



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

BOARD WRAP-UP

Board of Education Meeting

September 13, 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**
 - **Meagan Jackson-Gonzalez - Resignation as 6th Grade ELA Teacher effective October 8, 2021**
 - **Taylor Levshakoff - New Hire as a Special Education Paraprofessional at the Primary School for the 2021-2022 school year**
 7. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - D. **Approve Willow Tree Contract - contract attached 9-9-21**
4. **CONSENT AGENDA - APPROVED CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED**
 - A. **Personnel Approval**
 - Anthony Faison - New Hire as the Junior High Assistant Football Coach for the 2021-2021 season
 - Bethany Bender - New Hire as a Teacher at the Intermediate School for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Victoria Valdez - Resignation as Human Resource/Payroll at the Central Office effective July 29, 2021
 - Chad Rangel - Resignation as a Paraprofessional at Tiger Trades Academy effective August 3, 2021
 - Betty Grant - New Hire as a Bus Driver at Transportation for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Amy Place - New Hire as the Physical Education Teacher at the Primary School for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Carley Fraser - New Hire as the 7th Grade Head Volleyball Coach for the 2021-2022 season
 - Shiann Muniz - New Hire as a Paraprofessional at the Primary School for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Chris Eddy - New Hire as a Bus Driver at Transportation for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Tammie Langston - New Hire as a Paraprofessional at the Primary School for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Brian Amaya - Resignation as a Paraprofessional at the Primary School effective August 18, 2021
 - Selena Tapia - Resignation as a Paraprofessional at the Intermediate School effective August 18, 2021
 - Miranda Montano - New Hire as a Paraprofessional at Tiger Trades Academy for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Colleen Hudson - New Hire as a Paraprofessional at Tiger Trades Academy for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Lea Vigil - Resignation as a Paraprofessional at the Intermediate School effective August 25, 2021
 - Christina Mackey - New Hire as Paraprofessional at the Junior/Senior High School for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Vanessa Flood - New Hire as Paraprofessional at the Junior/Senior High School for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Thelma Lay - New Hire as a Teacher at the Intermediate School for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Adalida Foxhoven - New Hire as the Junior High Student Council Co-Sponsor for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Kellie Buhr - New Hire as the Junior High Student Council Co-Sponsor for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Jennifer Hall - New Hire as the Assistant Forensics Sponsor for the 2021-2022 school year
 - D.C. DiPrince - New Hire as the High School Knowledge Bowl Sponsor for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Brandon Coates - New Hire as the Junior High Knowledge Bowl Sponsor for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Julie Meiklejohn - New Hire as the High School TAC Director for the 2021-2022 school year
 - Adalida Foxhoven - New Hire as the Junior High TAC Director for the 2021-2022 school year

BOARD WRAP UP – September 13, 2021

Page | 2

- Stephanie Gutierrez - New Hire as a Special Education Paraprofessional at the Intermediate School for the 2021-2022 school year
- Brandon Coates - New Hire as the Junior High Cross Country Coach for the 2021-2022 season
- Meagan Jackson-Gonzalez - Resignation as 6th Grade ELA Teacher effective October 8, 2021
- Taylor Levshakoff - New Hire as a Special Education Paraprofessional at the Primary School for the 2021-2022 school year

B. Approve Additional Out-of-District Students for the 2021-2022 school year

C. Approve Additional Substitute Teachers for the 2021-2022 school year

C. Approve New Job Descriptions

D. Approve Revised Regulation GDBA-E-1 on First/Revised/Final Reading

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

A financial report was not presented.

6. MINUTES

Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on August 9, 2021 and Special Meeting on September 1, 2021.

