

used for storing maintenance equipment, and parts of the playing fields are made available to the community.

Abernathy also pointed out that the property's north end has grading and drainage issues, and that the east side of the school is too close to a right of way. Much of the two-story portion of the building does not qualify under ADA, and the committee estimated

that it would cost about \$7 million to bring the building up to code regarding the ADA and asbestos issues. The \$7 million would not solve the site, lighting, and security concerns.

Abernathy also commented that Grace Best is not located where the fastest growth is occurring in the district.

Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wangeman said that if the board were to decide to invest in the Grace Best property, the district would then investigate grants to help pay for the improvements.

When asked whether the district should invest in improving Grace Best, Abernathy said no. He did say, however, that the programs already on site are plausible for now and that parts of the building may be utilized as a preschool or for special education purposes.

Wangeman said that the Grace Best site would work well for the district's Transitions program serving students with special needs ages 18 to 21 because these stu-



**Above:** The Lewis-Palmer Middle School band, under direction of Mike Mazingo, performed at the board meeting. *Photo by Harriet Halbig.*

dents do not wish to be among the general population.

Regarding enrollment statistics, Abernathy cautioned that the district enrollment is growing at the rate of the equivalent of an elementary school every two to three years.

Abernathy then addressed two more specialized needs of the district.

Regarding special education services, he said that the services are available throughout the district with programs for intensive needs and autism addressed at different

locations. The services should continue to remain available throughout the district, and that any new elementary schools should also contain a site-based facility, Abernathy said.

Brofft said the federal government requires that these services be available, and the district's policy of inclusiveness would prevent locating all services at one site.

One concern is that the intensive needs program is located at Kilmer Elementary, in the eastern portion of the district and relatively far from

emergency care if needed.

Wangeman said that the next two elementary schools are likely to be located near I-25, as that is where the fastest growth is occurring. As the schools are planned, the committee will ensure that there is appropriate space for special education services.

On the subject of early childhood education, Abernathy said there are now four preschool locations. As with special education, the board considered whether to locate all early childhood services at one site. Each preschool site requires one to two rooms.

The choice is between offering the service at multiple locations and capping enrollment at each or centralizing the service in one building.

Brofft reminded the board that federal regulations require that the district offer preschool access to those identified by ChildFind (a process of evaluating school readiness) or for those who qualify based on family income. Teachers would prefer a single location because it would offer the opportunity for teamwork.

Abernathy then addressed the STEAM program (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) and the requirements involved. At the elementary level, STEAM would require having a makerspace (a room with arts and craft supplies, sometimes including simple robotics), while at the middle school and high school levels more technology and labs would be required.

Other subjects under discussion by the committee include deferred maintenance, school safety approached under the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design process (consider lighting, ease of access, landscaping, ease of lockdown, traffic, etc.), and identification of land available to build new schools.

The timeline for continued meetings includes the committee meeting on Sept. 26, meetings with the District Accountability Advisory Committee and the board in October and November, and action by the board at its December meeting.

#### Policy actions

The board approved policy GDCA regarding sick leave for staff and JRCB regarding privacy of student data and also approved policy JS regarding student use of district technology.

#### Back-to-school update

Brofft reported that Palmer Lake Elementary School has



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