

Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education, April 17

District will take over high school free lunch program

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer District 38 Board of Education voted to opt out of the federal free/reduced-price lunch program at the high school level at its April 17 meeting.

When the federal free/reduced lunch program was first explained to the board in the spring of 2012, members expressed concern that the calorie content would be insufficient for high school students, but they agreed to try it during the 2013-14 school year.

Students have been purchasing fewer lunches at the high schools. The board voted to forgo federal funding, continue to provide free/reduced-price lunches at district expense to those who qualify, and offer an expanded a la carte menu.

Board Vice President John Mann said that this action is a good example of local control over school policy and action.

New principal introduced

Incoming superintendent Karin Brofft introduced Kim Blair, incoming principal of Lewis-Palmer Elementary School. Brofft said that Blair was interviewed by three teams as well as interim Superintendent Ted Bauman and herself. Blair is from the Harrison school district and has been meeting with the Lewis-Palmer school's teachers.

Exploratory classes

There was extensive discussion of the subject of exploratory classes at the sixth-grade level. An announcement had been made that these classes would no longer be available in the coming year. Two adults and three students urged reconsideration of the decision.

Board President Mark Pfoff thanked them for their input, and especially for the courage of the students to speak to such a group. He acknowledged that, at the time the decision was made to retain sixth-graders in the el-

ementary schools, the board had committed to maintaining a middle school experience for the sixth-graders by offering these classes.

Pfoff said that times have changed in the intervening years and the resources available at the various elementaries are varied. While noting that the superintendent and administrators made this decision, and not the board, Pfoff said that the board would investigate the decision. Pfoff stressed that the board must view the entire district's welfare as it makes decisions.

Bauman said that he was concerned at the unequal opportunities at the various schools and the ability to opt out of physical education and technology classes. (It was later learned that sixth-graders will now be scheduled to take a music class, art, PE, and technology and still have access to a limited number of other options.)

The costs of new assessments

Director of Assessment and Gifted Education Lori Benton presented the third in her series of reports about the new assessments beginning this year.

The cost at the district level for these assessments would be about \$133,000 for the tests and related software, \$7,000 for Mastery Manager, and an annual \$20,000 in computer costs.

Additional expenses would include \$17,000 for temporary employees to proctor the tests and maintain the computers, \$3,000 for substitutes, and many hours of time on the part of the administrative staff.

In addition to dollar amounts, Benton said that there are many ramifications during the testing itself, such as loss of availability of computer labs, loss of instructional time, extensive planning time, and the disruption caused by students being pulled out of class to take the tests.

In an ideal world, Benton said, the schools would have assessment labs, whether mobile or fixed, and state-of-the-art computers that could connect to a wireless system. Also, there would be support personnel who would administer the tests and analyze the results, technological support at each location, and training to bridge the gap between the current pencil and paper teaching techniques in use and the new technological testing techniques.

Current plans call for the use of retrofitted hardware, use of instructional coaches and assistant principals to assist with the testing, creation of a director of curriculum and a professional development position, and increased training regarding testing, scheduling, and computer support.

Benton proposed the development of an "assessment dashboard" including assessments and results, updated quarterly and posted on the district website. There also would be an annual assessment calendar available in August and a September presentation on results of the tests administered during the previous spring.

In response to questions, Benton said the results of the computerized testing will not be available sooner than those of previous tests. She also said that the state requires that a minimum of 95 percent of the students participate in the testing. Were this not the case, the accreditation of the district could be threatened.

Pfoff commented that he felt the students should spend more time in the classroom rather than in assessments. Benton responded that the only way to change the requirement would be through legislation.

Student support system

Director of Exceptional Student Services Mary Anne Fleury reported on the use of the Multi-Tiered System of Support in the schools. This system emphasizes the role of adults in the learning environment, encouraging general education teachers to alter their teaching techniques to include students of all abilities.

Under this system, students would only be pulled out of the general education classroom to deal with behavioral issues or serious deficits in their knowledge.

Fleury said that her team is determining what professional development is needed to ensure that consistent language is used at all levels to describe a student's needs and accomplishments.

Bauman commented that the use of this system is closing many growth gaps.

The board approved lists of contracts to be renewed and contracts not to be renewed.

Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wangeman explained the status of a number of minor funds within the district budget in advance of presentation of the budget at the May meeting. These funds included Trust and Agency



Above: High school students progressing to Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) national competition were introduced. From left are Courtney Bushnell (teacher and advisor at Palmer Ridge), Palmer Ridge students Ian Gerchow, Cole Hurford, and Emily Cahalane, Lewis-Palmer students Mikaela Harvey, Sommer Briddon, Cody Leeper, and Michaela Smith, and Mike Diamond (marketing teacher and DECA advisor). Photo by Harriet Halbig.



Above: Prairie Winds Elementary Students performed their original folk tale for the board. From left are Noah Sailer, Amelia Saffold, Riley Jones, and Lindsay Jenson. Photo by Harriet Halbig.

Funds (which fund such groups as the Student Council), proceeds of fundraising, building reserve fund (consisting of cash in lieu of land payments from the county), the pupil activities fund resulting from gate receipts and sports fees, the bond redemption fund, and the insurance reserve fund.

In planning for the 2014-15 school year, Wangeman said that the district is monitoring the ages of new students and maintaining a list of classes that may grow to a size that would require hiring of a new teacher. About six classrooms at the elementary level would be on the list.

Bauman commented that it's difficult to set a standard class size, saying that required registration for classes at the middle and high school levels makes it easier to monitor progress. He also said that a minimum number of students must register for each specific advanced placement class in order to support the hiring of a teacher.

Because of the fluid nature of the student count, the board has given the superintendent authority to hire three to five teachers in August to respond to changes in the student count.

Bauman announced that there will be a memorial service for Don Breese, former district superintendent, principal, and coach, at 2 p.m. June 1 at Lewis-Palmer High School. Breese passed away in March.

Palmer Ridge High School business teacher Courtney Bushnell and Lewis-Palmer High School marketing teacher Mike Diamond introduced students who will be competing on a national level for the Distributive Education Clubs of America. They said that 50 to 150 students compete on the state level in each category and only the top 5 continue to the national level. The competition consists of a written test, role playing, and case studies.

Prairie Winds Elementary School Principal Aileen Finnegan introduced members of a gifted education class who performed their original folk tale about why the school's classrooms have no doors.

The Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer D-38 meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month in the district's Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting will be on May 15.

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

A Gift of Time Specializing in Residential Cleaning

Overwhelmed?
Want your home spic and span?



Call Stacy today! (719) 930-2178

Weekly • Bi-weekly • Monthly • Move-outs • Move-ins.

THE FINEST HOMES, SERVICE & RESULTS



GLENEAGLE GEM
* Unique Home on Golf Course* 4Bed/
4Bath/ 2Car* Quality & Comfort* Huge
Rooms* Vaulted Great Room/ Sun
Room/ Loft* 2 Master Bedrooms* Wood
Burning Fireplace* Move-in-Ready*
SD-20* 2,984 Sq. Ft.* \$340,000*



JACKSON CREEK
* Stunning* Classic Homes Contemporary
Rancher* 4Bed/4Bath/3Car* Huge Master/
Gourmet Kitchen* Office/ Rec Room/ Wet
Bar* Perfect Condition* European Influ-
ence* Top Quality* 3,576 Sq. Ft.* Pano-
ramic Mtn. Views* SD-38* \$450,000*



ON WOODSTONE PARK
* Ashcroft 2-Story* Next to Huge Park*
3Bed/3Bath/3Car* 4,500 Square Feet*
Perfect Condition* Light/Bright* Great
Room/ Office/ Formal Living/Dining* Pri-
vate Yard w/BB Court* Mountain Views*
Unfinished Lower* SD-20* \$390,000*



GET OUT OF HERE!!
* Incredible Mountain Retreat* Freemont
Co* 3Bed/3Bath* 3,817 Square Feet* On
175 Acres* Includes exclusive lease: 640
Acres State Land* Main Level Master*
Custom Finishes* Views Everywhere* PV
Solar System* Horses OK* \$550,000*



MARK RUDOLPH
(719) 492-3974 Cell

It's not about the many homes I've Sold,
It's all about my Clients!
Call me to discuss how I can help you!

Shields
ERA REAL ESTATE