

D-38 District Accountability Advisory Committee, April 8

# Most requirements met or exceeded

By Harriet Halbig

Assessment and Gifted Education Director Lori Benton gave a final report on Unified Improvement Plans (UIPs) at the April 8 meeting of the Lewis-Palmer School District 38 District Accountability Advisory Committee. In previous meetings, the committee had discussed the UIPs of each district school. This final presentation involved the district-wide plan.

The district exceeds state requirements in academic achievement, graduation rate, and postsecondary and workforce readiness. It meets requirements in academic growth, overall academic growth gaps, and English language development and attainment.

Benton said that the district is accredited with distinction, indicating that the district earned more than 80 of a total 100 points in its overall evaluation. During the year ending June 30, 2013, the district scored 86 points, its highest score to date. Contributing to this total were 35 of 35 points for postsecondary and workforce readiness and 14.7 out of 15 points for academic achievements.

Among the few weaknesses were reading and math for students with disabilities, which were rated as "approaching," and writing among students with disabilities, which was rated as "does not meet."

Benton said that within these areas there was still improvement from the previous year, with several categories rising from "does not meet" to "approaching." The purpose of the growth gaps improvement plan is to bring unsatisfactory performance up to grade level within two years, which is very difficult. She said that "growing" a student by more than 60 percent in a year is very challenging. Consequently, goals are set lower so they are more attainable.

Also, she said, the district does not have funding for summer school for all students.

There was an addendum to the plan for gifted education for the first time in this plan. Benton said that growing students who already exceed requirements can be challenging and requires constant attention.

The data upon which the program is based are received in September following the end of the school year addressed. During the year the data are analyzed and a new plan is sent to the Colorado Department of Education by April 15. The committee is required to review the plans and approve their submission to the state.

In a related matter, Benton showed the committee some sample questions from the upcoming assessments that will be administered online later in April. She pointed out that the

students will need to learn to use new technology to undergo these tests and that some will be able to attend demonstrations in advance of the testing.

### Legislative report

Board of Education liaison John Magerko distributed some written materials regarding discussions and legislation on the state level. Among these was a letter from Paul Lundeen of the state Board of Education regarding whether Colorado should participate in the use of federal Common Core standards in its curriculum.

Lundeen wrote that Colorado's standards are and have been more rigorous than the Common Core and that the state should continue to adhere to this higher standard. Consequently, legislation known as the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids of 2008 called for development of higher standards in 10 areas. The state board adopted these standards in 2009.

As a condition of becoming a member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and using its tests, Colorado was required to adopt Common Core in English/language arts and math. The state continues to maintain the autonomy to adopt its own curriculum in these and other areas. The development of curriculum in Colorado is the responsibility and right of districts.

The state Board of Education in 2012 requested that the state be allowed to create its own assessments to evaluate the achievement of Colorado students. The General Assembly, however, voted that the PARCC assessment must be used.

Lundeen said that the time involved in administering this assessment is staggering and said that it would be preferable to have Colorado lead the country in its rigorous standards rather than compare itself to other districts nationwide.

### Budget and security report

Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wangeman reported briefly on projected revenues and expenses for the 2014-15 school year.

She said that projected district revenues for the coming year would be \$2.09 million, which would include \$631,000 for a projected 100 new students, an increase in per pupil revenue of \$176, and use of current building reserves to complete some projects underway. An anticipated surplus of \$772,000 from 2013-14 would complete this total.

Expenses for the same period would include \$729,770 for compensation, \$250,000 for the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA), \$57,000 for health insurance, \$30,000 for classified positions in the home-

school academy and Lewis-Palmer High School, \$768,000 for the addition of several full-time teachers and instructional coaches and to compensate of loss of Title I funding, \$118,000 to fund the position of a director of curriculum, \$12,000 for a new night security position, and \$100,000 for instructional technology, maintenance, grounds, and utilities.

This should allow for a surplus of revenues over expenditures of \$33,861.

Regarding safety and security, Wangeman said that the administrative council had determined that communications is the primary weakness in the district's security system, causing delays in response in crisis situations.

It was determined that there were too few radios in the district and that reception is weak in some areas. Each school now has one or two Command radios used to communicate with the district administration. Schools also have some internal radios, but not all departments are covered. Also, Lewis-Palmer High School is on the VHF frequency, while the district is on UHF.

The board voted at its March meeting to purchase 114 radios and three repeaters (at Prairie Winds, Bear Creek, and Lewis-Palmer High school) to improve emergency preparedness. This would provide sufficient radios to equip custodians, teachers and kitchen personnel. The total cost of the radios and repeaters will be \$69,612. Training will be provided to all individuals who will be using the devices.

Wangeman further reported that planning is underway to improve evacuation and lockdown training and to require after-action reports following any security incident.

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The District Accountability Advisory Committee usually meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Due to end of school year activities, however, the May

meeting will be held on May 6 at the district Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument.

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



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