



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

**BOARD WRAP-UP**

**Board of Education Meeting**  
**March 24, 2025**

1. **ROLL CALL** – A. Ayala, S. Ayala, Hines and Kolomitz. Leyba was absent.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **AUDIENCE**  
Kinsley Mayo and Livia Smith, La Junta Junior/Senior High School students, spoke to the Board about their concerns with the new attendance kiosks being implemented.
4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA – AGENDA APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
  2. **CONSENT AGENDA**
    - **Olivia Lewis - Resignation as Math Intervention Teacher at the Junior/Senior High School effective May 23, 2025**
    - **Emily Palmer - Resignation as Classroom Teacher at Tiger Trades Academy effective March 24, 2025**
    - **Matthias Inguito - Resignation as Maintenance Technician effective March 31, 2025**
  9. **EXECUTIVE SESSION ADDED**
5. **CONSENT AGENDA - APPROVED CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED**
  - A. **Personnel Approval**
    - James Osborn - New Hire as Science Teacher at the Junior/Senior High School for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year
    - Cassie Brusuelas - Resignation as 6th Grade Science Teacher at the Intermediate School effective May 23, 2025
    - Rick Salazar - Retirement as Elective Teacher at Tiger Trades Academy effective May 23, 2025
    - Heather Nelson - Resignation as Business Manager effective March 31, 2025
    - Olivia Lewis - Resignation as Math Intervention Teacher at the Junior/Senior High School effective May 23, 2025
    - Emily Palmer - Resignation as Classroom Teacher at Tiger Trades Academy effective March 24, 2025
    - Matthias Inguito - Resignation as Maintenance Technician effective March 31, 2025
6. **MINUTES -**
  - A. Minutes of February 19, 2025, February 24, 2025 and March 5, 2025. **APPROVED AS PRINTED**
7. **PRESENTATIONS –**

**School Safety Update:**  
**Dan Jorgensen - Colorado Department of Education:**  
Dan Jorgensen with the Colorado Department of Education spoke to the Board regarding Board training. The district received an EASI grant and some of that money will provide this training. He said CDE (Colorado Department of Education) is expected to offer local Board training to support the academic outcomes of local education agencies. The program combines effective governance practices along with best practices with school turnaround work. This program will be around 15-20 hours total throughout the year. These can be Board work sessions and/or retreats. Superintendent Blincoe said there are two of the current Board who won't be able to run for re-election and he asked Mr. Jorgensen his thoughts on how to split up this training. Director S. Ayala said she prefers not to do any of this training during the CASB Convention so it doesn't take away any training at the convention. Superintendent Blincoe said this would not interfere with any of the CASB meetings. Mr. Jorgensen said training could begin prior to CASB and then pull in any new Board members. He said he feels it is better to do some of that prior to CASB, which could help with transition. He said two 3-hour sessions should be set up. He prefers not to have a huge gap between meetings (two weeks at the most). The first session covers general principles and the second session would be application of those principles. Director A. Ayala asked how quickly he is thinking on having the first meeting. Mr. Jorgensen said it could be as early as April. Director Hines suggested pushing it to at least May. Director Kolomitz

feels doing it sooner rather than later would be best. He would like to have the current Board in attendance. Director A. Ayala said she would rather have the training sessions sooner than later so the Board will have time to implement what they learn. A Doodle poll will be sent out looking at dates in April and May. Mr. Jorgensen said he is happy to chat with the Board if there are any questions or concerns.

**Sarah Lynch - TNTP:**

Sarah Lynch, with TNTP (Intermediate School's Partial Manager), introduced TNTP to the Board. Ms. Lynch explained TNTP is a nationally recognized leader in education. She said education does not equip every child with the tools they need to thrive as adults and TNTP believes all young people should be equipped to access multiple pathways in order to succeed. She shared the five factors of mobility: academic foundation, career-connected learning, social capital, personal support and civic engagement.

