



**Above:** At its Feb. 12 meeting, the Monument Academy board recognized the high school teaching team. Vice President Lindsay Clinton and Treasurer Craig Carle took turns listing the teachers and their subject area, strengths, and accomplishments. From left are board President Ryan Graham, Clinton, board member Matt Ross, high school teachers, Kristin Grieshaber, Sara Helgoth, and Jenni Helgoth, board member Dygert, and Carle. Not shown are high school teachers Spencer Colter, Shawn Crook, Harry Grover, Trevor Kelson, Richard Merkling, Aaron Meschuk, Sarah Scaling, and Brian Thomasson. Photo courtesy of Monument Academy.

vanced category, and first-graders are at 78%, indicating that kids can handle high expectations.

**Proposal for Army JROTC program**

Vinchattle said there was interest in a Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) program, so he explored some options by contacting the head of JROTC programs in the state. He learned that the Army program is pushing to expand into 50 schools per year in Colorado. There hasn't been a new Air Force JROTC program in 10 years, he said.

Vinchattle said there were three programs available. The Army would provide everything needed to start a program, including curriculum, uniforms, and equipment. It would cover half the cost of two instructors who would make \$86,000 each, and MA would provide the other half. Additional start-up costs for MA would include setting up classrooms, possibly in the portables. The program would likely start in 2027, he said.

Board member Craig Carle asked whether this would be a class during the day or after school. Vinchattle said it would be a mix, with some classes for credit during the day and extra credit opportunities for drilling and color guard after school. Vinchattle noted that MA would be able to open the program for eighth-graders as well, unlike other high schools. Carle suggested finding grants to help fund MA's cost, and the board discussed the timing and student count requirements and the ability to delay the program if MA were not fully ready in the 2027-28 school year.

The board unanimously approved having Vinchattle apply for the program.

**Letters of agreement for bond refinancing**

Vinchattle presented a proposed letter of engagement to work with Miller Farmer Carlson Law, MA's current lawyers, on the refinancing of bonds. He said it would allow the firm to represent MA on the bond refinancing and on the track and field construction, looking at contracts and speaking with bond representation for a \$25,000 flat fee. Graham noted that this would be part of the refinancing costs.

Vinchattle also proposed a letter of engagement with D. A. Davison to be the underwriter for

Monument Academy's Series 2026 bonds.

The board unanimously approved both engagement letters.

**Initial calendar discussions**

Vinchattle brought forward the proposed 2026-27 school year calendar, asking the board to confirm it, but saying he also wanted to explore different calendars with staff and families, allowing MA to consider the pros and cons of different start dates or a four-day calendar.

Graham said he appreciated that Vinchattle was willing to take the time to gather data from parents, staff, and teachers. He said he had heard a lot from parents on the subject.

The board unanimously approved preschool, elementary, secondary, and homeschool calendars for the 2026-27 school year.

**Highlights**

Board meeting highlights include:

- **Spotlight.** Vice President Lindsay Clinton recognized the high school teaching team, saying the high school was small but mighty and had received the Platinum Advanced Placement (AP) award the previous month. Clinton and Carle read a short statement about each teacher, what subjects they taught, and their strengths and accomplishments.
- **Executive director.** Vinchattle reported that mid-year testing was complete, that MA would launch its America 250 campaign focused on patriotism and would also cele-

brate Colorado's 150th anniversary and MA's 30th anniversary. He also noted that the preschool program held its first core knowledge day, and the high school eight-man football team was gaining interest and had a new helmet design. Finally, he thanked Operations Manager Jake Dicus for his work on a \$150,000 facilities assistance grant that would be used at both campuses.

- **Finance director.** Laura Polen reported on December financials, which is the halfway point of the year. West Campus had a net loss of \$51,000, which would have been a loss of \$36,000 without the deficit spending of Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) funds. The East Campus had a net loss of \$467,000, which would have been an income of \$542,000 without the ERTC deficit spending. Polen then reviewed the General, Preschool, Facilities Corporation, and Foundation Corporations funds, detailing beginning and ending balances and income, expenses, and interest. Finally, she noted that MA is working on the capital construction plan for the track and meeting

weekly with the bond counsel and underwriter, and has filed W2s and 1099s with the state.

- **Curriculum West.** Clinton reported that the committee met to document best practices to effectively and transparently communicate with parents about curriculum. Its goal is to earn parents' trust that MA's standards are aligned with expectations. She also said the committee reviewed

the draft field trip process.

- **Curriculum East.** Clinton said the committee approved a final draft and would provide an update next month on curriculum alignment.
- **Student Accountability and Advisory Committee (SAAC) West.** Clinton said the committee had reviewed answers to the mid-year survey, and the chair would prepare a recommendation letter to the board.

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