

MA (Cont. from 12)

standard operating procedures are in progress, she said, and handbooks need to become cohesive across the campuses. Graduation requirements meet statutes. Enrollment has remained stable but does not reflect growth, Richard noted, displaying a screen showing that the Tri-Lakes area from 2010 to 2021 had grown 50%. MA's enrollment trends show the highest growth when the school expanded to K-8 and had a large class size in 2018, after which class sizes started to go down.

This year is the lowest class size since 2013, she said. Population in the Tri-Lakes area has increased by 67% while class size at MA has dipped 7%, she said, with enrollment increases being due to adding grades. D38 saw a growth of 9% over that same time frame, she said. With an increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) students, there has been an increase in staff and debt. The greatest need for sustainability in the future is to increase student enrollment, Richard stated.

On governance, she noted that MA board members are parents dedicated to the current and future success of the school. Board roles and responsibilities should be reviewed annually, and new member training should be consistent, she said. The board needs a better understanding of governing by policy and setting direction. She noted that the board had begun reviewing policies and said that an academic policy is needed that includes penmanship. Teacher representatives should be inducted as was done in the past, Richard advised.

Overall, Richard gave academics a mixed score of green, yellow, and red while operations was mostly green with some yellow and governance was 1/3 green with the rest mostly yellow and just a little red. She recommended that leadership identify an action plan, involve staff, and establish a timeline, saying that HST has a system for developing an excellent school and could return for quarterly benchmarks or annual reviews.

The board went into executive session for one hour for advice on specific legal matters regarding the external audit report and for discussion of personnel matters arising from the report. Upon returning, it took no action.

Unified Improvement Plan

East Campus Principal Angela Duca presented a draft of MA's secondary school Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) for the board's approval at its Oct. 10 meeting. The intent, she said, is to create goals based on student data as required by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). The process began by attending a workshop with D38 and analyzing the data from the school performance framework to inform academic goals. By evaluating the SPF, NWEA, and Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) data, MA identified the need to improve math growth in middle and high schools. The principals met to determine priorities and challenges.

For middle school, there has been a high turnover of math teachers and therefore inconsistent implementation of curriculum Duca said. She said the major strategies to improve include teacher retention and data-informed instruction. MA plans to use mentor teachers throughout the school year and provide support through frequent check-ins and monthly instruction and revised teacher training. MA will partner with colleges to recruit highly effective teachers, and math teachers will work together to create vertically aligned curriculum.

For high school, schedule constraints and lack of access to student data before the school year mean that instruction was not tailored to student needs, Duca said. The root focus is limited math programs and placing students in the right class. MA will implement data-informed instruction and work to vertically align curriculum and content. Duca said MA will use PSAT and NSMQT scores to help and will re-evaluate its math placement tests. Executive Director Collin Vinchattle had a 13% teacher loss rate, which sounds high but is about average, she said.

Elementary Principal Kurt Walker said West Campus improved by 18 points, moving from an "im-

provement" to a "performance" category, which is the highest category. The school rose in all areas except for math growth where scores went down, as did all D38 elementary schools, he said. Last year's UIP goals were two-year goals, he said, so they would continue with those. They focused so much on English and Language Arts that they neglected math. The West campus started trainings on data analysis of the math scores and had a professional development session with both campuses, which opened his eyes to what was missing, he said.

The board unanimously approved the UIP plans for MA elementary and secondary schools. The plans go to D38 to be approved and sent to the state.

October count presentation

Registrar Lena Gross presented on the final enrollment after the October count. She explained that the October count encompasses Tuesday, Sept. 24 to Tuesday, Oct. 8. If a student is absent on Oct. 1, the official count day, MA could review the attendance record to prove a student was in attendance for five consecutive days before or after. If that wasn't possible, MA gathered letters on extenuating circumstances from parents or letters from teachers affirm their attendance. The following week, MA was scheduled to present its numbers to D38 for submission to the CDE.

