



**EAST OTERO SCHOOL DISTRICT R-1**  
301 RATON AVENUE  
LA JUNTA, COLORADO 81050

**BOARD WRAP-UP**

**Board of Education Meeting**  
**October 23, 2023**

1. **ROLL CALL** – Ayala, Backes, Derbigny and Leyba. Director Bickel was absent.
2. **PUBLIC HEARING TO REVIEW THE UNIFIED IMPROVEMENT PLAN**  
There was no public feedback or comments on the Unified Improvement Plan.
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
4. **AUDIENCE**  
Lisa Pantoya, thanked Mr. Grasmick for allowing the 2A for LJ committee to have a tailgating event at the last home football game.
5. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA – AGENDA APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
  3. **CONSENT AGENDA**
    - A. **Personnel Approval**
      - James Lopez - New Hire as Junior High Boys Basketball Head Coach for the 2023-2024 season
      - Katie Morales - New Hire as Custodian for the 2023-2024 school year
      - Raymond Ricard IV - New Hire as Maintenance Technician (HVAC) for the 2023-2024 school year
      - Christopher Rodriguez - New Hire as Custodian for the 2023-2024 school year
  4. **FINANCIAL REPORT**
    - A. **Financial Report added**
6. **CONSENT AGENDA - APPROVED CONSENT AGENDA WITH THE REMOVAL OF POLICY LBD**
  - A. **Personnel Approval**
    - Amy Estrada - New Hire as a Paraprofessional at the Intermediate School for the 2023-2024 school year
    - McKinna Cuckow - New Hire as a Paraprofessional at S.E.A.L. Academy for the 2023-2024 school year
    - Robert Peteque - Resignation as Custodian effective 9-14-23
    - Jack Waring - New Hire as the Technology Website Coordinator for the 2023-2024 school year
    - Katie Morales - New Hire as Custodian for the 2023-2024 school year
    - Raymond Ricard IV - New Hire as Maintenance Technician (HVAC) for the 2023-2024 school year
    - Christopher Rodriguez - New Hire as Custodian for the 2023-2024 school year
  - B. **Approve Additional Out-of-District Students for the 2023-2024 School Year**
  - C. **Rescind Revised Regulation LBD-R on First/Revised/Final Reading**
  - D. **Approval of District Advisory Council's Master Action Plan and Membership List for 2023-2024**
  - E. **Approve Building Accountability Committee Members for 2023-2024 School Year**
7. **FINANCIAL REPORT -**

Heather Huckaby, Business Manager, shared the 2023-2024 First Quarter Financial Report. She reviewed the General Fund which shows a negative balance of \$57,472.00. Ms. Huckaby stated revenues will be coming in the next couple of months. In looking at the report, Director Derbigny inquired as to how more than 100% of a budget line can be spent. Superintendent Lovato explained this does happen throughout the year but should even out at the end of the year. Right now, this is not a concern but will be tracked and budget adjustments made in January should take care of some of those things. Director Backes asked how many funding sources the district has. Superintendent Lovato said the bulk of revenue received comes from state equalization and tax revenue. He elaborated by saying food service is reimbursed by the state according to the number of meals served and Title funds are reimbursed-based. He said everything else is state or federally funded. Director Backes commented that this is a fabulous report and made note of the work that has been done to get to this point. She did suggest adding footnotes to explain the numbers in red on the report. No action was taken.
8. **MINUTES** – Minutes of the Regular Meeting on September 25, 2023 **APPROVED AS PRINTED**

**9. PRESENTATIONS**

**Intermediate School:**

Claudia Apodaca, La Junta Intermediate School Principal, said their accountability committee is now referred to as Partners in Education (PIE). The name was changed to create continuity between the elementary schools. She shared that at their last meeting the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) was reviewed and this year's UIP shows a shift moved to academic achievement, with the main focus being on NWEA math and reading growth. She said staff is looking at the data and using it to drive instruction.

Mrs. Apodaca explained it has been decided that this year Intermediate students will have two NWEA testing sessions (beginning and end of year) versus three testing sessions taken last year.

Another UIP goal is to increase student attendance, which is showing growth from last year. Mrs. Apodaca credited the student advocate and district social worker for helping with that.

Focusing on best practices is also a UIP goal. This was also a suggestion that resulted from the S-CAP (Student-Centered Accountability Program) review. Mrs. Apodaca said professional development regarding engagement is being looked at. Also, the district's strategic priorities revisions are being considered.

CMAS participation numbers increased from last year at the Intermediate School. Mrs. Apodaca shared informational brochures explaining the purpose of the CMAS assessment were sent home to parents in order to encourage more participation. She said she felt this parent outreach made a difference.

