

decision. He said the enhancement would provide additional connectivity with public safety and law enforcement officials in the event of an emergency and would include information on card readers and other district programs.

Board President Tiffiney Upchurch asked whether there is a financial advantage to doing this now.

Director of Operations and Development Chris Coulter responded that this is a life-saving system. He suggested that if all schools are not upgraded at once, it may be possible to complete the upgrades during late night or early morning hours.

The board approved the proposal 4-1, with Clawson voting nay.

Curriculum discussion

The board approved new curriculum for fourth-grade history (The Colorado Story, an updated version of the current curriculum), fourth- and fifth-grade social studies, and fourth- and fifth- grade science. In addition, the

board approved the use of character education programs which have been used on a trial basis over the past year.

The board also approved additional counselors for the elementary schools. During the discussion it was emphasized that there is a concern about accountability and privacy and to respect community values rather than national standards.

The board approved the curriculum 4-1 with Clawson voting nay.

Policy discussions

The board approved updated policies on wellness, which include provisions for physical education and nutritional requirements.

The board also approved a new policy regarding the provision of medically necessary treatment in the schools. The policy states that the treatment must be recommended by a Colorado licensed healthcare provider or licensed private health care specialist. The provider or specialist must attend IEP (individual

education plan) or 504 meetings to discuss the necessity of the treatments.

The district also retains the ability to have the treatments administered by qualified district staff or a contracted provider.

An additional provision allows the provider or specialist access to the classroom to observe as long as this observation is not disruptive.

Restructuring of bus routes

Somers explained that district bus routes are divided into three priority groups.

The first priority group is the special education routes as they are required by federal law.

The second priority is the regular neighborhood routes which are at or near capacity.

The third priority are those routes east of Highway 83.

At the time of the meeting, four people were undergoing driver training. All of these drivers would be as-

signed to priorities 1 and 2. There is an ongoing shortage of drivers. At the moment there will be only one route to serve students east of Highway 83.

Election discussion

The board appointed Vicki Wood, secretary to the superintendent, as the district's representative to notify county officials of the desire to participate in the Nov. 7 election. Four of the five board positions are eligible for election this year.

Petition packets can be picked up from Wood at the administration building beginning Aug 9.

The Lewis-Palmer D 38 Board of Education meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month in the district learning center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting will be on Aug. 21.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Monument Academy School Board, July 13

Board organizes, approves before and after care contract

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) board held its July 13 meeting at The Platinum Group offices in Colorado Springs, which is the office of board President Ryan Graham. The board handled several organizational matters, agreed to a contract for before and after care, and heard committee and administrator updates.

The regular meeting was followed by a board retreat that included on-boarding of new members, review of the board manual and calendar, continuous improvement and assessment, legal requirements, and strategic planning.

Board member organization

Newly elected board member Matt Ross was sworn in for his three-year term, and all board members took their required annual oath of office and signed affidavits to be forwarded to the county clerk.

Board members then discussed and volunteered for committee assignments as follows:

- Highway 105 – Ryan Graham, president
- Curriculum – Emily Belisle, secretary
- School Accountability and Advisory (West Campus) – Matt Ross, board member
- School Accountability and Advisory (East Campus) – Lindsay Clinton, vice president
- Governance – Joe Buczkowski, treasurer, and Karen Hoida, board

member

- Finance – Buczkowski and Craig Carle, board member
- Building and Facilities – Hoida and Graham
- Resource Development – Carle and Clinton
- Human Resources – Clinton and Graham

As part of the discussion, the board agreed to fold the Safety and Security Committee into the Buildings and Facilities Committee and to disband the Volunteer Committee as MA is moving to a new system called ParentSquare.

Before and after care contract signed

Graham noted that the board had approved a revision to a potential contract for before and after care with Leading Edge in November 2022 but that Leading Edge did not agree to the changes. The board considered a new proposal by Monument's Best that had been vetted by its legal counsel. Tom and Chrystal Lind, founders of Monument's Best, were present to answer questions. They noted that there is a state-mandated process to vet employees who would be given access to MA that included background checks, courses, and CPR certification.

Operations Manager Jake Dicus met with Monument's Best when the Leading Edge arrangement didn't work out. His kids have participated in its program, and he felt it would fulfill a need for MA's families. Dicus said 15 families must sign up for the before

care program to work financially. If MA is closed, Monument's Best will offer sports camps using MA's facilities for MA kids and, possibly, other kids from the community. Once approved, Dicus planned to put together a slide show to send out to parents to gain interest and would present it as part of the back-to-school night. Dicus and elementary school Principal Kurt Walker have discussed the facilities to be used at MA's West Campus.

Monument's Best has membership software to help parents sign up for its programs. Its contract is for one year with wording for indemnification. It is licensed for up to 60 kids but could amend that if needed.

The board unanimously approved the contract and authorized Graham to execute it.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- Graham reported that work was in progress on the recirculation road around MA West necessitated by the Highway 105 expansion. Some re-engineering was required due to water runoff from heavy rains. He said carline information would be sent out before school starts.
- A parent spoke during the public comment agenda item, expressing concern about showing non-educational movies to kids for indoor recess in general and objecting to the movie Elemental by Disney specifically. She also asked if MA would be required to financially participate in the Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH) program each year, noting it has cost \$45,000.
- Interim Chief Executive Officer Kim McClelland provided financial highlights in lieu of financial consultant Officer Glen Gustafson, saying he is in a good place with the audit and is closing out the school year. She had no details to share from the district on the free lunch service but noted that only the elementary school would be participating. She also noted that the CKH expense was

for the initial staff training to use the discipline model in the hand-book. Principals could sign up for a premium offer with resources, mentoring, and implementation guides for \$4,000 annually.

- The board discussed and approved an updated student hand-book for its West Campus, making minor updates to carline, board eligibility, and logo use.
- The board unanimously approved the new graduation requirements presented by high school Principal David Kennington, who noted that requirements include a capstone project. He said that parents and students want to have a traditional valedictorian honor for the highest grade point average (GPA), which may have to be determined at the thousandth level. Additional honors for high GPAs would be conferred. Graduation is expected to be on Saturday, May 18, possibly at MA, wearing a black gown with a stole. He said families wanted guidelines for senior photos, suggesting a modest dress code with no pajamas or furry costumes be submitted with a message that aligns with MA.
- The board approved an update to the 1501ES Elementary School Uniform Policy, adding a daily wear sweatshirt with MA's logo.
- The board unanimously approved the preschool calendar, policies and procedures, and revised tuition contract.
- The board discussed the draft of new curriculum policies to include supplemental curriculum selection and tabled any action to the August board meeting.

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, Aug. 10, at 6 p.m. at the East Campus. See more information at see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.



Above: At its July 13 meeting held at The Platinum Group offices in Colorado Springs, Monument Academy (MA) board President Ryan Graham (left, standing) swears in newly elected board member Matt Ross (right, standing). Seated are board members, from left, Joe Buczkowski, Craig Carle, Emily Belisle, and Lindsay Clinton. Photo by Jackie Burhans.



Above: At the July 13 Monument Academy (MA) board meeting, all board members took their annual oath of office and signed affidavits to be sent to the clerk and recorder. Standing from left are Joe Buczkowski, treasurer; Karen Hoida, board member; Craig Carle, board member; Emily Belisle, secretary; Ryan Graham, president; Lindsay Clinton, vice president, and Matt Ross, board member. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

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