

### Hiring consultant approved

At its Nov. 18 special meeting, the board went directly into executive session to “discuss negotiations and advice to negotiators regarding fundraising matters and to review proposals and negotiations regarding possible contracted services.”

After around three hours of discussion, the board unanimously approved authorizing the hiring subcommittee composed of board President Ryan Graham and Vice President Lindsay Clinton to negotiate and execute a contract for hiring the chief executive consultant.

### Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- Board member Craig Carle recognized Scott and Rachel Karstens for devoting their time to ensuring the success of the MA football program. Scott stepped up to coach, emphasizing the key fundamentals of football, good sportsmanship, and hard work, said Carle. Rachel put in hours on the sideline, provided rides to players, and put on a banquet where each kid was spotlighted. The last two years have been successful, with back-to-back winning seasons and the thrill of bringing home the championship this year.
- Chief Financial Officer and Interim Chief Operation Officer Marc Brocklehurst reported that the appraisal of a portion of MA's West Campus property had been completed, and he expects results shortly. The recirculation project has been posted on BidNet, a nationwide site for



**Above:** The November board spotlight recognized Scott and Rachel Karstens for their support of the successful Monument Academy football program. From left, board member Craig Carle, Scott Karstens, and Rachel Karstens. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

government contract opportunities, and two prospective bidders have made inquiries.

- Belisle reported that the curriculum committee had begun discussions of a portrait of a graduate and had a robust discussion of the school's math curriculum. She agreed to ask the curriculum committee to bring a proposal for parental review back to the board's governance committee.
- Belisle and board member Michael Geers noted that the East and West Campus school accountability advisory committees (SAAC) were preparing for their upcoming parent survey. Geers said the West Campus SAAC was looking

to propose an alternative to the Capturing Kids Hearts program to save money and more closely align with MA's philosophy. High School Principal David Kennington said MA's East Campus would be the site of the upcoming meeting of the District Accountability Advisory Committee, which was being rebranded as the Parent and Community Advisory Committee.

- Buczkowski reported for the Finance Committee that there would be unanticipated expenses for hooking up the modulars, as one would be used as a high school science classroom and for HVAC systems service on both campuses. The modular cost is unknown, but he estimated the HVAC costs to be \$16,000 for West Campus and \$12,000 for East Campus and expected to see final budget revisions voted on in December.
- The board unanimously approved a memorandum of understanding with Leading Edge to provide before and aftercare. If Leading Edge accepts the agreement and MA receives its licensing, the program could begin in early spring or might be delayed until the start of the next school year.

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The MA School Board meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, Dec. 10, at 6 p.m. on the East Campus. *See more information at see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.*

*Jackie Burhans can be reached at [jackieburhans@ocn.me](mailto:jackieburhans@ocn.me).*

### Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, Nov. 14

## Board acts on bus purchases, opts out of FAMLI, ponders ways to cope with failure of the mill levy override ballot measure



**Above:** At the Nov. 14 D38 Board of Education meeting, members of the American Legion Tri-Lakes Post 9-11 presented the colors and led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Presenting the colors is a practice conducted by color guards who move the colors (in this case, the American flag and the Colorado state flag) from a carried position and place them in a stand. The American Legion color guard then presents arms ahead of the Pledge. From left are Anthony Trifiletti, John Hartling, James Bergeron, and Randy Fritz. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

*By Harriet Halbig*

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education devoted much of its Nov. 14 meeting to examining funding alternatives following the defeat of the mill levy override on the November ballot.

### Bus purchase discussion

Board President Chris Taylor moved that the district should purchase four new buses, with two funded by the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund and two from the transportation fund.

Executive Director of Operations and Development Chris Coulter and Chief Business Officer Brett



**Above:** At the Nov. 14 regular board meeting, the Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education thanked and honored all who have served in the U.S. military in both wartime and peacetime. The board asked attending D38 staff members, including those from Monument Academy, who have or are serving in any branch of the military, to come forward for special recognition. Phillips read the certificate of appreciation, which said, “In recognition and appreciation for your voluntary service, commitment, and sacrifices to our country and now to our nation's youth via your service to D38.” Shown are, from left, Theresa Phillips, D38 board member; Stephanie Markle, Social Studies; Chris Coulter, Maintenance and Operations; Mike Leland, Transportation; Todd Ronk, Safety and Security; David Shindel, Transportation; Jim Taylor, Student Services; Mike Theemling, Computer Science and Technology; Paul Willie; Lindsay Clinton, MA board member, David Kennington, MA High School principal; Ron Schwarz, D38 board member; Ryan Graham, MA board president. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

Ridgway explained that the district's school buses travel 50% more miles than the national average each year, and the lifespan of a bus should be 15 years. Over half of the district fleet is older than 15 years and as a result there is \$10,000 to \$15,000 in maintenance expenses each year.

New buses would have more safety features and better gas mileage. Coulter said the goal would be to replace two buses per year until all are less than 15 years old. ESSER funds can be used because new buses are a safety issue. Many buses in the district fleet have over 200,000 miles on them.

Coulter said that if the buses are ordered now, they could be delivered by August 2023, and many other districts are now ordering buses.

Board Treasurer Ron Schwarz praised Coulter for his research and said that each bus will cost around \$135,000. He questioned whether purchase of the buses was more of a priority than other safety features such as completing the installation of 3M film on school windows.

Superintendent KC Somers said that it is difficult to list the top priorities for spending in the district, but buses are absolutely needed.

Board Vice President Theresa Phillips commented that the purchase of two buses was cancelled a few years ago.

Taylor's motion to purchase four buses failed by a vote of 3 to 2.

Director Matthew Clawson moved that the district purchase two buses using ESSER funds. The motion passed.

The board agreed to discuss this issue further at its next work session on Nov. 29.

### Board opts out of FAMLI

Human Resources Director Misty Manchester explained that the state is offering paid Family Leave and Medical Insurance to staff. District staff was surveyed about whether they wished to participate as a district at the cost of 0.9% per pay period, with individuals paying 0.45%.

The staff voted to opt out of the program with the understanding that individuals could participate through the Colorado Department of Education.

The board voted to opt out of the program as a district.

### Post-election budget discussion

Ridgway presented a financial planning and analysis PowerPoint explaining that the district has spent 1% less than anticipated year to date but there is also a shortfall in revenue.

Following a lengthy discussion, Taylor asked for a detailed report on the aging bus fleet and the physical condition of other assets such as buildings in the district. He also asked for an analysis of staff turnover.

At a previous meeting, Ridgway reported that there was a total of \$800,000 in the transportation fund, which was not earmarked for any particular purpose. Part of this could be used to purchase buses, as explained above.

Taylor said there were a number of unfilled staff positions and asked whether these district savings