Gross explained that the homeschool partnership had 30 students, who are counted as half of a student for a total of 15 full-time equivalent (FTE) students. West Campus was just under the budget projection of 546 at 544.5 FTE including half-day students. East Campus was seven below the projection of 547. Middle school was budgeted for 407 and had 408 while high school was budgeted for 140 students and had 132. Overall FTE is 1099.6, which is 3.9 under the budgeted target of 1103.5.

Gross said it was possible that MA would be entering arbitration and was under discussion with two other districts about two students. This would bring the final FTE to 1097.6, but MA won't know the final CDE determination until December.

There were a lot of additions and withdrawals during the October count, Gross said, with West Campus growing by two but then losing seven, and East Campus growing by one and losing seven. She said MA had been in touch with families who left and sent them exit interviews to capture as much data as possible to understand their reasons for leaving. Gross noted that last year about 26% of K-12 students resided outside of the district, and that had increased to 27% this year with more districts being represented in MA's population. Gross said MA would use that data to inform its marketing strategy going forward.

Gross said that MA had held its first Community Connections night at its West Campus and were encouraged that several families attended. The team was hard at work planning events for the upcoming enrollment season including moving students to middle and high school, she said.

Policy updates

The MA board unanimously adopted and updated several policies at its Oct. regular meeting:

- KECL-MA Library Policy – As discussed in previous meetings.
- GBGG-MA Staff Leave – Explains types of leave and how it can be used.
- GBGH-MA Sick Leave Bank – Placeholder as MA does not have a sick leave bank.
- GBGH-R-MA Sick Leave Bank Regulation – Placeholder as above.
- GBGI-MA Staff Military Leave – Updated to reference executive director.
- GBGJ-MA Staff Bereavement Leave – Through paid or sick leave, not separate.
- GBGK-MA Staff Legal Leave – Standard modified to suit MA.

Board President Ryan Graham said he was grateful to have a library policy in place and that, if revisions are identified during implementation, it can be brought back to the board. Board policies can be found on the MA website at <http://bit.ly/ma-boe> by selecting Board Policies.



Above: At the Oct. 17 Monument Academy school board meeting, board President Ryan Graham spotlighted outgoing West Campus School Resource Officer (SRO) Dustin Williams. Graham is on the left, with Williams on the right. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- Graham spotlighted outgoing West Campus school resource officer (SRO) Dustin Williams. He expressed gratitude for Williams ensuring safety while building impactful and heartfelt relationships.
- Vinchattle reported that the field fundraising campaign had raised over \$70,000 so far.
- Gustafson said there was a \$68,000 loss in August due to upfront expenses, but that year-to-date MA is \$285,000 ahead with \$3.5 million in the bank and investment accounts. Finances are looking good, and he feels MA has turned the corner.
- Graham reported that, with MA's completion of its recirculation construction, parents should sign up for project updates by emailing hwy105aconstruction@gmail.com.
- Board member Matt Ross and Vice President Lindsay Clinton reported for their respective campus curriculum committees that both are looking to focus on vertical alignment after they get the results of the school audit due in November.
- Ross and board member Jilinda Dygert reported for their respective campus School Accountability and Advisory Committees (SAAC) that they were working on an annual parent survey. Dygert said the East Campus SAAC is focused on providing support on the UIP and asked that input on direction, board priorities, goals, and survey topics be emailed to saacsecondary@monumentacademy.net or communicated to Vinchattle. She asked that parents consider volunteering for lunch duty and car line to free up teachers' time.
- The board unanimously agreed to modify its Integrity Bank signature cards due to the departure of MA's business manager Diane Smith. They removed Smith and added Finance Assistant Dawn Bartlett, who has agreed to pitch in, picking up the financial slack in addition to her human resources duties.
- The board unanimously approved changing its November meeting from the 14th to the 21st so consultant Lis Richard can present the full non-financial audit.
- The next district Parent and Community Advisory Committee (PCAC) will be held at MA's East Campus on Nov. 12 from 6 to 8 p.m., with an optional tour starting at 5:30 p.m.