Ms. Lynch said TNTP will partner with administrators, educators and stakeholders to ensure high quality education for every student. There are four areas of strategic planning: Vision Setting and Strategy Development; Instructional Materials Selection and Implementation; Academic Diagnostics and Opportunity Scorecards; and Professional Learning and Coaching. They also have a Comprehensive Leadership Development Strategy.

TNTP has worked with 16 different school districts in Colorado since 2022, as well as the Colorado Department of Education.

Ms. Lynch reviewed the timeline for implementation. In the 2025-2026 school year, there will be monthly step back meetings, leadership support and development, and implementation support for priorities and initiatives. The strategic planning process will be discussed at a later date and Ms. Lynch said the Board will be a part of that.

Director Kolomitz asked if this will be a monthly agenda item. Superintendent Blincoe said Mr. Wilson will update the Board monthly on TNTP and UVA work. Mr. Wilson said staff felt comfortable with TNTP being in the building today and felt the support.

**MTSS Update (H. Romero):**

Hallie Romero, District Social Worker, Skye Sisson, Instructional Coach and Jared Wilson, Chief Academic Officer, gave the Board an update on MTSS. Mrs. Sisson explained that MTSS stands for Multi-Tiered System of Supports which is a framework that schools use to identify and provide targeted support to students who are struggling. The support focuses on academic, behavior, and social and emotional needs.

Mr. Wilson reviewed the RTI (Response to Intervention) process and shared the leadership PLC.

Ms. Romero said the focus is on the “whole child” (academic, behavioral, social-emotional and any other factors that impact the student), is data-driven (data to identify students who need additional support), multi-tiered (tiered system of support) and is considered prevention and intervention (aims to prevent academic and behavioral problems from occurring in the first place).

Mr. Wilson explained the key components: Universal Screening - regularly assessing all students to identify those needing additional support; Multi-Level Prevention System – providing support, starting with high-quality instruction for all students (Tier 1) and then moving to targeted interventions for those students in need (Tier 2 and 3); Data-Based Decision Making – using data to make informed instructional decisions and intervention plans; Collaboration and Communication – fostering collaboration among educators, families and other stakeholders to support the student's needs; Building Capacity – providing professional development and resources for educators to implement MTSS effectively; and Focus on the “Whole Child” – address academic, behavioral, social and emotional needs.

Ms. Romero shared this program is a three-year grant through the Santa Fe Trail BOCES and this is year three of the grant. She said our district is working with other BOCES districts and each district has a different focus.

Mrs. Sisson said our district's focus has shifted with the concerns being seen in the building. She said as staff work with different entities (UVA and TNTP) within the district to build leadership capacity and student experience, she said they are finding a parallel between groups. Mrs. Sisson said UVA (University of Virginia – Arlington) has helped take the steps to identify problems of practice as a district as well as individual buildings and build action plans around them. She said staff is looking forward to continuing to blend the work of all these groups together in order to grow.

Ms. Romero said there are three years' worth of data from the District Capacity Assessment (DCA). She said from this data, the District Implementation Team (DIT) has been established. This team consists of Principals, Ms. Romero, Mr. Wilson and an Instructional Coach. There are also Building Implementation Teams (BIT).

Mrs. Sisson said they are working on the communication plan regarding COMTSS and how it looks in our district.

Ms. Romero stated there are five components of COMTSS and the district is in the beginning phases of the Family School Community Partnership (FSCP) work, there is a deep dive into an activity of keep, start, stop on the different engagements provided by the district.

Mr. Wilson summarized by sharing the next steps for the District Central Hub will be boots on the ground; identifying and streamlining processes for everyday practices; and RTI-academics, behavior, etc. He said one of the major focuses moving forward is making sure our process and procedures are in writing so there is something all staff can refer to for support and resources.

