

Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education, Nov. 17

Board OKs online program application, names security chief

By Harriet Halbig

On Nov. 17, the Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer D-38 discussed the creation of an online learning program for high school students, foreign travel opportunities, and adjustments to the current district budget in response to increased enrollment. Also, a new chief of Safety and Security was introduced.

Due to inclement weather, the agenda was altered to compensate for those who could not attend.

Online learning application

Director of Assessment and Gifted Education Lori Benton and Palmer Ridge High School Assistant Principal Kim Sandoval presented a proposal to apply to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) for the creation of an online program for Lewis-Palmer and Palmer Ridge High Schools. Under state law, such a program could serve up to 100 students at each location and be considered a separate school.

Benton explained that such an offering would serve a number of purposes:

- In conjunction with the multi-tiered system of support, it would provide additional instructional support for exceptional students.
- Due to busy extracurricular schedules, it would offer instructional opportunities before 7:40 and after 2:52, allowing more academic time for students.
- Instruction would be self-paced.
- Would enable offering classes in lower demand.
- May offer a way to avoid repeating classes.
- Classes would be taught by Lewis-Palmer teachers.

Benton said that both high schools have filled out applications, and the district has applied for grants to help with development of the program. She estimated a three- to five-year development process.

The board approved the application.

New chief of Safety and Security introduced

Superintendent Karen Brofft introduced the new chief of Safety and Security, Dennis Coates, who has served as school resource officer for several years.

In addition to serving with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, Coates had previously been a patrolman and a teacher. Brofft stressed his familiarity with the district and with schools in general and welcomed him to the district administration. Coates will begin his job in January.

Foreign travel policy approved

Following last month's first reading of policy IJOA regarding foreign travel opportunities for district students, the board discussed the ramifications of such a program.

Any out-of-country travel must be arranged through the office of the superintendent and be demonstrated to be of academic worth such as language or cultural study. Only students in grades 9 to 12 would be involved in international travel.

Director Sarah Sampayo objected to the fact that the policy states that no credit be given for such travel.

Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wangeman said that it would be difficult to determine how the travel should be designed to qualify for academic credit. She recommended that the policy be left as is.

The board approved the policy as proposed.

The board then discussed the selection of EducationFirst Educational Tours as exclusive provider of international travel services and preferred provider of domestic travel.

Wangeman explained that the district consulted other districts regarding the offering of travel and determined that EducationFirst offers a comprehensive service to planning tours, arranging for guides, lodging, restaurants, liability and health insurance, and trip cancellation insurance. Wangeman also said that there will be a requirement for trained chaperones on each trip and that parents would be required to sign a waiver of liability.

The board approved the selection of EducationFirst.

Budget adjustments

Wangeman explained proposed adjustments to the 2016-17 budget. Brofft said that following an analysis of compensation levels in an attempt to remain competitive, it was decided to increase all salaries by 1.1 percent mid-year while increasing certain midlevel salaries a higher amount. The increases would be effective in January. \$200,000 has been allotted to this increase.

Wangeman said that the governor is recommending an increase in per pupil funding next year and the district anticipates continued growth. These two considerations confirm that the salary increases could be sustained.

Brofft agreed, saying that there has been a significant growth in enrollment since the October count.

Another item in the budget adjustment is the purchase of a security vehicle for \$35,000 for the use of the new chief of Safety and Security. In the interest of fiscal conservatism, Sampayo objected to this expenditure.

Board President Mark Pfoff said that the vehicle would require specialized equipment, especially regarding communications, because in the event of an emergency the director would have to coordinate with local law enforcement and other officials.

Board Secretary Matthew Clawson supported the expense, also pointing out that it would avoid liability for a private vehicle.

Brofft also said that the director of Safety and Security would be armed, which leads to potential liability to the district.

Other items

The board passed a resolution to retain the current boundaries for board districts.

Following a brief presentation by co-chairs of the District Accountability Advisory Committee, the board passed a resolution to eliminate a formal charge to the committee, instead defining the activities of the committee through the CDE handbook and the committee's bylaws.

The board approved a draft of the annual audit of district finances presented by John Paul Chevalier of CliftonLarsen Allen. The audit confirmed that the district met all TABOR and other requirements.

The board recognized the Lewis-Palmer High School baseball team for its outreach activities at Aurora Children's Hospital, and especially commended Assistant Coach Dimas Nunez for reaching out to the family of patient Jordan Austin by visiting him and supporting him. The softball team was also commended for its outreach activities.