APPROVED AS PRINTED

7. PRESENTATIONS

Building Report/Update

Julie Miller, Primary School Principal -

Mrs. Miller shared the beginning of year Dibels testing data for the Primary students. She said STAR testing is still in progress. In reviewing the data Mrs. Miller stated it is no surprise that reading is an area that is being focused on. She thanked the Board for allowing a reading specialist to be hired. The Primary is using the flooding model and all staff go into classrooms to help teach reading for 30 minutes each day. Flooding includes universal and targeted instruction. Mrs. Miller explained students are seeing skills and content up to four times. The Accelerated Reading (AR) program and the accompanying communication app was addressed. Since this topic was questioned by the Board at a previous meeting, Mrs. Miller wanted to share the Primary has chosen to not focus on AR this year due to the needs of the students. Staff is looking at direct instruction instead. Mrs. Miller stated students below level struggle with independent reading which is the AR program focus. The current enrollment numbers are: Kindergarten, 106 students; First Grade, 92 students; and Second Grade, 101 students. Class sizes are: Kindergarten, 22 students; First Grade, 17 students; and Second Grade, 18 students. There are 299 students at the Primary and five students who attend S.E.A.L. Academy, which brings the total enrollment to 304 students. Director Derbigny asked if the Literacy Program will be meeting at the Primary School this year. Mrs. Miller said yes and it was helpful by having the program at one site last year, but decided to have the program at different sites this year. Director Ayala shared the older kids attending the program can be distracting. She also thanked Mrs. Miller for following up on the AR program and appreciates staff taking the time to focus on student needs. Mrs. Miller said it might look like the focus is only on the low end, but there are things in place to give students instruction at their level. She also shared after school GT programs are being looked at. Director Backes asked what are the goals set for each grade level after looking at the data results. Mrs. Miller said teachers are looking at the data details to set goals and each teacher is setting their individual classroom goals. Director Derbigny asked for clarification on reading the data handout. Mrs. Miller explained the color coding and shared all students receive intervention flooding. Director Ayala asked when the next testing session will be. Mrs. Miller said the middle of year testing will begin in December. She said students are progress monitored regularly and intensive students get checked every 7-10 days.

Claudia Apodaca, Intermediate School Principal -

Mrs. Apodaca shared the Intermediate School's Dibels data. She is excited about the 6th grade results, which showed 78% of the students are at or above level. The 3rd grade results were the lowest and this class was the first class affected by Covid shutdown. Mrs. Apodaca said the Reading Specialist, Mrs. Sisson, is meeting with teachers weekly and Olivia Bachicha, with Generation Schools Network, meets with teachers monthly. Mrs. Apodaca said it has been nice to have help with the new teachers to become data driven. Enrollment at the Intermediate is: 3rd grade, 107 students; 4th grade 103 students; 5th grade, 113 students; and 6th grade, 103 students. This is a total enrollment of 431 students. Last year enrollment was at 466 students. Mrs. Apodaca looked into where students who didn't return went and she shared half the non-returning students transferred to other districts in state and the other half moved out of state. Class sizes are: 3rd grade, 20-21 students; 4th grade,

BOARD WRAP UP – September 13, 2021

Page | 3

20 students; 5th grade, 22-23 students; and 6th grade, 20 students. Director Ayala asked if the Intermediate is working with the same reading program as the Primary and Mrs. Apodaca said they are as it is a K-6 program, which gives vertical alignment. Director Backes asked if this counts as improvement on SCAP and it does. Mrs. Apodaca said staff is focusing on goals set with Ms. Bachicha. The four goals set by teachers are cultural shift, talent development, leadership and instructional transformation. Mrs. Apodaca said the Wonder Works intervention curriculum has been awesome and she is excited to have intervention again and it will begin next Monday. The Intermediate is also following the flooding model as the Primary. Director Ayala asked if there is data to show what made the difference with the 6th grade students and their testing results. Mrs. Apodaca said the 6th grade students didn't start testing with Dibels until last year, but feels getting away from leveling has helped. The Literacy Project has begun with 3rd and 4th grade students. Last year participation was low but seems to be increasing this year. The Student Council did the 9-11 ceremony last week. It was recorded and shown in classrooms to help alleviate group congestion. Mrs. Apodaca said town hall meetings will also take place this year. She said they will also be recorded and shared. Mrs. Apodaca said staff is looking into starting more clubs for students. Ideas that have been mentioned are Wilderness and Survivor club, Chess club and Gardening club. She would like to get more extra-curricular activities going. Mrs. Apodaca said this will give another outlet/activity for 5th and 6th grade students besides athletics. Director Ayala said she appreciates Mr. Ferguson's efforts to include all students and it is nice to see the videos. Director Derbigny stated the Board only sees letters of recommendation from principals on new hires and inquired about the interview process. She asked if principals check references, licenses, etc. The process was explained and Superintendent Lovato said in the future the Human Resources department will be putting out a bio for each new hire for the Board. Background checks and license verification takes place at Central Office. Director Ayala asked if the district has lost students who don't want to be in the building due to Covid concerns. Superintendent Lovato said a few, but the reason isn't specifically stated. He said an option has been found for those students.

