



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

BOARD WRAP-UP

Board of Education Meeting

February 8, 2021

1. **ROLL CALL** – Ayala, Backes, Bickel, Derbigny and Leyba.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – **AGENDA APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
 2. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 - A. **Personnel Approval**
 - **Morgan Simpson - New Hire as Paraprofessional at the Intermediate School for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year**
 7. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - D. **Approve Revised Policy JJJ on First/Revised Reading and Exhibit IKA-E on First/Revised/Final Reading**
 - E. **Approve Purchase of Replacement Coil for Intermediate School HVAC System**
4. **CONSENT AGENDA - APPROVED CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED**
 - A. **Personnel Approval**
 - Rodney Bickel - Retirement as Junior/Senior High School Instructor effective May 28, 2021
 - Fritzie Muniz - New Hire as Custodian at the Primary School for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year
 - Valentina Gutierrez Henriquez - New Hire as Paraprofessional at the Junior/Senior High School for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year
 - Marline Froman - New Hire as Paraprofessional at Tiger Trades Academy for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year
 - Toni Cox - Resignation as Paraprofessional at the Primary School effective January 9, 2021
 - Hope Baylor - New Hire as Paraprofessional at the Primary School for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year
 - Michael Nicklos - Resignation as District Attorney effective May 31, 2021
 - Morgan Simpson - New Hire as Paraprofessional at the Intermediate School for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year
 - B. **Approve Additional Substitute Teachers for the 2020-2021 School Year**
5. **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Merinda Reisch, Business Manager, informed the Board that for the month of January the income was \$1.2 million and expenses were \$1.1 million, which left \$87,544 in the black. **FINANCIAL REPORT APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
6. **MINUTES**

Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on January 11, 2021 and Special Meeting on January 26, 2021. **APPROVED AS PRINTED**
7. **PRESENTATIONS**

Cori Hanson, Chartwells Food Service Director, presented a food service report to the Board. He shared the challenges and successes food service has dealt with.

Some of the challenges have been:

- Changes to the meal program on the State and Federal level
- Food shortages and supply chain issues
- Covid closures and exposure protocols
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- Menu fatigue. Mr. Hanson explained this is due to there being only so many items that can be safely packaged and sent home.
- Adapting to the different service models: 1) Face to Face, 2) Hybrid, and 3) Remote

The successes Mr. Hanson reviewed were:

- Over 533,300 meals have been served since March 2020
- No employees have been laid off and in some schools' staff have been added and are looking for more.
- The CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) program was successfully added. Mr. Hanson explained this program allows snacks during the day.
- Staff, parent, student and community support

Mr. Hanson reviewed the food service fund balance. He explained the fund has a current balance of over \$700,000 and this money can only be used for food service. The increase in revenue is due to the USDA waivers that were implemented due to Covid, which allowed drive-up locations, off-site consumption, weekend meals and holiday and non-school day service. These waivers allowed an increase of 41% in meals served from the previous year. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), which the government is allowing to be used, has a higher reimbursement rate of \$4.31 for lunch compared to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) reimbursement rate of \$3.60. The SFSP also allows 100% of the meals to be claimed for reimbursement, compared to only 89% with CEP (Community Eligibility Provision).

Mr. Hanson also informed the Board the fees the district pays to Chartwells do not change because the district pays a flat fee. This means all the profit goes to the school district, which will be used to purchase new kitchen equipment as all excess funds must be spent on improvements to the program per USDA guidelines. Mr. Hanson also stated the cost to the district in labor for the 533,300 meals served is not higher than the labor cost of the 377,600 meals served. Mr. Hanson said this financial trend will not continue, however, the future is still not clear and the waivers are in place for SFSP to continue until June 30, 2021.

Mrs. Derbigny asked if a big decline of meals being picked up was noticed. Mr. Hanson said the only months there were dips were in July, the end of October and early November. He stated he isn't sure if the dips were from meal fatigue or people who weren't necessarily needing the meals simply staying home as the district switched from hybrid to fully remote in November.

Mr. Hanson praised all of his staff for their hard work and flexibility.

Mrs. Leyba said she wanted to say again that she appreciates everything that the Chartwells staff and the volunteer EOSD staff have done. She reiterated all the rules and regulations food service must follow and stated they have done a really good job at staying up to date on everything.

Mrs. Bickel said people may be coming accustomed to this program. She asked Mr. Hanson how he intends to communicate to the community that this won't be continuing. Mr. Hanson said he has some ideas but needs to wait until June to see what the USDA is going to do. He shared he is concerned that it will be quite a shock to families if it is taken away.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Lovato told the Board the bus barn frame is beginning to be put up. He said he expects the building will go up rather quickly.

