



**Above:** At the Feb. 21 D38 school board meeting, President Chris Taylor announced that he was resigning effective that night because his family was moving out of

state. Superintendent KC Somers and fellow board members Ron Schwarz, Matt Clawson, Tiffiney Upchurch, and Theresa Phillips expressed their gratitude for Taylor's hard work on the board. The superintendent, board members, family and D38 leaders in attendance at the meeting posed for a photo with Taylor and his wife Holly. Pictured from the left: Chris Coulter, executive director of operations and development; Davonne Johnson, Lewis-Palmer Elementary principal; Somers, Phillips, Schwarz, Holly and Chris Taylor; Upchurch; Clawson; Amber Whetstine, assistant superintendent; Peggy Parsley, outgoing Bear Creek Elementary principal; Brett Ridgway, chief business officer; and Mark Belcher, director of communications. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*



**Above:** At the February regular D38 school board meeting, Steve Waldmann, D38 chess team coach, spoke about the 16th Annual Lewis-Palmer School District Chess Tournament held Feb. 11 at Bear Creek Elementary School. Waldmann said this was the largest tournament, with 117 participants, and he appreciated the support from the district and all the volunteers who assisted at the event. The tournament was open to all students from kindergarten through 12th grade who live or go to school within the district's boundaries. Trophies were awarded to first, second, and third place by grade level for elementary students. Middle and high school students were awarded as a group. Seven of the participants who attended the board meeting were recognized. Attending were William Nedimyer, a second-grader from Prairie Winds who won first place; Brendan Buczkowski, a fifth-grader from Monument Academy who got third place; Kyle Fieber and Oliver Coberly, fifth-graders from Prairie Winds who tied for first place; Cole Temple, a Prairie Winds sixth-grader who won first place; and Nicholas D'Addario, a sixth-grader from Monument Academy won second place. Robert Collier, a ninth-grader from Lewis-Palmer High School, won first place out of 18 high school students. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

ceived all its annual revenue at the beginning of the school year, this would not be an issue.

In planning for the 2023-24 school year, the budget is reflected in documentation from the use of charts to detailed background information so that a variety of viewers could understand the situation, Ridgway said.

Taylor reflected that it is important to use this process to show how important the shortfall in compensation is. He said the deadline for deciding whether to request a mill levy override (MLO) on the November ballot is in August. This information could be used to inform the community in detail on how district resources are allocated.

Ridgway said that 92% of school revenue comes from the School Finance Act based on student count and per pupil funding. The level of funding in the upcoming school year is not yet known.

Referring to a 13-year history of the district, Ridgway predicted that the student count will remain relatively stable. He said that a large portion of Monument Academy (MA) eighth-graders go on to Lewis-Palmer or Palmer Ridge High School, but MA expects to retain more of these students next year.

Somers commented that MA hopes to introduce athletics and other programs in an attempt to retain these students. Projections of population are based on letters of intent received from MA students.

Schwarz commented that secondary students cost more to support than elementary students, yet they receive the same per pupil funding. This should be considered in budget planning, he said.

Ridgway said that he is projecting a 5% increase in per pupil funding, but it may be as much as 8%.

Upchurch commented that Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds must be used by September 2024.



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