The NWEA scores remained flat from last year to this year. Mrs. Apodaca said she is looking forward to this year's data. She stated the NWEA assessment format is similar to the CMAS assessment format and feels this is beneficial to the students.

The DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessment beginning of year data showed 64% of 3rd grade students are at or above level, 53% of 4th grade student at or above level, 57% of 5th grade students at or above level and 77% of 6th grade students at or above level.

Mrs. Apodaca reviewed enrollment numbers at the Intermediate School. There are 108 3rd graders, 103 4th graders, 98 5th graders and 96 6th graders.

Director Derbigny asked how many years the NWEA assessment has been administered. Mrs. Apodaca said this is the second year for the test. Director Derbigny asked if there are parents who opt out their children from the CMAS assessment at the Intermediate School level. Mrs. Apodaca said parents have that option if they choose. Director Derbigny also asked why the middle of year NWEA testing is being discarded. Mrs. Apodaca said it is one less assessment for students to take and staff will be progress monitoring. Director Backes asked if the data is showing the cohort (same class year to year). She feels cohort data is more valuable to see and wondered if that is available for CMAS data as well. Superintendent Lovato said CMAS does not show cohort data. Director Backes feels that in order to be strategic, the district needs to look at cohort data. Director Ayala commented that beginning, middle and end of year assessments have been administered due to not having enough data. She voiced a concern that middle of year testing was meant to catch students who may be falling behind and now it is not administered. Mrs. Apodaca said regular check ins are taking place. Director Ayala said she just wants to make sure nothing falls by the wayside due to not have middle of year testing. Director Derbigny asked what students who have opted out of CMAS testing do while the rest of the students are testing. Mrs. Apodaca said they are also taking classroom tests in another room. Director Leyba said the district has strategic plans through the S-CAP process, the UIP as well as the Generation Schools Network coach.

**Dr. Sam Schneider – Colorado Department of Education:**

Dr. Sam Schneider with the Colorado Department of Education came to the Board meeting to share the Colorado State context for East Otero School District and La Junta Intermediate School's performance and also to ensure clarity and support. This is the Intermediate School's fourth year in Turnaround Status. He also wanted to clear up misconceptions regarding school performance and accountability and answer any questions there may be. Dr. Schneider talked about the accountability framework overview and shared students are assessed on academic achievement and academic growth. He said once a school has been on the clock for five years, the district is required to go before the State Board. Regarding support, Dr. Schneider said he will be supporting the district from the state level.

Dr. Schneider stated there are five options the State Board of Education can select from after year 5: a) full or partial management by a public/private entity; b) conversion to a community school; c) innovation status; d) conversion to a charter school; e) school closure. After the board directs action, the district continues to receive ongoing support, monitoring and accountability. Full or partial management is where a consulting group will work with the school and district leaders to make things happen. Conversion to a community school is a school that tries to have everything that is not instruction available such as family engagement activities. Innovation status is where a school get approval from school board and state board to have waivers that allow them to deviate from state policies. The State Board of Education can direct schools to use one or more than one of these options.

Director Leyba asked if there will be additional ratings added. Dr. Schneider said yes there are a couple more metrics to be added and currently there is a statewide task force reviewing the state's accountability system. Director Derbigny asked if this will begin at the beginning of year five or the end of year five. Director Leyba said she understands the point of having help when a school is on the clock for this long to get more tools to become successful. She said it seems to be similar to things we are doing now. Dr. Schneider said the work that has been done with Generation Schools Network (GSN) will be formalized. Superintendent Lovato said when the Intermediate became year two, GSN was the original partner to start the process. GSN has been the state approved partner for years two and three. The state review panel will look at all things the district is using. The S-CAP process comes in and tells us what they see and the state review panel will give an order to follow.

The district will submit an EASI application to receive state funding for improvement. Dr. Schneider recommended a district strategic planning route and accountability pathways grant.

There will be a state review panel visit in the spring of 2024. This is a panel made up of Colorado educators who will come to the Intermediate School and observe classrooms, interview staff and students. They will also assess the five pathways that would best serve the school community.

Dr. Schneider reviewed the Intermediate School's testing results in depth. He also looked at the school's growth and achievement scores. In looking at the data Dr. Schneider referred to the cut points. Director Leyba asked him to explain what cut points are. He said cut points are the cut off points to move between tiers in the accountability system. Dr. Schneider highlighted the growth the Intermediate has made.

