

for feedback. Miller said it could be published in the board packet, the minutes, or on the website. Miller advised against using Google Docs for all board members to add comments as that would constitute a board meeting. Miller advised the board not to vote on this at the next meeting, saying if substantive changes exist, the final version should be discussed in an open meeting before voting at a subsequent meeting.

In discussion, Graham and board Vice President Lindsay Clinton objected to the statement that MA supports a student's right to transition. Hoida suggested a better word would be acknowledge rather than support. Board Secretary Emily Belisle suggested simply saying that supports all students. Miller said the statement could be eliminated without changing the substance. Belisle wants the policy to better reflect the resolution, especially the part that supports "natural law and moral truth," to address how this affects the community, to change some of the definitions and word usage, and to change some procedures. Graham noted that some of the language came straight from the Colorado Revised Statute and asked Miller, who said it would be legal advice that would require an executive session.

Belisle suggested that the principal should inform the parents and schedule a meeting. Buczkowski said that was left out to protect students for whom a forced conversation might not be in their best interest. Board Director Matt Ross suggested that this gave unwarranted trust to students. Hoida said that if the school said they would contact the parents, the student might not want to proceed with the transition. Clinton said she would want to know as a parent, and the policy should protect parental rights and not give authority to students.

There was a discussion about how to handle discipline, and interim Chief Operating Officer Kim McClelland said it was on a case-by-case basis depending on whether it was a student or staff violating policy. Belisle pointed out that this policy assumes a binary choice of genders, which is not always the case; Buczkowski said it's not a

problem unless they choose an opposite gender.

Buczkowski thanked the board for its input and said a lot of the changes were minor wording changes, but the biggest question was when staff needed to tell the principal and when the principal had to contact the parents, even against the will of the student. The policy was drafted to try to be realistic about the relationships students may have with coaches and teachers with whom they may be closer than their parents. It would be easy to just say minor students and their parents must come to see the principal, he said, but asked if that was realistic.

Graham said that community feedback is encouraged. Belisle said that all staff and teachers are mandatory reporters, and it's incumbent on them to report concerns about home life. Miller said there is another set of laws that hasn't been addressed about a student's rights around mental health and counseling that interposes in this discussion; he said he would prefer to talk to the board privately in more detail.

A second reading will be conducted at its Dec. 14 meeting. The board solicits community feedback on this draft policy, which is available at: <https://bit.ly/ma-draft-gender-policy>. Feedback should be submitted directly to McClelland at kmcclelland@monumentacademy.net no later than Dec. 1.

Plans to address

East Campus budget issues

Buczkowski reported that the Finance Committee reviewed the audit results and the substandard state of the debt service coverage ratio and cash reserves as of June 30, 2023, at the East Campus. The committee discussed plans for the West Campus to lend \$300,000 to the East Campus and the importance of establishing a balanced budget for the remainder of the 2023-24 school year. It also talked about cost-cutting measures to bring the East Campus budget back in balance. A lot of the 2024 budget depends on the results of the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) application MA submitted to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which might not be known

by the time the board is required to set a budget, he said.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- Clinton spotlighted Deborah Hulting, who has been a kindergarten teacher and is now an art teacher. She exudes warmth, fun, and patience with artists of all ages, Clinton said.
- Graham reported that a road is being constructed on the south side of the school to connect to the top of the "s" curve. The roundabout at Knollwood and Highway 105 may be completed in December or January.
- Board member Emily Belisle reported that the Curriculum Committee learned that MA could continue to use the current Saxon Math for another year, and the committee decided, in consideration of the budget, to table moving to a new curriculum. This will provide extra time to review the proposed final candidates: Reveal Math and Everyday Math.
- Ross reported for the Student Accountability and Advisory Committee (SAAC) of West Campus that MA had collected the most food in a recent food drive, and he highlighted recent and upcoming PTO events. SAAC reviewed questions for the mid-year survey, which was available on Nov. 15 and will be open until Dec. 1.
- Clinton reported for SAAC East

that it began reviewing questions for the mid-year survey and noted that MA hosted the district Parent and Community Advisory Committee (PCAC) at its west campus on Nov. 14. She also gave a roundup of activities for the East Campus PTO.

- The board discussed the quarterly dashboard and how to interpret the data and plans to improve achievement and behavioral outcomes.
- The board unanimously approved the Emergency Operating Procedures with changes discussed at a previous meeting.
- The meeting ended with an executive session to discuss property transactions; to address D38 charter contract updates and related financial and bond covenant issues, and school security protocols and proposals; to discuss personnel performance and contract matters regarding school principals, Human Resources, and executive director; and to address related hiring processes and conflict of interest questions regarding a substitute hiring possibility.

The MA School Board meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, Dec. 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information at <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee, Nov. 14

Committee hears reports on staff and family surveys, Key Communicator program

By Harriet Halbig

The D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee (formerly District Accountability Advisory Committee) received reports on recent surveys of staff and families and an explanation of a new initiative to inform community members about district activities and priorities.

The meeting was held at the West Campus of Monument Academy (MA) and opened with a presentation by Principal Kurt Walker.

MA was chartered in 1996 and located in modular buildings on Woodmoor Drive until its current building was completed in 2008. It was originally called Lewis-Palmer Charter Academy, but the name was changed to avoid confusion with other schools in the district.

Upon the opening of the East Campus, in 2021, the West Campus became a school serving grades K through 5.

MA offers a classical-based education with emphasis on developing student character and educating future exemplary citizens. Its Board of Directors consists of parents and now features a program called Watchdogs, which is a group of fathers of grade-school students making their presence known during arrival and departure of students and recess.

Fall surveys of staff and families

D38 Director of Human Resources Alicia Welch presented a report on the results of surveys of staff and families conducted this fall.

The surveys were administered by an outside source. Welch stated that while results are shared in a number of different ways, all responses are anonymous.

The survey consisted of 20 questions and three open-response questions. All staff members were invited to participate. A total of 469 staff members participated out of a possible 810. The surveys were sent out via email.

Welch said that experience indicated that often fewer people participate at the first opportunity,

so such surveys will be conducted annually.

Staff members were asked whether their work positively impacts those who they serve, whether they have a clear understanding of the mission and goals of the organization, and whether they have a sense of pride in where they work. Responses to these questions were largely positive.

In terms of opportunities, staff responded that resources were not always allocated to maximize effectiveness, feedback on improving performance was lacking, and support in embracing work responsibilities could be improved.

Family responses were positive in that they feel the schools are clean and well maintained, parents are treated with respect, and the children's learning is treated as a high priority.

In terms of opportunities, families said that they wished to receive more direct communication regarding their student's progress and that school rules were sometimes not enforced equally.

There were 540 responses from families.

The committee then broke into groups to discuss the results of the family survey. A dominating opinion was that parents didn't receive more direct communication from teachers due to time constraints, but teachers on the committee said that if parents contact them directly they are always open to discussion.

Another criticism from the parents' standpoint regarding enforcement of rules is that district policies are very complex and the district should develop a way in which parents can view them more directly.

The general result of the surveys was that both staff and families were at least satisfied with the district's performance.

Key Communicators program introduced

Director of Communications Mark Belcher offered a presentation on a new program, Key Communicators, designed to strengthen the dis-

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