

ing barriers for the homeless in the community by coordinating with health and social services agencies.

Title II involves high-quality educators and leaders by providing training for teachers in responsive classroom training to foster connections and respect among students and teachers, to increase the number of highly qualified teachers, and to fund such positions as Learning Coach and stipends for teacher leaders. Funding is also provided to substitutes for

teachers attending trainings.

Title III provides funding to improve the education of English learners to meet state achievement standards. Funding supports family, school, and community partnerships, purchase of supplemental materials, tutoring for students, and a professional library for culturally and linguistically diverse instruction.

Title IV supports student academic enrichment by providing a well-rounded education to all, improving the use of

technology to support academic achievement and digital literacy, providing financial assistance for accelerated exam fees such as Advanced Placement, and supporting the salary of a coordinator of Learning Services to oversee continuing education for teachers.

An additional focus of the district is on family, school, and community relationships. These are supported through the use of Family Nights funded by Title I, an international dinner held annually to support connection

between cultures, homework clubs at Palmer Lake and Bear Creek Elementaries, a family liaison/interpreter/translator, and the availability of the Mango Language program for adults provided by the Pikes Peak Library District.

Palmer Ridge High School Principal Adam Frank led a tour of the school before the meeting and said this year's theme is Excellence with Equity. He introduced four students who said what made them value being a student at Palmer Ridge. These

aspects included membership in the Building Advisory Committee, valuing the choir program, being made to feel welcome, and the excellence of the school library.

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The District 38 District Accountability Advisory Committee meets five times a year, usually on the second Tuesday of the month from 7 to 8:30. Locations vary. This was the final meeting of the 2021-22 school year.

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Monument Academy School Board, April 14

Board backs COO despite reviews, welcomes board candidates

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board held a regular board meeting on April 14 to review campus climate and administration performance surveys, renew administrator contracts, and introduce board candidates. It also had a special board meeting on April 6 solely to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters relating to the surveys evaluating the chief operating officer (COO) and to receive legal advice related to personnel matters.

Board reviews survey results and renews COO contract

In the Human Resources Committee report, board representative Joe Buczkowski said the board had tasked itself with doing an employee-wide climate survey of all faculty and staff and a 360-degree assessment of both the COO and chief financial officer (CFO). The committee contracted with the Employers' Council with a budget of \$15,000 for an annual membership, a review of grievance policies, an ethics hotline, surveys, and executive coaching for the COO. The results for all surveys are available on MA's website at <https://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board/board-surveys/>.

Board President Ryan Graham then read a prepared statement recapping some of the challenges MA has faced over the years and its efforts to course-correct in the recent past. The board felt it needed to repair and rebuild and, as part of that, decided to hire Merlin Holmes as MA's COO. After doing its due diligence and reviewing Holmes' history, the board

felt he was the right person for the job. MA continued to endure challenges, including the sudden resignation of its high school principal, the impact of the Highway 105 project on its West Campus, disciplinary problems, and culture wars, Graham summarized.

After reviewing the survey results, Graham said, some might ask why he stands as a voice of support for Holmes. He noted that Holmes had done exactly what he was asked to do, was task-oriented, was good at recruiting, and was a visionary and fiscal conservative. Holmes must continue developing his communication style, but Graham said he was willing to invest in him. Graham recommended MA renew Holmes' contract for one year, implement executive coaching, and continue to perform skip-level assessments with his reports.

Buczkowski agreed, saying Holmes has great charter school

experience, respects the board, and respects the parents' role in school choice. Buczkowski said Holmes has been instrumental in procuring phase two funding,

and he wasn't sure it could happen without him. Board member Lindsay Clinton said that Holmes is willing to be coached and listen to constructive criticism.

Other board members also made statements of support, and the board voted unanimously to renew Holmes' con-

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