Director Backes asked if partnering on the EASI grant means paying a consultant and wondered if it could be used for curriculum. Dr. Schneider said there may be some allowable funds to purchase high quality curriculum materials. She said she is thinking about some of the schools going through the year 4 process who are using competency based education systems. Dr. Schneider said there is a new rigorous action design pathway.

Director Leyba thanked Dr. Schneider for answering the Board's questions and for saying "we" when speaking instead of saying "your school" and considering himself to be part of our team.

Director Derbigny asked how many schools in Colorado have reached year five. Dr. Schneider said he doesn't have that number readily available but has link of how many have gone to state board hearings. He said he does know it is has not been very many.

## **10. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Superintendent Lovato shared the financial audit will begin in December. The journal entries and adjustments are still in process, but things should be ready for Mr. Farmer, the auditor, to come. Getting the salaries to come out of the right budget lines is also being worked on.

Building updates:

*Jr/Sr High School:* the roof is an issue and will have to be addressed.

*Tiger Trades Academy:* floors are being installed and some of the students are helping with that as work study.

*Intermediate School:* Superintendent Lovato said he is working on getting someone to paint the building and cupulas will be included in that.

*Primary School:* everything seems to be working fine with the plumbing.

The scoreboard foundation has been poured and requires a 28-day cure time. Using it for football this year is out, however, some cool things will happen for graduation.

Richard Romero, Safety Coordinator, shared an informational video showcasing the Emergent3 program. This is a program the district will use in case of an emergency which will help facilitate accuracy and speed in response. Mr. Romero said he appreciates the chat portion of this program. He also shared this year safety has been normalized and lock down drills happen quarterly. Director Backes clarified the only people using this app will be staff and emergency personnel and Mr. Romero said that is correct. Director Ayala commented on this program allowing staff to speak to each other in real time. Mr. Romero said this program is just an added tool for safety and said the chat feature is only for pertinent information. Director Leyba asked if another reunification exercise will happen. Mr. Romero said he would like the I love you guys foundation to come to the district for a training, however, that is around a \$15,000 expense. Mr. Romero took a moment to remind parents to keep their information updated and current.

The security systems are updated annually. This year there were no deficiencies. Cameras and access control are working well. Mr. Romero commended the buildings for their taking safety seriously.

Director Derbigny asked about the current enrollment numbers. As of today, there are 1339 students enrolled. She asked if there have been any Covid cases. Superintendent Lovato said there has been a few cases as well as strep and other illnesses going around. Director Derbigny asked if all the water fillers have been installed and Superintendent Lovato said they just arrived today. He also shared the materials to repair the Tiger Trades Academy gym should be arriving soon as well.

Director Ayala asked if the weather makes a difference on the concrete curing for the scoreboard foundation. Superintendent Lovato said the concrete will be covered and it should be fine. She asked where things are at with the bus barn. Superintendent Lovato said access has been gained from the east side and the best routes for turns are being figured out. Director Ayala asked if the problem of parking on the east side of the gym has been solved. Superintendent Lovato said deliveries and service techs are still parking there but no staff do. She also asked if there is anything to report regarding the HVAC project. Superintendent Lovato said the project is complete but programming is still in progress. He said once the heat gets turned on and the day becomes warm, the switch over to cooling isn't easy. Director Leyba asked about the air conditioning. Superintendent Lovato said most have refrigerated air, but the Junior/Senior High shop and Tiger Trades Academy gym both have swamp coolers. He would like to replace those with refrigeration units.

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Approve the Purchase of Teacher Computers (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$37,470.00 AS PRESENTED**
- b. Approve the Purchase of MacBook Pro Computers for TTA (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$15,499.50 AS PRESENTED**
- c. Approve Intergovernmental Agreement for School Resource Officer (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$30,000.00 AS PRESENTED**
- d. Approve the Purchase of a Wrestling Mat (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$12,108.54 AS PRESENTED**

**12. BOARD COMMENTS**

- ✓ Superintendent Lovato recognized Mr. Romero for his hard work and claimed he is invaluable to the district. He is always willing to help out where needed.
- ✓ Director Backes said in respect to asking for whatever the item is, does any new staff orientation include ways to ask for funds. Superintendent Lovato said yes and between \$30,000 to \$50,000 was invested in band this year. She said the band is sounding great. Director Backes also extended condolences to Crowley County and the loss of their student.

**13. ADJOURNMENT – MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:22 p.m.**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**DEE LEYBA, President**                      **ANGELA AYALA, Vice President**  
**DARLENE DERBIGNY, Secretary/Treasurer**                      **KIDRON BACKES, Director**  
**KRISTIN BICKEL, Director**