Coach Susan Odenbaugh and members of the Lewis-Palmer High School Girls Volleyball team were congratulated for winning the state 4A championship for the third time in four years. With a record of 29-0, the team also qualifies as fourth in the nation. *See photo on page 25.*

Third-grade students of Kim Cona at Prairie Winds Elementary gave a poetry performance.

Dave Whitman of Monument Hill Kiwanis reported on the success of the group's Empty Bowls Dinner in October and thanked the district for its help, including kitchen staff, administrators who served soup, and the use of the Lewis-Palmer High School kitchen. Proceeds of the dinner and auction totaled \$26,600 to benefit Tri-Lakes Cares.

The Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer D-38 meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at the district's Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting will be on Dec. 15.

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Baptist Road Rural Transportation Authority, Nov. 17

"Going out of business" celebration marks end to BRRTA

By Jim Kendrick and Lisa Hatfield

The president of the Baptist Road Rural Transportation Authority board (BRRTA), El Paso County Assessor Steve Schleiker, was the master of ceremonies for a celebration of the formal deactivation of BRRTA that is scheduled to take place in December. Between 1997 and 2016, BRRTA completed multiple separate projects to improve the Baptist Road corridor.

Some of the "BRRTA Timeline" milestones that Schleiker briefed were:

- BRRTA was created Nov. 4, 1997 by El Paso County and the Town of Monument, through a vote of the early residents, to design, plan, finance, and construct certain road improvements along a portion of Baptist Road.
- In 2006, BRRTA voters approved a 1 percent 20-year sales and use tax within the boundaries of the authority, with collection beginning July 1, 2007.
- In 2007, BRRTA issued \$21.5 million in revenue bonds.
- In 2008, construction was fully underway.
- On Oct. 18, 2011, BRRTA's construction was accepted as completed by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT).
- In 2012, CDOT reimbursed \$3 million to BRRTA.
- In February 2016, CDOT reimbursed \$12.5 million.
- In May 2016, Baptist Road west of the Interstate 25 interchange was completed and celebrated
- On June 1, 2016, BRRTA final payment of the outstanding bond principal and interest.
- On July 1, 2016, the BRRTA sales/use tax ended.

Some of the highlights for the Baptist/Struthers road widening project were:

- Struthers Road extension added 6,000 feet of Struthers Road north to the intersection with Baptist Road.
- Baptist Road widening project expanded the road from two to four lanes from Jackson Creek Parkway to Tari Drive (1.86 miles).
- Construction began June 19, 2006, and completed on Struthers Road Nov. 7, 2008, and on Baptist Road May 5, 2009.
- Improvements included: signal installation, signal upgrade, frontage road, new lanes, and noise barrier.

Some of the I-25 Baptist Road Exchange expansion project highlights were:

- Construction commenced Nov. 10, 2008, and was completed November 2009.
- Widened Baptist Road to four lanes, with turn lanes.
- Eight-lane bridge over Interstate 25.
- Ramp modifications with new traffic signals.
- Installation of new water and sewer lines.

Some of the Baptist Road West widening project highlights were:

- Construction began April 2015 and was completed May 2016.
- Collaboration with Tri-Lakes Views to include artwork by Reven Marie Swanson.
- New BRRTA roundabout at Old Denver Road selected for 2016 Colorado American Public Works

Association Project of the Year Award.

- Bridge over the railroad tracks and Monument Creek.
- Roundabout at the Old Denver Road/Baptist Road intersection.
- Modifications to the Santa Fe trailhead parking area, drainage improvements, utility relocations, and rehabilitation and enhancement of the Preble's meadow jumping mouse protected habitat.

Some of the "closeout" items were:

- November 2016 – BRRTA and the El Paso Board of County Commissioners completed an Intergovernmental Agreement to transfer assets and future project completion to the county.
- December 2016 – All assets expected to be officially transferred to the county
- December 2016 – The BRRTA board will formally recommend that the county and the Town of Monument dissolve BRRTA.

See these two county videos:

- Baptist Road roundabout artwork: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xcu4MAoDfMQ
- Baptist Road West project: www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZ6BX_L4DEc

Story time

Schleiker said his BRRTA presidency, coming immediately after being appointed to county assessor, was the upside of his position for which he was "sworn in to be sworn at." Schleiker welcomed representatives in attendance at the celebration from:

- Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority