

ceive a vote as they were not elected to the board.

The students at the March 18 meeting were Maren and Aaron from Lewis-Palmer High School. To view their presentation, please see board-docs.

New Middle School principal
The board approved the hiring of Courtney Harrell as principal of Lewis-Palmer Middle School.

Superintendent farewell
The board and several individuals expressed their gratitude for Somers' contributions to the district during his tenure.

His ability to guide the district through the pandemic while maintaining school performance was recognized. He went to Washington, D.C., to explain how the district was able to maintain student participation hours and was interviewed by The Washington Post. He implement-

ed a campaign to improve literacy at a time when many districts were declining. He demonstrated an ability to listen deeply to those he encountered, notably during his listening tour at the beginning of his tenure.

Several members of the administration, teachers, and community members thanked him for his leadership and contributions to the district.

Somers responded that he felt the key to his success had been through relationships within the district and the community. He said it had been an honor to serve and that he will not be a stranger. To view the farewell, please see the livestream of the meeting on lewispalmer.org.

Finalists selected
At its special meeting on March 20, the board announced the selection of four finalists for superintendent. They are:
• Dr. Stacie Datteri, assistant

superintendent of Academic Achievement and School Leadership, District 6, Greeley.

- Michael Freeman, community superintendent of schools, Jefferson County.
- Alicia Welch, director of Human Resources, District 38.
- Amber Whetstine, assistant superintendent and acting superintendent, District 38.

To view the resumes of the candidates, please see the website under superintendent search 2024.

Correction

In last month's article about a meeting of the Parent and Community Advisory Committee, we said that Board President Tiffiney Upchurch traveled to Washington, D.C, as part of a coalition from the Colorado Association of School Boards Federal Relations Network. The purpose of the visit was to lobby for promised funding of the In-

dividuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), created in 1975.

At its inception, Congress pledged to fund education for individuals with Individualized Education Plans at the rate of 40%. This funding was never achieved. At present, the funding is at a rate of 13%. The district funds the remainder.

The article stated that the delegation achieved the full funding. This was not the case. Although some bipartisan support was achieved, there was also a degree of disinterest.

OCN regrets the error.

The Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month in the district Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next regular meeting is on April 15.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Monument Academy School Board, March 10, 14, and 21

Board selects executive director candidates

By Jackie Burhans
Monument Academy (MA) held two special meetings and one regular board meeting by Zoom in March. Both special meetings consisted primarily of executive sessions, the second of which yielded finalists for MA's open executive director position. The board also updated policies and heard administrative and committee reports.

Executive director finalists named

The MA board held a special meeting on Thursday, March 21 to go into executive session to interview and discuss candidates not yet named as finalists for the position of executive director. Before entering the executive session, it added another item "to discuss personnel matters re: an employee grievance and legal advice related to the grievance process."

The board returned after two hours and unanimously advanced the finalists for the executive director position: Joshua Yancy, Colin Vinchattle, and David Stanfield. Vinchattle is currently MA's middle school principal.

A special meeting will be held on April 4 at 6:30 p.m. in the East Campus Gym to hear from the finalists.

No action was announced regarding the grievance issue.

Policies updated

The MA board unanimously approved an update to its policy IKE-MA Promotion, Retention and Acceleration of Student. Interim Executive Director Kim McClelland said this came to her attention from a registrar and she noticed some red flags in the processes which required a replacement policy. She spoke of the need to use the school's Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) to ensure proper interventions and support. She noted that in the past, parents had wanted to hold students back so they could do a sport again. The policy addresses how to handle cases for students who have an educational support plan such as an IEP, 504 or ALP. It also requires that elementary students be administered the Light's Retention Scale before any final retention decision.

The board also unanimously approved the updated policy 1525 State Assessments Refusal Policy. The changes include updating the form and deadline information and by adding the requirement for counseling should a parent/guardian choose to excuse their student from testing

once it has begun.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights included:

- MA held a special board meeting on Sunday, March 10 to go into executive session for legal advice on specific legal matters related to personnel contracts, investigations, and processes and for negotiations and advice to negotiators regarding employment contracts and agreements; and for personnel matters related to the high school and central administration. The board reconvened after an hour and half, taking no action.
- The board went into executive session after its regular meeting on March 14 for negotiations and advice to negotiators regarding executive director interviews and contract discussions and to discuss specialized details of security arrangements or investigations. They returned after more than two hours, taking no further action.
- McClelland spoke with D38 interim Superintendent Amber Whetstine about adding language to its charter contract to confirm that MA can offer homeschool enrichment. The board unanimously approved the language proposed by its legal counsel.
- The board unanimously approved funding of \$99 for election software for the upcoming board election and asked the Governance Committee to amend the policy so that the authorization would be automatic for future elections.
- Financial consultant Glenn Gustafson reported that he was very optimistic that financial plans are coming together and that MA is poised to finish the year on target for its budget. His number one priority for the FY24-25 budget is to restore East Campus to financial viability.
- Gustafson said the School Finance Act was still in limbo but task force recommendations would result in a reduction in D38 funding, though that might get delayed until FY25-26. Board President Ryan Graham pointed out that could impact MA to the tune of \$700,000 and suggested the community reach out to representatives.
- Graham said that when school

starts in August, both circulation roads should be available.

- Board member Emily Belisle said the Curriculum Commit-

tee proposes pausing the implementation of the new math curriculum to discuss changes in the curriculum adoption policy.

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