

The first section of the present elementary school was constructed in 1934 and served grades 1 through 8. Palmer Lake District 33 joined Lewis District 5 to become the Lewis-Palmer School District in 1948.

Palmer Lake Elementary closed in 1980 and underwent major remodeling, adding a lobby, classrooms, and a gym in 1986. A cafeteria was added in 1992 and a conference room in 2004.

Jadomski listed several annual activities at the school, among them a July 4 run, a Santa breakfast, a senior Thanksgiving lunch and Walk Your Child to School Day.

The student population is 355, with two sections for

each grade except for three sections of second grade. Students engage in such programs as Every Child a Writer, Every Child a Reader, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) engineering programs, the Cat's Meow Choir, and a band.

Jadomski said that she is most proud of the fact that the school was rated as "approaching its goals" in the 2011-12 school year, and was rated as "meets" in 2012-13. This rating applies to student achievement, academic growth, and academic growth gaps. In the area of academic growth gaps in writing, the school exceeds its goal.

Review of ballot issues

Board of Education liaison John Magerko reported that the official bluebook explaining ballot initiatives had been mailed to district voters and encouraged everyone to read it carefully to make an informed decision before casting a ballot.

Magerko said that the intention of Amendment 66 is to bring all districts up to a certain level through the use of personal income tax funds. The mill levy override (MLO) would use increased personal property tax funds to improve local schools, thus keeping the funding in the district.

The board is communicating with all segments of the district to inform voters about the possible impact of passage of either or both initiatives, Magerko said.

Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wangeman further explained the ballot initiatives, saying that the state currently has a flat income tax rate of 4.63 percent. If Amendment 66 were to pass, the first \$75,000 of income would be taxed at 5 percent, while anything over \$75,000 would

be taxed at 5.9 percent. The hope is to generate about \$1.1 billion for K-12 education at a time when school funding is losing ground to increased spending on Medicaid and other programs.

The intention is for these dollars to be allocated based on a number of factors, including percentage of at-risk students, English Language Learners, and free/reduced-cost lunch participants. At-risk students would be provided with free preschool services and free all-day kindergarten to help prepare them for first grade.

Wangeman said that due to the relatively small number of disadvantaged students in the district, for each \$1 of additional taxes paid by residents, the district would receive about 42 cents. District 38 would be the second-lowest funded district in the state, but the funding per pupil would increase by about \$350 per year.

Magerko commented that receiving increased funding through Amendment 66 would rob the district of local control, because the state would determine to which schools and which programs the funds would be allocated, whereas an MLO would guarantee that all funding would remain local. He also pointed out that the district is not required to utilize the entire maximum MLO funding each year.

Committee for Political Activity Chair Cori Tanner encouraged everyone to inform themselves thoroughly before voting.

Tanner provided a first reading of the amended by-laws for the committee, to include assessments and evaluations of Universal Improvement Plans (instead of School Improvement Plans) and assessment of the district evaluation system for teachers and principals. One principal will be added to the committee for the latter activity.

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The District Accountability Advisory Committee meets at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. Locations vary. The next meeting will be held on Nov. 12 in the library of Lewis-Palmer Elementary School, 1315 Lake Woodmoor Drive, Monument.

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

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