Dan Nuschy, Junior/Senior High School Principal -

Mr. Nuschy handed out a brochure that has been printed promoting La Junta Junior/Senior High School. Included in the brochure are the four strategic priorities for the district. Mr. Nuschy said students, parents and staff are all being included in the SCAP process. In looking at the strategic priority climate and culture, the Junior/Senior High School has changed their Meet and Greet in to a relationship building time. He also shared the Parent/Teacher conference format may be adjusted as well. The curriculum development and implementation strategic priority will include looking at summer school for 7th and 8th grade students. The communication strategic priority includes the new website which offers an app for parents to use. The last strategic priority, common vision and consistency, has resulted in the creation of the TAC program. Mr. Nuschy said this program is helping students complete their classwork and stay off the ineligibility list. Director Bickel asked what kind of barriers are being seen with Covid this year. Mr. Nuschy said having to quarantine students was challenging. He told the Board he appreciates their support in mask wearing. Director Derbigny asked if students can be made to wear a mask and Mr. Nuschy said no, however, the majority of students are wearing a mask as well as all the teachers. Director Backes asked about the number of ineligible students decreasing and Mr. Nuschy said the numbers have decreased and students are talking about not wanting to go to TAC. Director Backes asked if the TAC program is helping students who are not athletes. Mr. Nuschy said those students are the biggest decrease of ineligible students. Director Backes also asked if there are any students using TAC for tutoring and Mr. Nuschy said there is a handful every day. Director Ayala asked about having enough rooms to accommodate students at the Junior/Senior High School. Mr. Nuschy said he currently has two open classrooms. Enrollment is lower than in years past. The breakdown is: 12th grade, 77 students; 11th grade, 80 students; 10th grade, 86 students; 9th grade, 91 students; 8th grade, 112 students; and 7th grade, 98 students. Superintendent Lovato said enrollment is down about 100 students from past years. Director Backes asked if there are many kids participating in the Ag program. Mr. Nuschy said there are two full classes and he is working on expanding the program and building on it every year. He shared there are currently 550 students enrolled in grades 7-12. Mr. Nuschy also commended the marching band on their first place trophy at the Colorado State Fair.

Ken McNerney, Tiger Trades Academy Director/Principal -

Mr. McNerney informed the Board there are currently 119 students attending TTA. He said 26 of those students are junior high students. There are 12-15 students per teacher. There is no more strictly online classes and students have to attend in person for their activities, which is about 30% of their day. Mr. McNerney said there is a paraprofessional in every class. He said TTA is working on developing their own School Accountability Committee as well as taking part in SCAP committees. Mr. McNerney said there was a lot of success last year with the Mars program and he would like to continue that. He also shared students are making corn hole boards and will be selling them online and the students have a lot of great ideas. He has expanded the music lab and it is basically a recording studio. A survey was recently completed by students who attend TTA and the results showed that 90%

of the students believe there is an adult at the school that cares about them and their success. Mr. McNerney said having an in-house counselor has been a big help. Director Derbigny asked if there is a music teacher at TTA. Mr. McNerney said no, but he has a long-term sub, Mr. McDade, who has an extensive music background as well as individual instruction who will be helping. Director Ayala shared she was able to see the Mars project in action and told Mr. McNerney she appreciates the effort to reach all students. She said she is excited for the corn hole board project. She asked if Mr. McNerney has enough staff to handle the volume of students. He said he needs two more certified teachers and an industrial arts teacher. Job openings are still being advertised. Director Ayala asked if most of the building is being utilized. Mr. McNerney said it is. He also elaborated that this year, students have specific times for core subjects: English, math, social studies and science. He feels this is better and is working out well. Director Derbigny asked if the students are sitting all day. Mr. McNerney said they do not. They have one hour with the English teacher, then go to shop for example. He said students move every hour.

Superintendent Lovato commended the principals and stated the Junior/Senior High School brochure is awesome. He said there will be brochures coming for the other schools as well as a district-level brochure.

8. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Lovato shared the concrete is being poured at the bus barn for the approaches. He said the gas and water lines have all been placed externally. Insulation and electrical needs to be installed. Vehicles will be able to be parked inside in four weeks after the concrete has cured.

The turf replacement crew is beginning to install the turf. There will be a second crew coming in to expedite the installation. Superintendent Lovato said he is pleased with Hellas, as they have done what they said they were going to do.

The auditorium lighting project is on hold until the fall production is complete. There is still a wait on items to be shipped.

