement, saying to the MA community and staff that they had made their voices heard and thanking them for their passionate pursuit of the truth. He said the board understood the urgency to fix the issues but that it would take time. He shared the perspective of a student with their permission:

The student said the work ethic was not strong enough and that

teachers make excuses and allow extensions, which does not prepare students for life. High school students are mixed with and treated like middle-schoolers and given little responsibility, which limits growth. If given responsibilities, they believe high school students would step up. Expectations have been dropped drastically and character-first is not enforced, so students don't behave. Teachers don't know how to deal with issues blaming them on being a new school. There used to be a high bar which set MA students apart, but the amount of drama and gossip is unlike anything previously experienced. For these reasons, they don't think the school is for them anymore.

Graham said the board is there to help, adding if MA doesn't correct the course it will not have a high school in the years to come. He spoke of the financial situation based on the current bonds and the need to expand capacity and add athletic facilities. Holmes was brought on to be COO but was thrust into other roles, and his communication style has caused issues. The board members, he said, have put their family, business, and personal lives on hold as they work on these issues and are here to say that failure is not an option. Graham recommended, in addition to the hiring directives, that the board hire an executive coach to delve into leadership, communication, culture, climate, and collaboration issues.

After a lengthy discussion on what that would entail, the board unanimously agreed to do so and to allocate up to \$10,000 and form a subcommittee led by board members Joe Buczkowski and Misty McCuen to spearhead this effort. Graham also asked the Governance Committee to review policy 1518A on grievance and create a new policy on regular communications from principals to



Above: Teachers Anna Vroom, left, and Kendra Kuhlman were spotlighted by MA board member Misty McCuen for their work in and outside of the classroom. Photos by Jackie Burhans.

the MA community.

Highlights

- McCuen spotlighted Anna Vroom, elementary PE teacher, and Kendra Kuhlman, enrichment teacher, for their contributions in and outside of the classroom.
- Holmes and Athletic Director Chris Hale met with the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA), the high school activities governing body, to discuss the two-year extended process to join.
- Graham said the Governance Committee would do a first-ever review of the staff handbook policies in the spring.

- Brocklehurst reported that, working with the COO, they had greatly reduced next year's expected \$700,000 deficit. He was not prepared to share details but reassured the board that it did not involve a reduction of staff.
- The board did a first read of its new board election policy.

The next regular board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 13 at 6 p.m. at the East Campus band room in person only. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. For more information, see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

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Lewis-Palmer D 38 Board of Education, Dec. 13

Communications program, demographic study, open enrollment policy discussed

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education discussed the implementation of priority 5—building strong relationships through effective communication—received an updated demographic analysis of the district, and considered new policies on open enrollment during its Dec. 13 meeting.

Communication discussion

Director of Communications Mark Belcher reported on plans to modernize the district's brand through redesign of the district logo, initiating a marketing push in January via digital communication, redesigning of the district website to feature the five priorities of the strategic plan, and initiating the creation of a monthly newsletter about Board of Education activity.

Current assets include a new storytelling platform, social media outlets, and the website.

The marketing push addresses four key groups: district students, parents, staff, and the community. Print ads featuring the theme "D38 elevates" will appear in local publications. Stress will be placed on the messages that the district supplies a world-class education and serves every student every day.

The new logo will be introduced immediately on the website and signs

will be replaced at all locations over the coming year.

When asked about plans to cut back on print ads, Belcher responded that the district plans to limit investment in ads in relocation publications and instead concentrate on ads directed toward the local population. The effectiveness of the new approach can be determined by enroll-



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