



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

BOARD WRAP-UP

Board of Education Meeting
January 26, 2026

1. **ROLL CALL** – Ayala, Hines, Kolomitz and Salzbrenner. Bickel was absent
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **CELEBRATIONS**

Tiger Trades Academy graphic art students presented an update on the program to the Board. Mr. McNerney shared the graphic arts program is new to TTA this year. Marianne Hale, graphic arts teacher, told the Board this has been a learning experience for her and the students. She said for the first month, students worked on their computers. Coffee mugs were ordered and students put Christmas designs on them. They were a hit and the mugs were sold, which allowed the purchase of more items to print. Students have printed shirts, mugs, tumblers, earrings and more. Three Tiger Trades Academy students attended the meeting: Kaylee Hernandez, Monica Salais and Sarah Ornelas. The students are in the graphic arts class. Mr. McNerney stated this class is giving students employable skills.
4. **BOARD RECOGNITION**

In honor of School Board Recognition Month, the Board of Education was acknowledged for their volunteered service and dedication to the school district. Superintendent Krumholz thanked the Board for their hard work and efforts. Tiger Trades Academy gave each Board member a personalized stainless steel tumbler made by the TTA graphic arts students.
5. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA – AGENDA APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
 2. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 - **Danielle Lopez – Resignation as a Paraprofessional at the Intermediate School effective 1-26-2026**
 3. **FINANCIAL REPORT**
 - A. **Financial Reports added 1-22-26**
 8. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Budget and Appropriation Resolution Added 1-22-26**
6. **CONSENT AGENDA - APPROVED CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED**
 - A. **Personnel Approval**
 - Scott Bishop - Retirement as Bus Driver effective January 15, 2026
 - Kalie DeHerrera - New Hire as Assistant Junior High Boys Wrestling Coach
 - Jaedyn Gronemeyer - New Hire as Secondary English Teacher at the Junior/Senior High School for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year
 - Danielle Lopez – Resignation as Paraprofessional at the Intermediate School effective 1-26-2026
 - B. **Approve an Additional Substitute Teacher for the 2025-2026 School Year**
 - C. **Approve Additional Out of District Students for the remainder of the 2025-2026 School Year**
 - D. **Approve the District Advisory Charge for the 2025-2026 School Year**
 - E. **Approve Resolution Authorizing Signing of Checks/District Bank Account at First National Bank**
 - F. **Approve Resolution to Appoint Jared Wilson as Authorized Representative for Federal Programs**
7. **MINUTES -**
 - A. Minutes of the Regular Meeting on December 8, 2025. **APPROVED AS PRINTED**

8. FINANCIAL REPORT

Kim Griego with Abacus presented the December 2025 financial report. Glen Gustafson with the Colorado Department of Education Public School Finance Unit joined her. Ms. Griego began by reviewing the cash flow report. She shared the district is currently showing a \$2,780,944.20 deficit. Some of that deficit is due to not having received the property taxes, which won't come in until the audit is complete. The property taxes are a little over \$1,000,000. The percent of budget should show around 50%, and things are tracking as they should.

Ms. Griego discussed the income statement summary, which gives a summary of revenues and expenses. This shows where the district is at on receiving funds and expenditures by line items.

Director Hines clarified the district will still show a deficit of \$1.7 million after taxes are received. Director Kolomitz asked what year of property taxes the district hasn't received. Ms. Griego stated the 2023-2024 taxes as well as this current fiscal year. Director Kolomitz asked how the district can operate at a deficit year to year. Ms. Griego shared the district is working with the state auditor's office regarding the zero percent loan that is available to Colorado school districts. She said this allows districts to borrow money against the property taxes owed to them. Superintendent Krumholz stated the district's past annual budget deficits have been covered by savings.