Mr. Miell, Maintenance Director, had a walk through with Trane to look at the HVAC systems. Some issues to fix will be less and some will be more complex. A solar option is being looked into as well.

Superintendent Lovato congratulated the Board members who were elected by acclamation. He said he would like to schedule an all-day work session in the next three weeks. He would like to have it prior to the SCAP review in November.

Building and Covid reactions have responded well. There are a handful who can't or won't wear a mask. Superintendent Lovato said the goal is to keep students in the building and thanked the Board for their support.

Superintendent Lovato informed the Board that schools do not fall under the vaccination mandate for employers with more than 100 employees. He shared there are a good percentage of staff members who are vaccinated. Superintendent Lovato said there will be a separate mandate for school employees and districts are having discussions on what if or when that mandate comes and what it will look like. He said if 20 out of 250 employees quit because of a mandate, the district couldn't function and the district can't afford some of the unintended consequences. He said the focus is on the kids and is excited SCAP is becoming real. Superintendent Lovato did state the Covid rules keep changing and he will continue to be proactive and does expect some hiccups along the way.

Enrollment this year compared to last year shows 15 more students, however, this is about 60 students below the peak from a couple of years ago. The district-wide enrollment number is 1395. The Primary School is up two students, the Intermediate School is up 47 students and the Junior/Senior High School is up 65, but enrollment is still well below. TTA is at 116 students compared to 215 last year, but many students transferred back to the Junior/Senior High School.

Director Derbigny asked what the Covid color is right now. Superintendent Lovato said he believes Otero County is in yellow. She asked what new students are told regarding mask wearing. Superintendent Lovato said they are told they need to be worn in the buildings.

Director Ayala said she saw Homecoming information online. She asked if there will be a home football game. Superintendent Lovato assured the Board the stadium will be ready. Director Ayala asked if spectators will be

BOARD WRAP UP – September 13, 2021

Page | 5

asked to wear masks. Superintendent Lovato said no and he feels adults can be responsible for themselves. He stated the district is not equipped to enforce mask wearing from a legal standpoint.

Director Derbigny inquired on how the turf is compacted. Superintendent Lovato explained the process.

Director Ayala said good job on the swimming pool. She said there are a lot of people in the water. Superintendent Lovato said TLM Constructors did an awesome job.

Director Leyba asked Superintendent Lovato who he chose to facilitate the Board retreat. He said he hasn't spoken to anyone but is hoping to meet a few at the CASE conference he will be attending this week.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Approve Children's Literacy Center Tutoring Program (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$28,800.00 AS PRESENTED**
- b. Approve the Purchase of a School Bus (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$98,823.01 AS PRESENTED**
- c. Approve the Purchase of the Transfinder Program (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$11,995.00 AS PRESENTED**
- d. Approve Willow Tree Counseling Contract (Lovato) **APPROVED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$33,000.00 AS PRESENTED**

10. BOARD COMMENTS

- ✓ Director Derbigny shared with the Board she would like a different seating arrangement at the meetings and wondered if there is a reason for the current setup. She said she would like equitable seating with the Board president sitting in the middle and two directors on each side. Director Bickel said she feels Superintendent Lovato should sit in the center as well due to him speaking for the majority of the meeting. Director Derbigny asked if the seating arrangement is declared by the Board president or if it is voted on. Director Leyba stated she doesn't want to be separated from the Superintendent and note taker. Director Ayala suggested the Board try a couple of different options. Director Derbigny asked Superintendent Lovato if anyone has complained about the cost of the turf replacement. He said not specifically but there are people who believe more money goes to athletics than anywhere else. Superintendent Lovato said the ESSER I funds are spoken for. He had to figure out how to spend the ESSER III funds and is still trying to figure out how to spend \$1.9 million of ESSER II funds.
- ✓ Director Ayala asked for a rundown of activities that are happening in the buildings. Specifically, anything the Board can partake in. She would like something that will help keep track of what is going on. Superintendent Lovato said the new website app will help. Director Ayala asked for a paper version in the interim.
- ✓ Director Derbigny said it was nice to have the principals at the meeting.
- ✓ Director Backes extended condolences to the Wiley School District and families on the loss of four students this week. She thanked all staff on their innovation and focus on academics as well as their resilience. She said students are at the center of everything we do and that is really inspiring. Director Backes congratulated the band stating they did a really good job.
- ✓ Director Bickel said she really appreciates hearing the creative ways to adapt.

11. ADJOURNMENT – MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:01 p.m.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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