



Above: Several students from Lewis-Palmer and Palmer Ridge High schools were selected for the Western Slope Honor Choir. In the front row, left to right, are Amelia Whetstone, Noelle Garcia, Shandi Soper, Joella Streeter and Hadley Miles. In the second row are Palmer Ridge High School Principal Dr. Adam Frank, (unidentified), Superintendent Amber Whetstone, Choir Teacher Madeline Douthit and (unidentified). In the back row are Board President Ron Schwarz, Benton Miles, (unidentified), and (unidentified). Additional students pictured or absent: Sidney Black, Lucy Cavin, Krew Sloan, Finn Clark, Bernadette Korty, Seyana Schaffer, and Jane White *Photo courtesy of D38.*



Above: Lewis-Palmer Middle School student Zander Billings performed a selection for the board on his guitar. *Photo courtesy of D38.*

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Athletic complex

At its March 3 work session, the board viewed a presentation by community members Scott and Jill Bradley proposing a joint venture between the district and the Monument Athletic Foundation, a nonprofit entity, to build and administer an indoor athletic complex on the site of Grace Best Education Center and adjoining property.

The complex would include an ice rink, multi-use outdoor turf area for soccer, lacrosse, and baseball, and multi-use courts for basketball, volleyball, wrestling, and such uses as robotics competitions.

The Bradleys said that the advantage of forming the foundation is that it would allow for applying for

grants and other funding, which would not be available to the district.

The agreement sought would require the district to demolish Grace Best and remediate asbestos on the site, providing a shovel-ready location. The land would remain the property of the district and be leased by the foundation, which would administer and maintain it.

The components of the complex would be available for district use as a priority and could be rented to other local leagues and entities.

To view the presentation, please go to the district website, lewispalmer.org. Under the Board of Education tab, select board-docs and select the March 3 meeting. Click on view the agenda and click on the presentations.

At the end of the March 16 meeting, the board passed a resolution to explore the partnership with the foundation with the understanding that all plans would be subject to appropriate approval processes and include community involvement, which may include the Town of Monument.

The resolution delegates authority to the district's administration to evaluate site suitability, design, benefits, and developing a plan for the project, including lease negotiations and site preparation.

board on the development of the district's 2026-27 budget. A draft budget will be presented to the board at its May meeting.

Ridgway said that assumptions are being made regarding funding from the School Finance Act, which provides a large portion of the district's revenue. At present, actual enrollment is expected to decline by 164 students across the district, with the largest decline at the elementary level. Revenue is expected to remain flat at \$11,125 per pupil, which would result in a reduction of funding of about \$2 million.

Investment in capital projects is projected to be \$2.5 million. The increase in the cost of health benefits is unknown but could be as much as 17%. This year it was 16%.

Ridgway said that in response to this decrease in funding, it will be vital to "right-size" staffing and programming across the district. This could mean a reduction of 30 to 35 staff members and staffing adjustments at the elementary level. Some adjustments would also be needed at the secondary and administrative levels.

To view Ridgway's presentation, please see board-docs as described above.

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Student representatives

Each month, the board welcomes two student representatives who can report on activities at their school, ask questions, and participate in board discussions. They may not vote.

March's representatives were Keegan Mallory and Claire Monroe from Palmer Ridge High School, who spoke about the Future Business Leaders of America and the Distributive Education Clubs of America.

To view their presentations, please see board-docs.

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education meets at 6 p.m. in the Bauman Learning Center at 146 Jefferson St. in Monument. The next regular meeting will be on April 20. For information, please contact Vicki Wood at vwood@lewispalmer.org.

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

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