

**Highlights**

The following items were highlighted at the board meeting:

- Strop reported that construction on the new secondary school was on schedule to hit the mid-August date.
- The Northwestern Evaluation Association (NWEA) results for fifth grade were very strong.

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The next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 9 at 6 p.m. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

Email [board@monumentacademy.net](mailto:board@monumentacademy.net) to get a Zoom invitation to the next board meeting and/or to submit comments or ask questions. See <http://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board> for the latest information.

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## Lewis-Palmer District 38 District Accountability Advisory Committee, May 29 Committee discusses budget, end-of-year reflections, multiple pathways

By Harriet Halbig

The District Accountability Advisory Committee (DAAC) is composed of teachers and parents from each of the district's schools and members of the administration, including a liaison from the Board of Education.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, all district meetings are being held online.

### Board and legislative update

Board liaison Tiffiney Upchurch reported that, due to the pandemic, the state Legislature suspended its session in March. As a result, many issues have been tabled until next year, including most bills involving education

Upchurch then spoke of the board's strategic plan, including the following goals:

- Providing a safe, healthy, welcoming environment for students.
- Providing a quality education.
- Offering a deep professional culture for staff.
- Providing effective asset management.
- Forging strong community relationships.

Each of these initiatives has been assigned to two individuals on the board or in the administration.

Upchurch also said D38 was one of the largest participants in distance learning in the state. She said Superintendent K.C. Somers is beginning to plan for various options for fall.

### Budget discussion

Executive Director of Financial Services David Crews presented information on the 2020-21 budget. For details, please see the Board of Education article on page 1 of this issue.

DAAC's charter includes the requirement that it review and advise on the district's budget priorities. The budget must be submitted to the state before June 30. The board will meet in a work session on June 2 to discuss details of necessary cuts.

Crews said the draft budget does not include any cuts in salaries or layoffs but represents a 12% to 14% decrease in revenue due to the pandemic's impact on state and federal revenue.

When asked for comment from the committee, one member said that after meeting with other teachers, it was agreed that they would prefer to remain employed even with a pay reduction rather than be laid off.

Somers said that the number of activities would not be reduced, but fees may be increased, including the transportation fee. Some vacant positions may not be filled.

Executive Director of Learning Services Lori Benton said the district could begin to do things that had previously been contracted out, such as printing, professional development, and compilation of kits for science classes.

### Multiple pathways presentation

Benton presented information on alternatives to tra-

ditional post-secondary pathways.

She said that 20% of students were not having their needs met through traditional classroom education and that there are many alternatives to a traditional four-year college education.

Among those is career and technical education, which provides a background in such areas as biomedicine, marketing, information technology, salon and spa careers, and journalism. In this program, students can pursue career training during their high school years and graduate with the ability to make a good living, Benton said. Funding comes from grants.

In Concurrent Enrollment, high school students can enroll in post-secondary courses and earn college credit during their high school years. Students attend classes at Pikes Peak Community College or the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs during their regular school day. Tuition is paid through the state-provided per pupil revenue. Some teachers have also been certified to teach college-level courses at D38 schools for college credit.

The ASCENT program (Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment) allows students who complete 12 postsecondary credits before the end of 12th grade to extend their high school graduation for one year. Students are required to apply for state funding, and do not need remedial courses. Textbooks and fees are the responsibility of the students. They are not eligible for federal financial aid but may use private scholarships.

The district also offers a number of alternatives in online learning. Part-time, full-time, and single online courses are offered. One advantage of the online learning offerings is that students who came into the district after their freshman year in high school can take courses required by the state without attending summer school. Others can take online courses to compensate for the fact they are unable to take required courses due to time conflicts with sports or other activities.

Benton responded to a question by saying that students may not use the online option to take more than a full schedule of academic classes in order to hasten graduation.

### Superintendent's report

Somers reported on his first year in the district, including periods of listening and learning, the election season, post-election debriefing, and dealing with the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

Goals include creating and solidifying the strategic plan for the district and developing an effective relationship between the superintendent and the board.

The philosophy behind all decisions is to place the students first by creating a welcoming environment and a rigorous and relevant education by meeting students on their level and meeting their individual needs.

A second goal is to have a high-performance staff that is provided with professional development and compensated competitively to promote retention.

A third goal is to have financial stability and community engagement by developing partnerships within the community and encouraging trust and transparency.

Because of these initiatives, regional demand to attend D38 schools should continue and increase, Somers said.

Somers thanked the members of DAAC for their support and contributions.

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The District Accountability Advisory Committee will have no further meetings this school year.

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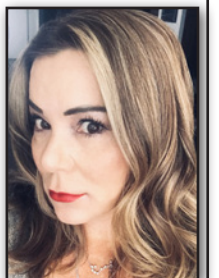
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