## **8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT -**

### **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Blincoe started by addressing the plan for Ms. Nelson's departure. Her last day will be March 31. He has a meeting with Abacus, whom the district has been working with this year. They are able to handle financial tasks. Ms. Nelson has been working with her department and has been training on some of the items that will be needing to be completed. Superintendent Blincoe said he will be working with the business office this week. He hasn't heard back from the auditor on the audit, but is hoping to hear soon.

He said he has finished up round three of corrections today for the BEST grant. He said in mid-May he will give a presentation to the BEST board and will find out shortly after that if funds are received. Director A. Ayala asked if the BEST grant isn't secured, what is the secondary option. Superintendent Blincoe said re-apply is the option. Another option is to discuss re-applying for roof replacement or to begin the process to build a new school. That process will be about a five-year process. Director A. Ayala asked what will actively be done to address the leaking roof if the BEST grant isn't received. Superintendent Blincoe said nothing. Director A. Ayala asked if the district would pay for the new roof and Superintendent Blincoe suggested that not be an option. She recommended communicating so people understand that the problem isn't being ignored.

There was a double payment a few years back to PERA and they will be refunding \$267,316 to the district. Director Hines asked if the PERA contributions have been made. Superintendent Blincoe said the payment had been made, but it was held up due to some errors. The errors have been corrected and it is now posted.

The district has purchased a new data analysis system, Abre. This helps see real data in real time.

Director Kolomitz asked about the timeline for the budget. Superintendent Blincoe said the budget is approved the last week of June and goes into effect on July 1. He said the budget won't be started until the district finds out what state funds will be received, which won't be until May. Director Kolomitz asked when Superintendent Blincoe will know how many teachers will be needed. He said it will be soon.

Director Kolomitz asked what if the Federal Department of Education goes away. Superintendent Blincoe said the main thing the federal department of education does is Title funding and grants. He said the Colorado Department of Education is wonderful to work with and are very helpful to districts.

### **Chief Academic Officer's Report**

Jared Wilson, Chief Academic Officer, spoke about the new partnership with TNTP. He said he is hopeful for the partnership and is excited to be working with them. On June 9, there will be professional development in Denver with TNTP.

Mr. Wilson said UVA (University of Virginia-Arlington) was here February 26 and 27. With UVA, 90-day plans have been made and continuous work is being made on the "big rocks" (a. ensure effective use and access to high-quality instructional materials for kids; b. establish and build capacity towards a "La Junta Vision of Instruction"). One big thing is how things are shared with teachers. Mr. Wilson said this leads to a focus on building a central hub with standard resources. An alignment with TNTP will occur as well. There will be administration walks/TNTP walks/UVA walks/Teacher walks in the buildings.

Regarding S-CAP (Student-Centered Accountability Project), Mr. Wilson said the on-site review was on March 10 and 11 which was a limited review due to the number of reviewers. The review focused on learning and climate in the district. The positives from the review were the learning climate being safe and welcoming. The CKH (Capturing Kids Hearts) program was mentioned. The areas needing growth are learning dispositions, where students aren't actively engaged in the classroom. Mr. Wilson said he is working with S-CAP to schedule a full panel review in the future. Mr. Wilson said the instructional coaching positions are huge in the district.

Director Kolomitz asked Superintendent Blincoe if the district should continue to participate in S-CAP. He said the district has a lot of irons in the fire with UVA and TNTP and he and Mr. Wilson have discussed putting S-CAP on hold for a year or two. Superintendent Blincoe said he wants the principals to focus on raising academics. He wants to continue the discussion. Mr. Wilson feels it is a benefit for our teachers to go evaluate other districts. He added he is struggling since we don't get the full evaluation.

**9. DISCUSSION -**

**Housing Discussion**

Affordable housing for new teachers was discussed. One of the obstacles in recruiting new teachers to the district could be lack of housing. Director Kolomitz said other districts in the state are purchasing houses/apartments and renting to teachers as part of their recruitment package. Director S. Ayala said one district she spoke with had housing on district land. Director Hines asked if this is something that would be looked at for out-of-area teachers. Superintendent Blincoe said he sees this for new teachers. Director A. Ayala said she wouldn't be able to get behind purchasing homes with taxpayer money. She said the housing market has turned and at this time, there are many rentals available. Superintendent Blincoe asked Director A. Ayala if there is a list of rentals she could share. She said to call the office as the list is updated often.

