

movement.

Board comments

Treasurer John Magerko thanked the District Accountability Advisory Committee for its sponsorship of candidate forums for the board election and encouraged members of the public to get involved in education matters by writing to the Colorado Department of Education or attending meetings in Denver in areas of interest.

Board President Mark Pfoff thanked Mann for his service, which he said was particularly valuable during the recession

when budget cuts were large and unavoidable. Pfoff said that Mann was instrumental in identifying priorities so that Wangeman could come to the board with a proposal that they would approve.

Mann spoke about the importance of public education to society. He said that his wife was a teacher during the time when he served in the Air Force and, upon his retirement, he too entered the field. He acknowledged individuals he knew during his tenure on the board, including Caryn Collette, who oversaw the consolidation of two middle schools into one, and Wangeman for the stability of her leadership in financial matters. He also praised the district's Special Education Program, which is successful and exemplary despite the fact that it is funded at a minimal level by the state.

Mann also cautioned that it is wise to continue to anticipate rescissions by the state, as they happen almost annually.

Practice ACT shows benefit

Director of Assessment and Gifted Education Lori Benton reported that the use of the practice ACT among 10th-graders has

caused significant improvement in ACT scores among juniors.

Benton also explained the application process for individuals seeking to conduct research studies or distribute surveys within the district.

The Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer D-38 meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month in the district's Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting will be on Nov. 19.

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

District Accountability Advisory Committee, Oct. 13

Committee determines calendar for 2015-16, discusses teacher evaluations

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D-38 District Accountability Advisory Committee determined its meeting calendar, finalized its charge for presentation to the Board of Education, and discussed the teacher evaluation process during its Oct. 13 meeting.

The committee will not meet each month this year. In the past, the committee examined each school's unified improvement plan (UIP) and the district's plan during the meetings in the winter. This year, the plans will be reviewed at individual schools with the schools' Building Accountability Advisory Committees (BAACs), and detailed summaries will be reviewed with the committee in April. The entire committee will meet in November, January, February and April.

The committee approved the year's calendar.

At these committee meetings, the group will also receive updates on the district's communication plan, technology developments, the Community-Family Partnership, Gifted Learning, Special Education, safety and security, and the budget.

Committee charge

Director of Assessment and Gifted Education Lori Benton reviewed the committee's charge before final presentation to the Board of Education. The charge will be virtually unchanged from the previous year. Responsibilities include:

- Overseeing the Special Education and Gifted Education programs (including English Language Learners).
- Advising the board regarding budgetary matters.
- Overseeing the staff evaluation process.
- Aiding the board in community outreach through such things as host-

ing forums among candidates for the board.

- Committee for Political Achievement, a subgroup of the committee, acts to monitor legislative and other activity that may affect the district.

Evaluation updates

Director of Personnel and Student Services Bob Foster spoke about Senate Bill 191 and recent changes in the evaluation process for teachers and other staff in the district.

Foster listed the stages of the process, including orientation to the process, self-assessment, meeting with the evaluators, and classroom observations by evaluators.

This system was introduced in the 2013-14 school year and is still developing. The first year was "hold-harmless" as districts worked through their methods of compliance. The 2014-15 school year was the first in which staff could be ruled ineffective, which effects probationary status.

A primary aspect of the system is to have a large part of the evaluation score based on student performance. The remainder is based on a detailed review of professional practices.

A major drawback of the system is the fact that many employees are not teachers of subjects for which there is data such as test results to measure student performance. This includes such employees as media specialists, librarians, teachers of dual diagnosis students, teachers of the arts, and instructional coaches. For these individuals the district has had to devise its own methods of evaluating student performance and submit these techniques to the state for approval.

Another weakness is the fact that performance is based on growth from one year to the next, and the assessments

being applied are changing frequently.

Foster and Benton said that they will keep the committee informed regarding any future changes in the process.

