

cial statements and have improved MA's financial position. One example was a Colorado state check for capital funding for FY2021 that was recently received by Lewis-Palmer School District and was quickly remitted to MA. He called attention to the end of the financial report, which showed the elementary school in positive territory with \$100,000 net income year to date, noting that the secondary was lagging with a negative amount of \$70,000 but was much improved from previous months. Gustafson said it sets MA up well to get through the remainder of the year to be in a much better position than initially thought.

He also dug into administrative costs with Ridgeway, mutually discovering outdated allocations, which will be revised for FY22-23.

Gustafson also reported that MA is earning 4.5% on its market account with Integrity Bank, which he called "fantastic." He still wants to proceed with opening a ColoTrust account, as approved by the board in its January meeting, with a small balance so it could be used easily. The ColoTrust interest is 5%, so going with Integrity Bank only loses a few basis points while supporting a valued local partner. See the article about ColoTrust at www.ocn.me/v23n2.htm#ma.

Gustafson contacted MA's audit firm CliftonLarsonAllen CPA (CLA) about working on the tax return and will provide any additional information requested. The representative from CLA mentioned that its fees would increase from \$12,000 to \$30,000 with a similar increase for the school district, noting that he understood that MA might look at other options.

In his final section, Gustafson said Interim Chief Operating Officer Kim McClelland had pulled together the leadership team to work on the budget. Krista Pelley, director of People Operations, is working on the staff allocation for Gustafson to add to the budget, so they are on track with this process. He explained that traditionally, once the board approves the preliminary budget assumptions, there is a blackout period while staff builds the budget. He asked for additional time but said he was still on track to deliver the budget to the board in May for its approval by June 30, as required by law.

Gustafson explained that the Legislature was delayed in releasing the School Finance Act, which delayed the Colorado Department of Education from releasing the exact funding to each district. One serious concern was that the Legislature was considering diverting money from the cost-of-living factor to rural schools, impacting MA and D38 significantly. Local districts could see up to a \$6 million loss, and several factions, including school districts, the Colorado Association of School Executives, and the Rural School Alliance, were lobbying against this change.

Note: The state Legislature dropped these changes from the School Finance Act after this board meeting.

In his Finance Committee report, board member Joe Buczkowski confirmed that, of the additional revenues found, a significant amount was applied to the East Campus, which meant the East Campus could end up in the black compared to the budgeted \$376,000 loss and that there was now a very low risk that MA's cash on hand would fall below its 2019 bond covenant requirements. He also confirmed that both First National Bank and Integrity Bank, each of which holds over \$500,000 in certificates of deposit for MA, comply with the Colorado Public Deposit Protection Act, which protects deposits of public funds in excess of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) maximum of \$250,000. Finally, Buczkowski said MA in-

tended to post the director of finance position in May.

Handling snow days

High School Principal David Kennington discussed options for handling potential snow days and state instructional contact requirements. He noted that MA East could not accommodate another delay or closure after the most recent snow day and remain in compliance with state requirements. Through a joint effort of principals and the COO, the team considered three options:

1. Extending instructional hours. This could be done by converting the remaining Fridays from half to full days or adding minutes to each school day.
2. Extending the school year. This could be done by leveraging the May 19 teacher workday but is not a popular option as many parents already have made vacation plans.
3. eLearning days. Kennington said this was the preferred method, noting that Palmer Ridge High School was already doing this. eLearning would be the least disruptive and would include the opportunity for virtual meetings and synchronous or asynchronous learning leveraging free 40-minute Zoom sessions.

Kennington said most middle school teachers preferred eLearning, with high school teachers splitting between eLearning and extended days. The School Accountability Advisory Committee (SAAC) and the high school parent advisory group preferred eLearning. McClelland noted that the board did not have to vote on the decision but that she wanted them to know which option was preferred, also recounting that the school calendar has fewer half-day Fridays to avoid this issue next year. Clinton said she appreciated seeing the decision process and understood both the objections and the impacts.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- The board approved a special budget meeting at the East Campus on May 25 at 10 a.m.
- McClelland reported that she was now leading a technology committee and had put together teacher feedback, and had created a parent survey
- Graham reported that the Highway 105 expansion-related project had begun preliminary work with a drone pilot mapping out a parcel for the development of the recirculation.
- Board member Emily Belisle reported that they are in the draft stages of the new curriculum adoption policy, dividing it between main and supplemental curriculums taught to 75% and 25% of students, respectively. The math curriculum subcommittee was continuing to meet because of expected long-term changes and was looking at pros and cons and narrowing down which curricula the school should consider.
- Belisle noted that technology had been moved out of the umbrella of the curriculum committee, whose task was to home in on defining MA's approach and intention for using technology in education. She encouraged parents to provide feedback.
- Both the East and West Campus SAAC committees reported that end-of-year surveys were being finalized and requested that parents provide feedback.
- The board adjourned to executive session to

discuss security arrangements and the performance and evaluation process for administrators, returning to adjourn the meeting without further action, discussion, or public comments not pertaining to agenda items.

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, May 11, at 6 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information at [see https://bit.ly/ma-boe](https://bit.ly/ma-boe).

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Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, April 17

New director sworn in; board reorganization; Safe and Welcoming Schools discussion

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education welcomed a new director and reorganized during its April 17 meeting. Additional business included a report on safe, healthy and welcoming schools (priority 1 in the strategic plan), employee health benefit changes, and policy revisions.

New director and reorganization

Former board President Chris Taylor resigned his position effective on the date of the February board meeting.

The board held a special meeting on April 8 to appoint a new member, Kris Norris. Norris was sworn in and signed an affidavit of confidentiality at this meeting.

As required by law, the members of the board then reorganized. Tiffiney Upchurch and Ron Schwarz

were nominated as board president. Schwarz withdrew his name, commenting that he felt that his skill set was better suited to continue in another capacity.

Upchurch was then elected as president. Following a brief discussion, Norris was appointed as vice president. Schwarz will continue as treasurer, Theresa Phillips will serve as secretary, and Matthew Clawson will continue as director at large.

In their board member comments, several members welcomed Norris and thanked Upchurch for her willingness to serve as president. Clawson encouraged those who were eligible to run for office in November.

Upchurch commented that April is sexual violence recognition month and that freedom from assault is a human right. One of the public comments was made by a former student who suffered assault