All buildings are now face to face learning. Superintendent Lovato said each building has had quarantine issues but there was no panic and protocols and guidelines were followed. He said it is encouraging to keep moving forward. The county recently moved to blue on the Covid dial, which will allow more spectators at events. Superintendent Lovato said staff is currently working on implementing precautions for the increase in spectators and things will be in place for Thursday's athletic events.

The district is working with a new health agency, Willow Tree Counseling, as well as continuing working with Southeast Health Group and Ryon Medical. Superintendent Lovato said he will be offering four clinical visits with a counselor for each staff member which will be paid by grant monies. He said this will be a \$500 benefit per person.

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The district Covid vaccination clinic will be held on Friday, February 12 for any staff member who wishes to receive the shot. Covid testing will begin soon and the test that will be given will be the PCR based tests and not the antigen tests. Superintendent Lovato said testing will help with quarantine times.

The staff gym is being worked on. The exercise bikes, treadmills, and elliptical machines are in and put together. The Pilates equipment is in and Superintendent Lovato said he is hoping by the end of spring break staff will have access.

Superintendent Lovato updated the Board on the turf replacement project that was approved at last month's meeting. While working with the company, it turned out they wanted to charge more for art work. Due to this, he said different companies are being contacted for bids.

Director Leyba asked the Superintendent if he sees mask wearing to be an issue with the increased number of spectators allowed in events. Superintendent Lovato said with an increase in volume, there will be issues. He said each school district is handling it differently. He said the district will do its best, but he doesn't foresee roaming the bleachers to create confrontation. Reminders will be given by the announcer. Director Ayala recommended using the scoreboards to communicate mask wearing requirements. Superintendent Lovato said there are public service announcements that can be shown. Director Derbigny clarified the allowed number being 175. Director Ayala asked if there will still be someone at the door to count how many enter. Superintendent Lovato said tickets will continue to be handed out for contact tracing protocol. There will be separate entrance/exits for visitors. Director Leyba said she is confused with the punitive measures and who implements them. Superintendent Lovato explained the mask mandate is from CDPHE (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment) and CHSAA (Colorado High School Activities Association) set mask wearing as a variance stipulation to allow students to participate. Then the districts are tasked with mask enforcement. Superintendent Lovato told the Board our district is really trying to adhere to the mandate.

Director Leyba inquired if all ESSER 1 funds need to be spent before ESSER 2 funds can be used. Superintendent Lovato said the ESSER 2 application is not open yet. He said he is looking at possibly purchasing a new bus or working on air quality in the buildings with ESSER 2 funds as that will be allowed with approval. ESSER 1 funds to not allow that type of purchase. The district should receive \$1.9 million dollars in ESSER 2 funds.

Director Leyba asked for clarification on the type of Covid tests the district will use. Superintendent Lovato said it is the PCR (molecular) tests and not the Binax (rapid antigen) tests. He explained if a Binax test comes up positive, that require a PCR test as a follow up. The turnaround time for the PCR test is 72 hours, but Superintendent Lovato said the test results should be back in 48 hours.

Director Bickel asked if Superintendent Lovato has received any updates on the bus thefts. He said he has not, but the La Junta Police Department is still working on the case.

Director Derbigny asked if the new staff hired have their licenses. Superintendent Lovato said it depends on the position hired for and the requirements of that position.

9. NEW BUSINESS

a. Superintendent Evaluation Results (Leyba)

The Board had an informal evaluation discussion regarding Superintendent Lovato's performance.

Director Leyba said there hasn't been any significant changes and Superintendent Lovato is doing the best he can. The buildings are being taken care of and Superintendent Lovato understand how funds are required to be spent. She said the biggest topic right now is student achievement, but she feels the decrease can't be placed on the teachers or superintendent. She said the main thing is that we are reaching out to our students. She said if there is something that needs to be addressed, Superintendent Lovato addresses it.

Superintendent Lovato shared the area where he feels weak right now is his relationship with staff. He feels that relationship is being strained somewhat due to him not visiting the buildings and making those connections. He said he is choosing to stay out of the buildings due to Covid. He misses being in the buildings where staff can catch you and visit with you and let you know of their concerns. He also misses relationships with kids and families. Superintendent Lovato also said it is difficult to hold a teacher or a student accountable right now because so much is out of their control. This is an area of improvement

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for him once the barriers are lifted. The other area that he is fearful for is losing some good teachers from the profession. In the last three years, the turnover rate has improved. The Colorado Department of Education is anticipating turnover in all phase of education in record levels. He said it is getting harder to find people to apply for jobs. There are some retirements coming up. Superintendent Lovato said with student performance, the district's accountability with STAR and Dibels testing and in classroom attention is better than it was before.

Director Derbigny asked Superintendent Lovato how often he visited the buildings before the pandemic. He said on a weekly basis, if not more. Now he only visits the buildings when he is asked to of if he needs something. Director Derbigny asked about state assessments. Superintendent Lovato said no decision has been made yet and the state is looking to the federal level for a waiver. He said he thinks there will be a huge opt out movement and any data received over the next two years will be largely unreliable.