**Cell Phone Policy (Anxious Generation - Chapter 11)**

Student/staff cell phone use was discussed. Superintendent Blincoe said there is a law going through that will require all districts to have a cell phone policy. He said he wanted to throw this out for discussion and said the time is going to come when the policy arrives. He told the Board some language may need to be added to be specific for our district. Director Kolomitz said he is all for it. Director A. Ayala said she has a teenager in her house and she said at times in order for her teenager to get chores completed requires her phone being taken away. She said there are some teachers who are currently implementing their own classroom cell phone procedures. Director A. Ayala said she is also behind that. Superintendent Blincoe said if this is moved forward there will be a number of steps to go through before anything is implemented. There would also be discussion with administrators, teachers, students and parents.

**K-6 Math Curriculum**

New K-6 math curriculum was discussed. Mr. Wilson said Illustrative Math is the curriculum most being looked at. He said one piece that is different than most is essentially the basics of Illustrative Math is just a free online resource. You have to go through publishers, so it has been determined that Kendal Hunt Publishers captured what the district needs, which is to have hard copies of everything, i.e., teacher manuals and student workbooks. He has been working with Kendal Hunt to see what the resources look like. They do a great job of giving out all those handout resources but they don't do anything on the backside to enhance the online resources of Illustrative Math. There are some other such as Imagine Learning where their expertise is the online systems. Mr. Wilson said he has met with Kendal Hunt to secure a package that will include ELL, special education and community resources, but not having that online portion made Mr. Wilson feel like he didn't want to overstep and possibly working with two publishers. He will continue to research the other publishers. He would like to find a publisher that offers both the hard copies as well as the online resources. There will be in-person training several times throughout the year as well as working with the instructional coaches learning the professional development to share with teachers. Mr. Wilson said the Colorado Department of Education recommends the district hiring a math specialist. He said he would like to get into a March to March mindset where teachers receive new curriculum before the school year ends so they begin the new year with many questions answered. He wants to make sure all the needs are met before he gets a quote for purchase. Director S. Ayala asked if there is an online option where parents can help. Mr. Wilson said he is looking at all options and wants that option. Director S. Ayala asked what the success percentage for Illustrative Math is. Mr. Wilson said he hasn't heard a lot of negative. Director Kolomitz asked if there is a math curriculum that is being used for 7-12 students. Mrs. Foxhoven said it is Math and You. Director Kolomitz said he feels it is important that what math curriculum is chosen integrates well with the 7-12 math curriculum.

**10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a. Approve Revised Policies AC, GBAA, JBB, GCE/GCF, GDE/GDF, JB, JF, GBA, JICDD, JICDE, JFBA, JFBB, JICA, JII, GBEE and JS on First/Revised Reading (Blincoe) **APPROVED ON SECOND/FINAL READING**

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

- b. Share Results of Board Self-Evaluation
- c. Approve Revised Administrative Support Staff Salary Schedule (Blincoe) **MOTION FAILED ON A 3-1 VOTE**
- d. Declare a Critical Shortage (Blincoe) **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
- e. Approve Administrative Staff Employment Renewals - Resolution 2025-1 (Blincoe) **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**

**12. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

- a. Executive Session pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b) to confer with the school district’s attorney for the purpose of receiving legal advice on the Board’s legal rights and obligations in connection with the complaint and grievance procedures set forth in District Policy AC-R-2. **ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 9:22 P.M.; MEETING RECONVENED AT 10:31 P.M.**

**13. BOARD COMMENTS**

- ✓ There were no Board comments.

**14. ADJOURNMENT – MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:32 p.m.**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

*DEE LEYBA, President*                      *ANGELA AYALA, Vice President*  
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