

its position in the 92nd percentile in math. It meets goals in reading, writing and science. Academic growth goals were also met.

The school approaches its goals in Academic Growth Gaps. Those on free/reduced-price lunch, disabled, ELL, and students needing to catch up (those rated unsatisfactory or needing three years to attain proficiency) were approaching the goal in reading and writing. Minority students met the goals for reading and writing and students needing to catch up met goals in math.

The school exceeds goals in graduation rate, dropout rate, and Colorado ACT scores.

Gabel explained that determining growth scores for Palmer Ridge is complicated by the fact that the school has had only two graduating classes thus far, thereby offering fewer data.

He also pointed out that many of the students who are lagging behind lack an IEP or Response to Intervention services and therefore have less academic support than those in the special education program.

Gabel recommended that all teachers be informed of unsatisfactory performance by students entering the school so that they may be more closely monitored during the first semester of high school and provisions may be made to provide extra support.

Gabel also said that some students fail to appreciate the importance of TCAP scores in their academic record. He is encouraging parents to stress their importance and is providing some extra privileges to students who score proficient in various areas of study and granting an extra one-fourth credit. A rating of proficient also appears on a student's transcript. Special Education students who demonstrate strong growth from one year to the next are also recognized.

As part of Gabel's action plan for 2012-13, a pilot group of students struggling in math will be placed in a Transitional Algebra class that meets daily. For those struggling with reading, a steering committee will submit a plan to literacy coordinator Caryn Collette for reading across the spectrum of subjects. He also said that teachers need better professional development in the area of reading.

**Lewis-Palmer High School UIP**

Lewis-Palmer High School Principal Sandi Brandl explained the UIP for Lewis-Palmer High School. The

school meets its goals in academic achievement and growth and also in academic growth gaps in math. Trends at the school include an improvement among those with IEPs. The school met three of eight targets in growth gaps. Students needing to catch up are the primary weakness in this area.

Brandl said three action plans are in place to improve the school's scores. The special education program will be restructured and paraprofessionals (paras) will be in classrooms working with general education teachers. The high school math curriculum at Lewis-Palmer will be vertically and horizontally realigned to avoid duplication.

Finally, study halls will be structured in such a way that freshmen and sophomores may receive intervention during study hall. The study halls will be divided into math/science and social studies/English. In this way students may receive any extra help needed without missing class time.

**Palmer Lake Elementary School UIP**

Palmer Lake Elementary School Principal Julie Jadomski reported on the unique challenges faced by the teachers at her school, where 35 percent of the student body qualifies for a free/reduced-price lunch, up 6 percent from last year. Palmer Lake Elementary is the only school in the district to receive Title I funds because of this, and the additional funds are being used to provide additional literacy instruction.

Teachers at Palmer Lake Elementary are striving to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each student and to create an individual learning plan for each. This plan will follow the student throughout his or her elementary school career and allows for active monitoring and appropriate assistance as needed.

An additional program unique to Palmer Lake Elementary is the Every Child a Writer and Every Child a Reader program, stressing literacy from the earliest age and applying it across all fields of study.

**Legislative update**

School Board liaison John Magerko reported on actions taken by the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) to influence legislative activity on the state level during this year's session. Representatives of CASB are working with legislators to construct a new funding formula for schools triggered by the passage of a ballot initiative to provide more funding for K-12 education.

CASB will also continue to encourage funding of the Building Excellent Schools Today grant program in support of capital improvements. Such grants have funded recent improvements to Lewis-Palmer Middle School and Palmer Lake Elementary School.

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The District Accountability Advisory Committee meets at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. Locations vary. The March meeting will be held on March 12 at Monument Academy, 1150 Village Ridge Point, Monument.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at [harriethalbig@ocn.me](mailto:harriethalbig@ocn.me).

*Special Education Advisory Committee, Feb. 13*

**Committee learns of physical education opportunities**

By Harriet Halbig

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of Lewis-Palmer School District 38 learned of physical education opportunities for students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) at its Feb. 13 meeting.

Adaptive Physical Education teacher Dena Sikole explained the district's program in detail. Students have opportunities to participate in equine activities, bowling, ice skating, swimming, and laser tag. All activities are funded by grants. Sikole said that parents had often requested that gymnastics also be offered, and Sundance Studio owner Steve Clowes offered the use of his studio and staff to provide this opportunity.

Clowes said that gymnastics training offers a variety of advantages to special education students. Among these are the improvement of body awareness, strength, balance, confidence, and flexibility. As an individual activity, students also enjoy one-on-one attention as needed.

Clowes showed a slide presentation demonstrating the activities offered at his studio.

The children of a number of committee members have participated in this program. They all found it valuable. Some members suggested that the studio group students by age rather than experience and offer classes with fewer students.

Clowes said that he and his wife, Kathy, who coaches high school gymnastics, find this activity to be very rewarding and will continue to offer it in the future. In response to questions, Sikole said that she has distributed information about Special Olympics activities to district parents in the past, but has not had enough response to initiate a program in the Tri-Lakes area. Individual students may participate if they wish to do so.

She also said that she has had conversations with the

local YMCA.

Sikole said that schools rotate according to which students would attend which type of activity.

**Inclusion in the classroom**

District Special Education Parent Liaison Michelle Nay and SEAC Chair Suzanne Faber spoke of their experiences at a recent conference about inclusion of special education students in the general education classroom. Major themes of the conference were the harm of categorizing students by their disabilities instead of emphasizing their capabilities and the concept of inclusion as a civil right.

Conference presenters spoke of the value of parental support throughout school and the need to self-advocate.

Committee members had recently discussed the presence of paraprofessionals (para) with individual students in the classroom and the value of having the para assist all students in the classroom rather than a single individual. In this way, anyone needing assistance may receive it with minimal disruption of class.

Faber said that former Chair Ilanit Benaïm reminded her that the committee had created a document in 2010 regarding transitions from one grade and one school to another, a major focus of this year's group. Faber said that she will incorporate the earlier document with the one recently developed and will bring the resulting document to next month's meeting for discussion.

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The Special Education Advisory Committee meets at 6:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the district's Learning Center, 146 Jefferson Street, Monument. The next meeting will be held on March 13.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at [harriethalbig@ocn.me](mailto:harriethalbig@ocn.me).

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