Superintendent update

District Superintendent Karen Brofft reported on the district's strategic vision to encompass a focus on the community, a variety of learning opportunities, continued performance in the top 10 percent in ACT scores, continuing Advanced Placement offerings and scores above the national average, a high graduation rate, and acclaimed music, performing arts, arts, and sports activities.

The primary goal of the board this year, in addition to continuing excellence in the above areas, is to improve the availability of up-to-date technology in the classroom.

Brofft also said that she wishes to focus on 21st-century skills such as data-driven decision-making, enhancing the public's trust in the district through transparency, and engaging in long range planning.

Some of this year's initiatives include a focus on technology in the classroom, continued interaction with focus groups such as businesses, homeowners groups, and churches, and a revamping of the district's website.

Campus introduction

Lewis-Palmer High School Principal Sandi Brandl spoke of her school of 977 students, of which 17 percent are gifted, 16.6 percent are minority, 9 percent qualify for free/reduced lunch and 9 percent are disabled. Eighty-five percent of the class of 2015 plan to attend two- or four-year post-secondary programs.

The school offers 21 advanced placement (AP) courses, giving 502 tests to 303 students. Brandl said that she encourages students to take AP courses in areas that excite them, because these courses give them a good view of college-level classes. Also, the school shares a partnership with the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, which allows students to get college credit for specific classes.

The school is also a participant in Project Lead the Way, offering classes in engineering and biomedicine. It has been named a John Irwin School of Excellence nine times and has one of the highest graduation rates in the state.

The next meeting of the District Accountability Advisory Committee will be at 7 p.m. on Nov. 10 at Palmer Lake Elementary School, 115 Upper Glenway, Palmer Lake.

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

Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, Oct. 20

New insurer sought; salary increase proposed

By Jennifer Green-Lanchoney

The Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board discussed the need for a new insurer and a proposed salary increase at its Oct. 20 meeting.

Proposed 2016 budget change

Despite being on the list of approved insurers, Colorado HealthOp has now gone under, leaving Wescott and many others to search for new insurance. While the increase of only \$2,400 a year was a win over the \$36,000 increase proposed by their previous insurance agency, it was too good to be true, said administrative assistant Stacey Popovich.

Because Wescott will search for new insurance, this will change the bottom line of the proposed budget. The other line that will change is workers compensation. Popovich is working with Pinnacle insurance, which has recently gone through a structural revamp and didn't have the numbers available for Popovich to accurately adjust the budget.

Proposed salary increase

A line in the budget proposes Wescott salaries to be increased by 7 percent. Some positions, like paramedic, will be increased a bit more to keep competitive with other organizations. Wescott paramedics contract with the station to be put through school and then work for Wescott when they complete their education. Keeping competitive wages will hopefully entice them to stay beyond their contract with the station. Adjusting paramedic pay meant also having to adjust the officers' pay to stay in line with a tiered pay scale. Chief Vinny Burns also implemented step raises in the budget to be calculated into pay.

The board continues to move steadily toward a Dec. 1 approval of the 2016 budget, Burns said.

Administrative

The September financial statement totaled \$1.33 million, which is \$160,362 less than the August financial statement. The reason for the large difference is that wildland firefighting expenses came out in Septem-

Alpaca Holiday Extravaganza

Join the Southeastern Colorado Alpaca Breeders celebration of the 10th Annual Holiday Alpaca Extravaganza. Come meet the alpacas and experience the soft luxury of alpaca from animal to fashion. All kinds of alpaca garments, fashion apparel and accessories will be available for early holiday shopping. For crafters there will be fleeces, roving, batts, and yarn in a wide variety of colors. This FREE event is open to children of all ages.

Mark Your Calendar

Saturday, Nov. 21 from 9AM to 5PM

Sunday, Nov. 22 from 10AM to 4PM

Black Forest Community Club is located at 12350 Black Forest Rd. just north of Shoup Rd.

For latest information see our web page at <http://secab-extravaganza.weebly.com/> or call 719-495-6693

