

superintendent, the board announced that two finalists will move forward in the selection process: Palmer Ridge High School Principal Adam Frank and Interim Superintendent Amber Whetstine. Both the PCAC and the Staff Collaboration committees gave input to the board, indicating that listing the position internally was a preferable alternative to having the previous search organization do an additional search.

Part of the motivation behind this recommendation was that there were relatively few finalists in the previous search and several of them were district employees. Also, it was felt that a new superintendent should lead the district in the way it had been led rather than imposing a new system.

The board voted 4 to 1 to post the position internally. When asked, Human Resources Director Alicia Welch said

she did not intend to apply and therefore creating the job description and other activities would not be a conflict of interest.

Shank also reported on the timing of the search and that there would be greater community involvement this time and possibly some interviews would be in public.

One committee member expressed concern that current interim Superintendent Amber Whetstine is also the director of curriculum. Whetstine commented that the position of director of curriculum would be posted soon.

**Priority 2:**

**academic excellence**

Director of Assessment Dr. Michael Brom reported on the district's performance on state standardized assessments in the last school year.

Regarding English Language Arts, Brom said that the goal by 2027 would be to have students at all grade levels reach the 85th percentile, with a special emphasis on third-graders. The test indicating performance in this area is the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) test.

Showing performance results for the past three years, the elementary and high school scores achieved this goal with the middle school reaching the 83rd percentile.

The goal for growth is to

reach the 50th percentile each year, which would indicate maintaining grade level proficiency. Looking at a chart indicating performance among elementary schools, four schools exceeded the benchmark, two were at 50th percentile and the middle school was at the 38th percentile.

Brom also reported on achievement in math with the goal of reaching 85th percentile and at least median growth at all grade levels.

Action steps to achieve this would include improving math instruction through examination of programming, resources, assessments, and scheduling, sharing best practices among instructors, offering alternative courses, and ensuring equitable math placement as students transition from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school.

State assessment results (including PSAT an SAT scores in addition to Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) showed elementary students at 84%, middle school at 81%, and high school at 85%. Only the high school results indicated an increase from the previous year.

In terms of growth, only Palmer Lake Elementary and Ray Kilmer Elementary exceeded the 50% rate.

To improve the matriculation rate in the district, action steps included establish-

ing a facility and program infrastructure to include new courses and industry partnerships, aligning programs with student interests, developing academic pathways (training teachers, identifying partners), and engaging stakeholders in the community.

Currently, 25% of District 38 graduates are already enrolled in concurrent enrollment or other programs for college credit before graduation, 70.9% are enrolled in a two-year, four-year, or Career Technology course and 3.8% are entering the military.

To view the PowerPoint of this presentation, go to lewispalmer.org, family resources, district committees, meeting content by date.

Subcommittees of PCAC gave brief reports of their activities.

Because of time constraints and the fact that funding for the 2025-26 school year has not been determined, the committee will hold a special meeting at the district learning center on May 13 at 6 p.m. to discuss the budget.

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The next meeting of the Parent and Community Advisory Committee will be held at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, May 13 in the district's learning center, 146 N. Jefferson St. For further information, contact tmckee@lewispalmer.org.

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

**Monument Academy School Board, April 10 and 24**

**Proposed high school dress code draws concerns**

By Jackie Burhans

The Monument Academy (MA) School Board received student and parent feedback

on proposed high school dress code changes at its regular meeting on April 10 and returned to the discussion at a

special meeting on April 24. The board also heard a report from its Library Review Committee and approved numerous other policies.

**High school dress code changes debated**

During Citizens' Comment, students voiced concerns about proposed dress code changes. While praising MA's community and academics, they opposed the changes, citing financial burdens, loss of self-expression, and blurred distinctions between middle and high school. They feared the uniform-like code could hurt enrollment or lead to student departures. Others suggested better enforcement of the current code and urged the board to reconsider. Board President Ryan Graham commended the students for speaking.

Executive Director Collin Vinchattle announced the first reading of the proposed policy, noting that the board could consider changes in future meetings. He shared results from 100 responses to the dress code survey sent to students and families and acknowledged students' strong interest, demonstrated by their attendance and comments. Vinchattle proposed collaborating with Principal Angela Duca to engage students further.

The proposed policy refines the structure and wording, acknowledging the Colorado CROWN Act and outlining a process for applicable cases. It removes gender-specific annotations, stating that students must wear attire aligned with their gender. A new section on tattoos and markings prohibits drawing on skin, requires tattoos to meet respect guidelines, and prefers that they remain covered. Pajama bottoms are explicitly banned.

The survey asked students and parents about removing sweats and hoodies from the high school dress code. Comments echoed concerns raised at the meeting, noting that "smart casual" mentioned in other communication felt more restrictive and punitive.

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