The MA School Board meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. The November meeting has been moved to accommodate a detailed school audit presentation. The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, Nov. 21, at 6:30 p.m. at the East Campus. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

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Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, Oct. 21

Board approves Unified Improvement Plans, selects contractor for Career and Innovation Center

By Harriet Halbig

There was no livestream available of the Oct. 21 meeting of the Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education. This article is based on information in boarddocs. To refer to this source, please see the district website, lewis-palmer.org. Go to the Board of Education tab, boarddocs, meetings, and select the meeting date. Click on view the agenda to see the PowerPoint presentations from the meeting.

Unified Improvement Plan discussion

Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine presented on the subject of the annual Unified Improvement Plans (UIP) for the district and each school. This document details information on academic achievement and growth in such categories as math, English Language Arts, and (this year for the first time) science.

Within these categories data is further broken down in demographics such as English Language Learners, those qualified for free/reduced lunch, and students in special education or the gifted/talented program. Graduation and dropout rates are included as are statistics regarding the number of students attending two- or four-year colleges or entering the military immediately after graduation.

The district must transmit these forms to the Colorado Department of Education in October, including proposed action to improve performance. All schools received performance plans rather than improvement plans this year.

Growth is measured by comparing this year's assessment scores with the previous year. The goal is to be in the 50th percentile or higher each year so students remain at grade level.

Whetstine reported that the plans had been reviewed by principals, school teams, the Parent and Community Advisory Committee, and Building Ac-

countability Advisory committees.

Even when assessment results are strong, district officials determine possible steps to improve them.

Performance priorities identified were inadequate growth in elementary math, and inadequate growth in math and English in middle school.

Proposed solutions were to provide professional development to literacy across content areas and especially to meet the needs of preschoolers, multilingual households, and those on Individual Education Plans or in the gifted/talented program. Programs for monitoring progress would be implemented for those performing below grade level, and instructional coaches would aid in training teachers to address the problem. The goal for literacy is to have 90% of students in grades K through 3 reading at grade level by 2027.

With regard to math, professional development would be provided for teachers at all grade levels, there would be a targeted emphasis on number sense, instructional materials will be reviewed at the elementary level, and an effort will be made to determine the influence of time spent on the subject.

The board voted to transmit the UIPs to the Colorado Department of Education.

Contractor chosen for Career and Innovation Center

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway reported on the selection process for a general contractor for the Career and Innovation Center now in development.

Ridgway reported that over a thousand firms were notified of the project. One hundred and two of these firms sought further information and 33 individuals attended a pre-bid walk-through of the site. Eleven contractors submitted bids by Sept. 23.

Contractors were evaluated on the basis of qualifications, teams availability and qualifications, innova-

tion and project approach, cost of services, and project schedule.

Six reviewers, one of whom is from the architectural firm of Hollis and Miller on the project, scored each category.

Nunn Construction scored highest, including extensive experience in Career and Technical Education across many schools and districts with new construction and renovation.

The board approved the contracting of Nunn Construction as general contractor for the Career and Innovation Center.

Student recognition

Palmer Ridge High School Principal Dr. Adam Frank and science teacher Ms. Leslie Lantz recognized sophomores Casey Chau and Will Guttormann for their work on the school's Outdoor Learning Lab.

These students, working toward their Eagle Scout award, raised funds, recruited volunteers, and completed two pathways in the Outdoor Learning Lab.

To view the project, please see boarddocs.

Staff recognition:

National Principals Month

Superintendent Dr. Stacie Datterri recognized D38 principals for National Principals Month, saying they are among the hardest working yet least recognized individuals in education. She said principals set the academic tone for their schools and provide the mobilizing force for achieving student success.

October count announced

In his financial planning and analysis presentation, Ridgway announced that the October count was 10 students below the count on Oct. 1, 2023. It was 35 students fewer than those counted on Aug. 14 of this year.