

Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education, April 18

Board approves second resource officer and two policies

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education discussed and approved the addition of a second School Resource Officer (SRO) and approved policies at its April 18 meeting.

School Resource Officer added

Chief of Safety and Security Dennis Coates told the board that adding a second SRO to the district would allow more thorough coverage before and after school hours and coverage if one of the officers should be called away on Sheriff's Office business during school hours.

Coates said that the SRO, while a law officer, also is involved with law counseling, law education, serving as a role model, and acting as a community liaison. He also is involved in traffic control around the schools, and the additional officer would allow a presence in the middle and elementary schools as well as the high schools. The current SRO is Todd Ronk. As community liaison, the SRO is often contacted by parents requesting that the SRO speak to their children, he said. Coates said that an additional SRO would allow overlapping shifts. Although the first SRO is provided without cost to the district, the second will be salaried.

The addition of a second SRO was approved as part of the Consent Agenda.

Confidential information policy approved

The board discussed policy JRCB regarding confidential

information at the policy's second reading. Director Sarah Sampayo expressed concern over protection of medical information and suggested adding language that on-demand providers of services would be held to the same standards as contract providers regarding confidentiality.

Superintendent Karen Brofft said that some parents disclose psychological information to the district to ensure appropriate support services for students. She assured Sampayo that the district protects all medical data.

Director of Personnel and Student Services Bob Foster said that, even if such information is subpoenaed by a court, parents could act to quash the subpoena.

Sampayo made a motion to amend the policy to require that on-demand providers be held to the same standards as contract providers. The motion was not seconded.

The policy was approved 4-1 with Sampayo voting no.

The board approved the second reading of policy ADF regarding school wellness. The policy requires schools to offer nutrition education, supply nutritious meals, and offer daily opportunities for physical activity, to be overseen by a Wellness Committee.

Emergenetics presentation

Lewis-Palmer High School Principal Sandi Brandl and Assistant Principal Dawn Klein spoke of the Emergenetics program, which analyzes personality traits to promote better interaction between teachers and administrators. They explained that individuals approach problems with various styles, and knowledge of this fact enables individuals to interact more effectively.

Klein said the program also can improve a teacher's ability to deal with various learning styles among students and enable them to adjust their teaching approach accordingly. It also is useful in mentoring new teachers.

The questionnaire upon which the program is based was originated in the 1980s. This tool is in use by many corporations as well.

Take Charge presentation

Tom Pulford, physical education teacher and football coach at Palmer Ridge High School, spoke of Take Charge, an upcoming program addressing mental health among students.

Due to the recent upsurge in teen suicides and depression, he saw the need to offer a program to the community to address these issues. He said his high school football coach noticed that he needed help and hopes to pass on the advantage of seeking help for mental issues.

The program also addresses the influence of social media among today's teens.

The program will include input from such groups as Path 2 Empathy, the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, the El Pomar Foundation, and the Positive Coaching Alliance and will include time for discussion as well as formal presentations. The target audience is sixth grade and up.

Superintendent update

Brofft reported that the Air Academy Credit Union would award scholarships to winners of this year's art contest on Monday, April 24.

She said that progress on seeking the charter school waiver continues, with the District Accountability Advisory Committee approving it the previous week. There will be three public hearings on the subject with a board resolution in August. The board voted Jan. 19 to request a waiver on the procedure for application for a new charter school. The state requires that an application for a charter school must be submitted by Oct. 1 of the year before the opening of a school.

Brofft announced that there is curriculum review underway for Algebra I, Geometry, Trigonometry, and Pre-calculus and encouraged the public to review the materials.

She then announced that Principal Brandl is leaving the district and outlined the procedure for finding her replacement, with the selection expected to be approved at the board's May meeting. The position closed on April 21.

Home School Enrichment Academy

Chuck Stovall, the new administrator of the Home School Enrichment Academy, reported on the school, which offers instruction on Thursdays to students in grades K-8. Subjects include physical education, music, art, drama, science, world cultures, journalism, and social studies.

The academy includes students from in and outside of the district, features licensed teachers, and is funded through the state.

Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wangeman informed the board of preliminary district budget information.

Public comments

Matt Dunston praised the board for its work and for instituting the long-range planning process. As a parent of students in Monument Academy, he found that many questions at the planning meeting involved that school.

Terry Miller said that he contacted Sampayo after the previous meeting to thank her for her response to previous comments and said that teachers and administrators must learn to work together.

Tommy Summers praised the district for its care of children, saying that his children were abused at their former district in Missouri. He said he is grateful that the teachers and other staff here care for children.

Melinda Zark commented that the use of Emergenetics is fine for staff, but that teachers are doing fine in engaging with students. She also wishes to see increased efforts to recoup the expense of the geothermal system at Palmer Ridge and feels the district is not being aggressive enough with the original engineers.

Board President Sherri Hawking announced an executive session to discuss compensation, but Sampayo objected on the grounds that this subject does not require an executive session under state statute. She suggested that the subject instead be discussed at the next board work session. No executive session was held.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.

The Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education 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 May 18.

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