Committee receives performance data, introduction to Unified Improvement Plans

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D-38 District Accountability Advisory Committee received advance information on the District Performance Framework and Unified Improvement Plans for 2017-18 before reviewing the IUPs of the district and individual schools.

Director of Secondary Learning Services Lori Benton explained the purpose of the District Performance Framework, based on last year’s test scores. She explained that the areas for rating were academic achievement, academic growth, and postsecondary and workforce readiness. The postsecondary and workforce readiness area includes graduation rate and ACT scores. The ACT was taken by juniors over the past several years and is used by colleges to determine acceptance. Beginning this year, the SAT will be administered instead, with the PSAT offered first.

She explained that all related documents are color coded (green, yellow, and red) to indicate “meets,” “yellow” to indicate “approaching,” and red to indicate “does not meet.” Only the areas indicated in red or yellow require an improvement plan.

The district is accredited with distinction, with low participation in the tests. Although the federal government still requires 95 percent participation in testing, the state offered waivers in the event students declined to have students take a test. Therefore, although the district’s accreditation remains high, it must develop an improvement plan to increase participation.

Most important is that the committee is able to evaluate growth is by generation of reliable data. Data and accountability are vital, she said.

The Unified Improvement Plan Process consists of gathering data, describing trends, setting performance targets, and identifying strategies for improving outcomes through the use of benchmarks. Improvement should be evaluated at least quarterly.

The District Performance Framework can be viewed on the district website, lewishampton.org.

Safety and Security update

Chief of Security Operations Lisa Coates outlined his plans for his new position and department. His primary vision is to provide a safe environment in which students and faculty are free to concentrate on learning without fear of violence or disruptions. To achieve this, he will coordinate and oversee drills at all locations, train faculty and staff, act as liaison with local law enforcement, and assist in threat assessments.

Coates said that he intends to add a security pres- ence at the elementary and middle school levels and to examine and improve such aspects of security as cam er a surveillance, which of individuals have access to schools and students, and improved communication.

He also wishes to improve communication with par ents and the community. One aspect of improving communication would be to standardize announcements that would be used in the stadium or school when there is a need for evacuation or other action so that misunder standings could be avoided.

Legislative update

Board Liaison John Magerko reported on trends at the state level, reminding committee members that the Col orado legislature is starting soon. One aspect of state acade mic standards this year is invite educators and the public to make their opinions known.

The Colorado Association of School Boards is continuing its efforts to eliminate unfunded mandates by embarking on a new initiative called Give Us Liberty or Give Us Funding. Unfortunately, trends in the state budget imply that state funding might decrease and the need will need to remain innovative in funding the schools.