

D38 (Cont. from 14)

are encouraged to envision what they would like a sixth-grader to be like when they leave BCES to advance to middle school.

BCES offers culturally diverse and responsive instruction, depth and complexity in the curriculum, and a literary emphasis, she said.

The diversity aspect is reflected in the selection in the library, Parsley said. Use of the responsive classroom model encourages connections between students, families, and teachers.

Emphasis is placed on reading and writing at all grade levels.

Regarding extracurricular activities, BCES offers before- and after-school activities including a STEAM night (science, technology, engineering, and math), science fair, art show, chess club, K Kids (in cooperation with Monument Hill Kiwanis), and robotics.

A new program this year is All Bear Creek Reads.

At the end of the presentation, Parsley introduced her successor, Donnel Potter.

Portrait of a Graduate and Portrait of an Educator update

Secondary Program Coordinator Jess McAllister reported on progress in developing the District 38 Portrait of a Graduate and Portrait of an Educator.

This program, begun early last year, describes the cognitive and personal attributes desired to ensure success beyond high school graduation on the basis of input from students, staff, community, and parents. To read a detailed description of the program, please refer to the Board of Education article at <https://ocn.me/v23n4.htm#d38>.

Wellness Committee report and wellness policy update

The district wellness team is required by the National School Lunch Program to review its policy and practices every three years.

There are several changes to the policy this year, including the addition of nutrition education to the

curriculum, updating nutrition standards, offering physical education and other activity at all grade levels, and promoting overall wellness.

Grades K through 6 are participating in the National School Lunch Program. The policy requires that the district will comply with state and federal statutes regarding meals, competitive food services, Smart Snacks in Schools, and nutrition education. All students will have a lunch period of no less than 20 minutes.

The committee assessed current policy JIJ regarding physical education and activity. Adaptive physical education was not included, because it is part of the formal curriculum.

The updated policy will be presented to the Board of Education for approval in June.

Budget update

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway offered an update on the proposed 2023-24 district budget.

He said that the district processes about \$80 million per year. There are 936 employees including 408 teachers, 371 support staff, 19 school administrators, 15 professional and technical employees, and 14 district administrators.

The district's funds are in 19 bank accounts at seven institutions. The district is restricted by state law as to where it invests its funds.

The process by which the budget is determined is to establish a philosophy to connect projected changes in School Finance Act revenue to changes in General Fund expenditures.

Ridgway solicited opinions from the staff through the Staff Collaboration Committee (SCC), especially regarding compensation.

Ridgway said that he seeks to avoid fearful budgeting, because too conservative an approach can be harmful. The goal is for the budget to be "98% to 100.5% accurate," he said.

The drivers of the budget include School Finance Act income, which is anticipated to increase by 8% to \$9,800 per full-time equivalent; estimated student

count for the coming year; restoring funding for capital maintenance to pre-pandemic levels; and taking advantage of increased interest income on district investments, Ridgway said.

The amount of revenue from the School Finance Act will not be finalized until May.

Ridgway reported that, following input from the SCC, the budget will reflect increased revenue due to efficiencies, offering Health Savings Accounts in addition to other health benefits, offering an anniversary bonus every five years, and enhancing rewards for years of experience at the time of hiring.

For additional detailed information about the budget, see <https://ocn.me/v23n4.htm#d38> or go to the district website, lewispalmer.org, Family Resources, District Accountability Advisory Committee, and the meeting date, April 11, to view the PowerPoint.

Board of Education update

Board liaison Tiffiney Upchurch reported that the board will offer Engage and Elevate events again this year to encourage community members to speak with the board about their concerns.

This year the events are taking place in coffee shops throughout the district. The final event will be on May 16 at 1 p.m. at Bennie's, located in the YMCA building on Jackson Creek Parkway.

Upchurch also reported that this year's legislative session will end soon. She encouraged individuals to access to Colorado Association of School Boards website to track the progress of bills through the Legislature. Please go to casb.org/2023legislative-bills.

Upchurch also introduced Kris Norris, newly appointed member of the Board of Education from District 1.

The D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee meets six times per year. Locations vary. This was the final meeting of the 2022-23 school year.

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Monument Academy School Board, April 13

MA selects board members, makes progress on finances

By Jackie Burhans

At its April 13 regular meeting, the Monument Academy board selected the sole two candidates as board members, heard positive updates from its interim finance director, and discussed how to handle snow days for the remainder of the school year. The board also heard committee updates.

Board members selected

Vice President Lindsay Clinton had announced in January that two board seat terms were ending on June 30—that of Graham and of Michael Geers, who had been appointed to fill a vacancy. She said there were only two applicants for the seats—Graham and Michael Ross, so there was no need to proceed to an election. She gave the two candidates a chance to speak.

Ross said he had three children at MA and a 2-year-old at home. He said his family loves MA and is committed to their children's education. He lives in Palmer Lake, runs a small business, and is deeply in-

vested in the community and the next generation. He is an executive pastor at Pikes Peak Christian Church in Colorado Springs in Security-Widefield, where he deals with staff and budget issues. He said he has been in the ministry for 21 years, and his experience is very applicable to what the school board needs. He holds conservative Christian values and is looking for the opportunity to serve. Ross said in the last couple of years, he began observing what was happening in the country, and his eyes were wide and shocked. He believes that children are under attack both physically and spiritually, and he and his wife have decided that this is the time for parents to speak up.

Graham read from a written statement and said he was honored and grateful to have the opportunity to seek re-election. He felt that MA was one of the last beacons of hope, was at the forefront of radical ideologies, and needed to be willing to protect the innocence of children. He also said he was part of MA's course correction and believes the school is on the cusp of greatness. He spoke of some of the board's accomplishments of the past three years, including resolutions against critical race theory, testifying at the capitol against anti-charter legislation, and giving voice to parents. He said his vision over the next three years would be to continually stand firm against culture wars, a perpetual battle. He is also committed to ensuring MA can restructure its bonds before its balloon payment of \$29 million comes due in 2026, among other goals.

Clinton made a motion to approve by acclamation that Ross and Graham would begin three-year terms beginning July 1. The board unanimously approved this motion.

Positive financial report

MA's financial consultant, Glenn Gustafson, reported that the school was in a rhythm where it was closing month-end in a timely manner, getting payroll posted, getting the bank reconciliation done, balancing the books each month, and getting the financial results to the board.

He reported a meeting with Brett Ridgway, District 38's chief business officer, to review several line items that resulted in additional revenue streams that had not yet been distributed to MA. Those revenues have been received and recorded in the March finan-

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