

Unlike most districts, the D38's scores improved over 2019, attributable to its efforts to continue a rigorous academic schedule through the pandemic. Whetstine especially praised the board for instituting new literacy curriculum.

The district also has a very positive graduation rate and high marks for readiness for post-secondary education and entry into the workplace. Efforts are now being made to include enlistment in the military as a subset of activities following graduation. Students who achieved certification in a trade while in high school will also be recognized.

The board voted to approve the accreditation of the schools.

To view detailed information, please go to go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/board.nsg/vpublic. Choose the date of the meeting you wish to reference and select "view agenda." All supporting information can be viewed in detail.

Board recognitions

The board recognized Pastor Brian Petak of Ascent Church for support of suicide prevention by sponsoring the Run4Hope. The sixth run occurred the weekend before the meeting. The church has raised over \$140,000 in support of these programs, including funding of the Sources of Strength program at Lewis-Palmer and Palmer Ridge High Schools.

The board also recognized board Secretary Tiffiney Upchurch for receiving



Above: D38 board Vice President Theresa Phillips noted that Tiffiney Upchurch was awarded the 2022 McGuffey award by the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) for her committed and passionate service. Since 2017, Phillips said, Upchurch has brought unwavering passion, purpose, and persistence in championing the success of Every Student, Every Day and relentlessly advocating for strong public schools. Her service includes hundreds of volunteer hours and attending many school events. Phillips said Upchurch serves as board liaison to Monument Academy and to the District Advisory and Accountability Committee, the Special Education Advisory Committee, and the Preschool Advisory Committee. Upchurch is also a CASB delegate who leads by doing what is best for all kids, Phillips said. From left are board member Ron Schwarz, Upchurch, Superintendent KC Somers, and Phillips. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

the 2022 McGuffey award from the Colorado Association of School Boards. This award recognizes a member who brings committed and passionate service to their work. Phillips also recognized Upchurch for her active engagement with

the community and service as board liaison with Monument Academy, the District Accountability Advisory Committee, the Special Education Advisory Committee, and the Preschool Advisory Committee.

During his update, Superintendent KC Somers recognized journalism students at Palmer Ridge High School for the 2022 Epilogue Yearbook being named as an All Colorado Yearbook, and The Bear Truth newspaper receiving an Award of Merit. The Epilogue was also rated First Class by the National Scholastic Press Association.

Somers also recognized several National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists from the district. They are Tristan Clark, Elise Flinn, and Alex Weeks from Lewis-Palmer High School, and Lawson McVay, Nathanael Sapp, Laine Satterlee, Grace Weitzel, and Cole Wickert from Palmer Ridge.

The D38 Dispatch, an upcoming print newspaper, was introduced. The Long-Range Planning Committee will begin to meet later in the fall to discuss such issues as facilities condition, plans for Grace Best, and to update growth projections.

New Human Resources director named

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway introduced Misty Manchester as the district's new director of Human Resources and said she and the finance office will be working closely together.

Character education resource accreditation

Acknowledging that the district strives to provide a safe, healthy, and mentoring atmosphere for its students, three character-education programs have been in use for several years.

The Responsive Classroom program provides a framework for offering engaging academic activity with participatory lessons and a positive community sense of belonging and significance. All decisions are based on knowledge of a student's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

Capturing Kids' Hearts is used at the middle school level and continues the effort to offer support and encouragement with the goal of increased attendance and improved graduation rates.

Sources of Strength endeavors to spread hope and encourage emphasis on hope instead of trauma, training peer counselors to recognize when a student is struggling and help them find help.

Since the August board meeting, documents on these programs have been available for public comment before being approved. To view some of the public comments, see boarddocs.

Primary concerns are that using such programs could cut into academic time and that students and teachers are being encouraged to act as psychologists without parental involvement.

The board voted to approve the use of these programs in the schools.

Community engagement plan

Communications Director Mark Belcher reported that the Engage and Elevate public discussions held at various locations this year were very helpful in keeping the public informed and learning about their concerns and preferences.

Belcher proposed holding three Engage and Elevate meetings before the November election and one a month after, with a minimum of two board members at each.

Public comments

Two district parents spoke about the value of music education in our schools. They expressed a fear that difficulty in scheduling time for band education could threaten this resource, which brings such satisfaction and recognition to the district. It was suggested that in some cases music education could be offered as an extracurricular activity.

Lewis-Palmer Elementary School Principal Davonne Johnson commented on the value of social-emotional learning



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