



**Above:** At the Oct 23 school board meeting, the D38 recognized American Legion Tri-Lakes Post 9-11 for their work educating the next generation on the United States Constitution, American democracy, and patriotism by having veterans in the classroom. The American Legion also raises funds for high school student scholarships and sponsors high school juniors to attend the American League Auxiliary summer leadership programs. From left are board member Kris Norris, student representative Kaia of Palmer Ridge High School (PRHS), board vice president Theres Phillips, student representative David of PRHS, John Russell, Mike Christensen, Terry Carver, and Randy Fritz of the American Legion, and board president Tiffney Upchurch, board member Matt Clawson, Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine and board member Ron Schwarz. *Photo by Jackie Burhans*

dividual school level.

Board Treasurer Ron Schwarz requested that Ridgway determine whether the decline is a trend regionally and nationwide. He suggested discussing the issue with the district's demographer.

Ridgway said there was growth in enrollment the previous year, but it was less than anticipated.

Ridgway said that funds from the Universal Prekindergarten program are more robust than the previous use of tuition and limited state funding.

He said he is working with state legislators to achieve a more consistent cash flow over the course of the year. Currently, funding from taxes is not received until spring, requiring that the district maintain sufficient cash to fund its commitments early in the year.

Ridgway introduced the board to a new graphic to monitor utility expenses and how they are affected by the Schneider Electric contract. Water, electricity, and gas will be monitored separately and expenditures back to the 2018-19 school year will be included for comparison. Actual and budget numbers will be included.

Asked whether there is a guarantee of results from Schneider Electric, Ridgway responded that there is a guaranteed recovery in the agreement.

The board approved revisions to a policy regarding support staff vacations and holidays.

Board President Tiffney Upchurch asked about an item in the consent agenda regarding a contract with Schmidt Construction at the middle school.

Executive Director of Operations and Development Chris Coulter responded that the construction at the middle school is in response to the dangerous traffic pattern resulting from buses, cars, and pedestrians accessing the same area of the lower parking lot. This construction will involve repaving and developing the upper level lot for buses only.

The board approved the consent agenda.

One student and one community member made public comments regarding the district's treatment of transgender students. They stressed

that all students should be treated with equal regard and respect and that the current situation results in unnecessary stress and sometimes results in suicide.

**Student representatives**

The board welcomed two student representatives from Palmer Ridge High School. Senior Kaya Kimmey and sophomore David Gallaga were seated with the board and encouraged to enter discussions on reports and initiatives. The students are non-voting members and are responsible for sharing information with their student bodies.

Students from the two high schools will alternate attendance monthly to see how local government works.

**American Legion recognition**

The board recognized American Legion Tri-Lakes Post 9-11 for its efforts to educate students about the Constitution. Veterans visited classrooms, discussed the Constitution, and answered students' questions.

Vice Commander Terri Carver said it was encouraging that students got involved in the instruction and that the post has obtained 500 pocket Constitutions for distribution.

The American Legion also encourages high school juniors to apply to attend Boys State and Girls State during the summer.

Post member John Russell, action officer for Boys State, asked to meet with guidance counselors to promote attendance at Boys State and Girls State.

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The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education usually meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of the month. Due the school closures for Thanksgiving break, the November meeting will be on Nov. 27 at the district's learning center, 146 Jefferson St. in Monument. For further information, contact [vwood@lewis-palmer.org](mailto:vwood@lewis-palmer.org).

Harriet Halbig may be reached at [harriethalbig@ocn.me](mailto:harriethalbig@ocn.me).

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