

SEAC activities, goals

Director of Exceptional Student Services Rick Frampton reported on the activities and goals of SEAC. The committee meets once a month and is charged with offering networking opportunities for parents of students receiving services from the district. District staff members and a Board of Education liaison also attend the meetings. The committee reports to the DAAC once a year on its activities. Frampton also said a new program will honor individuals who help students with disabilities. The goal is to develop a reward program for these individuals.

This year, SEAC will focus on offering a way for parents to provide feedback to the district regarding current practices, and on advocating on behalf of students currently receiving such services. A detailed parent questionnaire received 80 responses. A

great majority of responses indicated that parents are pleased with the process of creating Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and their students are receiving good support. Frampton encouraged parents who expressed dissatisfaction to identify themselves so a dialogue could begin.

In keeping with this year's district theme of "through their eyes and in their shoes," the committee is encouraging all students in the district to imagine themselves as students with disabilities and how their school day and year would be experienced.

Exceptional Student Services Parent Liaison Michelle Nay explained the concept of family-student-community partnering. Advocated by the Colorado Department of Education, this program is defined as "the collaboration of families, schools, and communities as active partners in improving learner, classroom, school, district, and state outcomes."

Under this program, parents are equal partners with schools in achieving success for students. To achieve this, schools must offer a welcoming climate, and information must be shared in both directions between parents and schools. Parents must understand the education process and be empowered to support their students.

Safety and Security activities

Chief of Safety and Security Dennis Coates said district activities include the reprogramming of all radios and retraining of staff in their use, repositioning of the bus loop at Lewis-Palmer High School, and closure of one entrance to Palmer Ridge High School to ensure that each door has a monitor.

Ongoing activities include attention to emergency operation procedures such as lockdown and evacuation, reunification processes in the event of an evacuation, threat and risk assessments, use of the Safe2Tell program to express concerns, studies of traffic and parking issues in light of present and future development near schools, and professional development to keep all staff up to date on procedures. He hopes to hold drills that are not scheduled ahead of time to provide a more realistic experience for staff and students.

Coates briefly explained the Clair Davis Act, a recently passed law stating that the district has a responsibility to prevent any foreseeable act of violence. To achieve this, staff training for all individuals is offered. An additional precaution is to require an ID from anyone attempting to enter a school.

Coates reported that the district now has a second school resource officer (SRO), making it possible to have one at each high school. Because SROs are employees of the Sheriff's Office, they must sometimes be called away from the schools in the case of an emergency or to appear in court. With two of them in the district, better coverage is possible.

Plans include replacement of cameras beginning at the high schools and encouraging parents to update their contact information. The department is working on developing a procedure for notifying parents in the event of an emergency.

Coates said that he is willing at any time to speak to groups of parents about the district's security procedures.

Board liaison comments

Board of Education liaison Tiffney Upchurch invited committee members to attend a board work session addressing the long-term planning process and a meeting on Feb. 5 using the deliberative process to discuss planning.

Upchurch said that curricula for Financial Literacy and a Socratic Seminar are available for review and public comment from Jan. 29 to Feb. 9.

Upchurch also reported on legislative activity including a review of the Gallagher Amendment, which determines taxation rates for residential and commercial property and funding for the Public Employee Retirement Administration (PERA).

The District Accountability Advisory Committee meets six times a year on the third Tuesday of the month from 7 to 8:30. Locations vary. The next meeting will be on Feb. 13 at Prairie Winds Elementary, 790 Kings Deer Pt., Monument.

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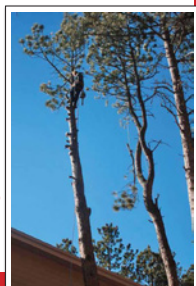
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Monument Academy School Board, Jan. 17

Board discusses marketing, revises open records policy

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board met on Jan. 17 to discuss its marketing strategy, revise its open records policy, and review the school year to date. Board members Julie Galusky and Matt Dunston were absent.

Marketing

As part of National School Choice Week, MA held a signature event regarding the "kindergarten round-up" program. Executive Director Don Griffin noted that MA is also doing a full-fledged marketing program that includes a blog by Principal Elizabeth Davis, a new Facebook page for kindergarten, and a promotional video. He said many parents will decide where their kids will go in August but are shopping in the first quarter of the year. The video was shown to the board and teachers' representatives in attendance and emphasized MA's Character First program, core knowledge curriculum, and parent involvement. The video is part of MA's effort to increase enrollment in its kindergarten for the 2018-19 school year.

Open records policy

The board discussed and unanimously approved modifications to Open Records Policy 1512. The changes, which were recommended by the Governance Committee, included the following:

- Title change from "Public's Right to Know/Freedom of Information Policy" to "Open Records Requests Policy" to better align with the purpose of the policy.
- Clarification that all requests are to be in writing.
- Clarification concerning the cost to recover or produce requested records.
- Clarification that requested records may be reviewed by the school's legal counsel prior to being released.

- Clarification that any fees to be charged for the recovery or production of requested records must be paid prior to the generation of those records.

The updated policy can be seen at <http://bit.ly/ma-policy1512>.

Other highlights

- Davis reported that December was filled with concerts and performances, which included a performance from the jazz band on the sidewalk for the parents doing pickup in the car line.
- Davis noted that the Curriculum Committee is in full swing and has done hundreds of hours of work outside of formal meetings. It is working on extracurricular offerings such as digital photography and the history of music as well as a unified approach to the skill of note taking starting in fourth grade.
- Griffin said he was honored to be appointed to the Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) board. BOCES authorizes charter schools and online schools and includes former state Board of Education members who are familiar with school choice.
- Griffin reported that planning is under way for the second annual Grandparents Day on Friday, March 16.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, Feb. 8 at the Monument Academy library at 1150 Village Ridge Point. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Information on the MA School Board, including schedule, minutes, committee and finances can be found at <http://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board>.

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