



Above: On Mar. 3, Monument Academy (MA) held a special board meeting featuring a panel to discuss the Faculty/Administrator Safety Training and Emergency Response (FASTER) program which trains armed school staff to stop school violence quickly. Panelists answered questions and touched briefly on trauma-based first aid and social-emotional wellness. In addition to MA board members, school administrators and the schools legal counsel, panelists included Laura Carno, executive director of FASTER Colorado; Brian Rea, superintendent of Peyton 23 school district, and John Castillo, father of Kendrick Castillo from the STEM Schools shooting in Highlands Ranch. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*



Above: Parent Daniel Tucker and elementary teacher Suzy Benz were spotlighted by board member Misty McCuen at the Mar. 10 Monument Academy (MA) board meeting. Tucker volunteers once a month for the Watch Dogs program that brings fathers into the school to perform service and provide a role model. Benz joined MA in 2007 and is the music teacher for grades K-5. She helps with the talent show, student play and music lessons. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

wellness with counselors and teachers who can forge relationships with students. Finally, they invested in training on trauma-based first aid.

Miller discussed the risks of having a non-uniformed staff member with a firearm on campus, saying that insurance companies do not see it as a high risk. Colorado law, he said, allows schools to have concealed-carry well-trained security officers who can also be teachers, administrators,

and custodians.

Board members had questions about common myths, psychological evaluation, the role of the school resource officer (SRO), how to talk to students about shootings, how to conceal a firearm, the cost of training, conducting building assessments, and more. Carno said the program was not just arming teachers but also lunch ladies and nurses, etc. Trainees must pass the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) qualifications. Carno said that psychological vetting is up to the schools. She said that best practices include interviewing volunteers and having administrators attend the program.

Board President Ryan Graham said that MA's SRO is shared between campuses and asked about the ideal response timeframe. Rea said most shooting situations end in a matter of minutes. Carno said concealing weapons is part of the training. She also said that children should have no question that the adults will keep them safe. Rea noted that Peyton 23 had SROs, FASTER graduates, and special weapons team members walk through their buildings to assess areas of concern. Carno said that initial training costs \$1,000 and requalification costs \$600 and that FASTER raises private money to help schools with the price.

Teachers and parents asked for

more details about the vetting process, how law enforcement identifies armed staff, whether the program covers both campuses, the availability of gun safes in the classroom, and other considerations. Graham said the board would have to create processes, and he would reach out to Rea for his ideas on vetting volunteers.

Rea replied that armed staff have digital gun safes at home but not at school. His team members all use the LifeSpot app to communicate with law enforcement and identify the location of armed staff. Carno said training teaches that the staff mem-

ber's job is not to be shot once law enforcement arrives on the scene.

Board members indicated they would support the program at both campuses if it moves forward. Castillo said that the board should also consider training on mass casualty events, identifying mental health issues, and closing campuses.

At the March 10 meeting, the board continued to discuss the FASTER program, the parent survey, social-emotional wellness, and related policies and procedures. Graham said the board would want to survey staff, parents, and community members for their input. The board

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