Director Backes stated there have been things that we never thought we would have to deal with. She said Superintendent Lovato is thoughtful, shows good responsibility and professionalism. He is not stuck in the moment and is trying to be proactive. Director Backes said she has nothing negative to say about Superintendent Lovato.

Director Ayala asked Superintendent Lovato if he feels the evaluation tool the Board uses is a good measure of what he is doing as a superintendent. She said the evaluation feels the same every time she completes it. Director Ayala asked him if this evaluation tool accurately judges what he does. Superintendent Lovato said his interpretation of an evaluation is it viable, can questions be answered and is communication strong. He said the tool covers the bare minimums of the job. He is more focused on what the Board tells him and said he should be doing things without looking at the box. He said he feeds off conversations he has with the Board and is more focused on the dialogue. Director Ayala says she trusts with verification. She likes to go to the buildings and have conversations with staff to get a feel of things before completing an evaluation, but this year hasn't had access to the buildings. She said she trusts Superintendent Lovato but likes to verify too. She said she is always singing Superintendent Lovato's praises and thinks he does a stand up job. She asked Superintendent Lovato to outline his personal goals and what he would like to achieve before the next school year or the next evaluation.

Director Leyba said in regard to the specific evaluation tool being used, the Board chose that instrument. She said we have to have an evaluation tool that lists the things the superintendent is supposed to be doing. Director Leyba said a Board retreat was planned where Superintendent Lovato would review his individual goals. The retreat was interrupted by the pandemic. She said she monitors the evaluation tool all year and knows Superintendent Lovato addresses each section. Superintendent Lovato said a retreat would be good to get the norms squared away.

Director Bickel thanked Superintendent Lovato for sharing what he believes is his weakness. She reminded him that during the pandemic, he had all staff Zoom meetings to keep staff informed. She said she hear a lot of good things about that.

Director Derbigny said she is glad to have this discussion tonight. She said she understands the background of the evaluation tool and it makes sense.

Superintendent Lovato reminded the Board the SCAP review is on April 13 and he is hoping for face to face, but is not encouraged it will be.

- b. Approve Superintendent Contract (Leyba) **RENEWED SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT TO JUNE 30, 2023 AT THE CURRENT SALARY OF \$105,000.00 PLUS \$1,800.00 FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES.**
- c. Adopt the 2021-2022 Calendar (Lovato) **ADOPTED AS PRESENTED**
- d. Approve Revised Policy JJJ on First/Revised Reading and Revised Exhibit IKA-E on First/Revised/Final Reading (Lovato) **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
- e. Approve Purchase of Replacement Coil for Intermediate School HVAC System **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$19,019.79 AS PRESENTED**

10. BOARD COMMENTS

- ✓ Director Bickel circled back to the consent agenda by stating Mike Nicklos will be missed, but pointed out that Rod Bickel, who is also retiring, has spent most of his career in La Junta. Superintendent Lovato shared he is not happy Mr. Bickel is leaving either. He said he is a staple and not only from a classroom stand point. Director Bickel said 24 out of his 35 years have been at La Junta.
- ✓ Director Backes said district FBLA was recently held and we had some student do well. She sends congratulations to them. Director Backes commented on seeing kids participate in basketball, wrestling and swimming and is proud of them for overcoming the challenges. She said the students just continue to impress her. Director Backes concluded by stating she can't say enough about what everyone is doing to make lemonade out of lemons.
- ✓ Director Leyba shared that CASE/CASB/CEA have a new parent advocacy group that focuses on legislative issues. She asked Superintendent Lovato to share the link on the district website. Director Leyba spoke as a parent for a moment and would like to strongly advocate to parents to opt their students out of state testing this year. She said opting out does nothing to student's grade point average and does nothing to get kids into college. She said state testing only affects the teachers. Director Leyba said the schools have the local assessments, and encourages parent to talk to the teacher to see how their kids are doing.
- ✓ Superintendent Lovato said performance on the state assessment has to be applied to every teacher's evaluation. He said 50% is professional practice and 50% is tied to student performance. Superintendent Lovato said each year the grade level or content level choose how much each piece represents, which is called the MSL (measure of student learning). He said this year the MSL has been waived. Superintendent Lovato said the district doesn't receive less funding if students opt out and the state can't be punitive to students who don't test. There are some interesting dynamics regarding the Turnaround Status at the Intermediate School, but we do have our local data.
- ✓ Director Derbigny commented on the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) book. Superintendent Lovato said the NAEP randomly selects nationwide and since he has been here, La Junta has only been selected twice. Superintendent Lovato said the results don't get used and they are not useful at our level.
Director Backes took a moment to congratulate all students on the honor roll. She said the students worked through a lot of adversity to get there

11. ADJOURNMENT – MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:26 p.m.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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