Mr. Glen Gustafson with the Colorado Department of Education School Finance Unit, helps districts with their financial struggles. He said the 23-24 audit, which the fiscal year ended 6-30-24, was due on December 31, 2024. When that was not submitted on time (and still hasn't been submitted), Mr. Gustafson said the state auditor notifies the county treasurer to turn off property taxes in March. Property taxes were shut off after March 10. Mr. Gustafson said they wait until after March 10 because that is a big payment to districts. East Otero School District property taxes have been off since March 11, 2025. He said 90% of taxes are collected between February and June. We are going into the big collection time and the district won't receive property tax revenues until the audit is submitted. Mr. Gustafson said now the district is late on the 2023-24 audit and the 2024-25 audit. The property taxes have been being accrued, but no cash has been received. That is what is creating the cash flow challenges. Director Hines asked when the 2023-24 audit is submitted the district will receive property taxes from March 11 to the end of the year, but since 2024-25 hasn't been submitted it will be shut off again on March 11. Ms. Griego said that is correct. Director Kolomitz asked what the status of the audit is. Ms. Griego said she met with the auditor last week and as of this morning have been able to turn over most everything that has been requested by the auditor. She said she is responding as quickly as she can. Director Kolomitz said it seems every time a Board meeting is held he is told the auditor is requesting additional documents. He asked why they keep asking for more. Mr. Gustafson said it is normal for auditors to request documentation, and what is making this difficult as it is old. The auditor is requesting documents from two years ago and this is a new auditor on top of new personnel. When irregularities are found, auditors dig deeper. Mr. Gustafson said our district is full of irregularities. In the end the auditor will give an opinion on whether or not the financial statements are accurate and presented fairly. That is the opinion the auditor renders and in order for them to put their name on that, they have to be sure those numbers are right. Ms. Griego said she did speak with Dmitriy Chernyak with DMC Auditing and Consulting (the district's auditor) and he is willing to meet with the Board. Director Hines asked if the 2022-23 audit has been recertified yet. Ms. Griego said he is still working on that. Director Kolomitz asked if they have received all the documentation for ESSER funds. Ms. Griego said not all the documents are digital so digging through boxes has been taking place. Director Hines asked if there is an estimated date of completion. Ms. Griego said she doesn't have one. Mr. Gustafson said Mr. Chernyak understands the district's cash flow problem and is making us a priority. Director Hines said on a bright note, once the 2023-24 audit is complete, things are in order for the 2024-25 audit and it should go quickly. She asked if we are in line for next year to get the audit completed. Ms. Griego said not yet, the two audits have to be completed before we are put on the auditor's schedule. Director Kolomitz asked as it pertains to the 2024-25 audit, did the district apply for an extension. Mr. Gustafson said the state won't give an extension if you are already late on an audit. Director Kolomitz asked what that means. Mr. Gustafson said in the end the extension really doesn't matter and there is no penalty for not getting an extension, except tax monies being held. Once the 2023-24 audit is submitted, the district will receive a lump sum payment of property taxes within a week. If the 2024-25 audit is not submitted by March 9, the property taxes will be turned off again. Superintendent Krumholz said the real challenge is getting caught up and once the district is caught up, we can get back on track. Mr. Gustafson said our district isn't in the worst condition but is in the bottom three in the state. He said due to a shortage in qualified business managers in the state, CDE is recommending rural districts partner with companies such as Abacus that can complete higher level financial duties. The district's situation is not alone with the challenge in turnover and policies and procedures that has gotten the district so far behind. He said it is imperative that there is good financial data. He stated the district is now in a position of deficit spending and running out of cash. What that means is sooner or later, the district won't have enough money to make payroll. When payroll is missed, Mr. Gustafson said that is fatal. The consequence of that is the state treasurer will take over the financial operations for the school district. They will pay bills and make any adjustments to staffing by cutting or laying off people and the

district will receive negative publicity. Mr. Gustafson said he spent time with Superintendent Krumholz converting the district to a budget template that will help properly budget funds in a way the Board will understand easily. He said he thinks the district is on the right track. He said the district has the pieces of the puzzle are in place to get things fixed. Once fixed, the district needs a plan so we are never again in this place.

Director Kolomitz asked for an explanation of what Colorado Trust is and how it works. Ms. Griego reviewed the cash account breakdown report. She said the district is currently earning 2.3% interest on a local CD. Colorado Trust pays an interest rate of 3.9% and it is like a money market account with easy liquidity. She said they have the best yield around. Mr. Gustafson highly recommends Colorado Trust and said it is only for Colorado government entities.

9. PRESENTATIONS -

Chief Academic Officer Update (Jared Wilson)

Jared Wilson, Chief Academic Officer, presented a mid-year update for the Primary and Intermediate Schools. He began by sharing the Big Rock #1 goal for 2025-26 is the planning and implementation of high-quality instructional materials. The Arc of the Year was reviewed, which is quarterly spring cycles. The first quarter focus was the culture of learning, second quarter the essential content, third quarter academic ownership and the fourth quarter will be demonstration of learning.

The outcome goals for the Intermediate School on the CMAS ELA (English-Language Arts) is at 50+% MGP (Median Growth Percentile), which increased by 10+% and 50+% MGP on the CMAS Math, which also increased by 10+%. The Primary outcome goals on the NWEA assessment for ELA and Math is 50% of students meeting their projected growth. The median growth percentile ranks kids on how they score on the test compared to students in the state.

Mr. Wilson shared that 50% of Intermediate students hit their growth goal on mid-year NWEA (Math and Reading) and 60% of the Primary students hit their mid-year growth goals. He said a lot of grade levels are showing double digit growth. The work being done is showing an impact, however, there is still a lot of work to do. Director Kolomitz asked if this math data was with the new curriculum. Mr. Wilson said the scores are the NWEA assessment data, with the new curriculum being used.

Mr. Wilson said with the Big Rock #1-High Quality Instructional Materials, greater than 95% of observed instructional tasks align with grade level standards. This is seen by leadership team walkthroughs. He said 85% of teachers find value in collaborative planning in collaborative planning/analysis in professional learning communities (PLCs) according to quarterly surveys. Director Hines asked if teachers give feedback if they aren't having a positive experience and what that is. Mr. Wilson said they do and some comments have been that this is a lot at once. Mr. Wilson said the leadership team reviews these comments and makes adjustments as necessary. He said they want to be as supportive as possible. Director Hines asked if 81% of teachers are using high quality instructional materials, what are the rest using. Mr. Wilson said when goals are set, a little wiggle room is necessary. If a teacher is seen going off script, feedback is given.

Big Rock #2 is strengthening the quality and consistency of instruction. The implementation goals of Big Rock #2 are 80% of observed classrooms will demonstrate a level 3 or higher for academic ownership and 100% of staff will have a level 3 or higher for culture of learning. He said the district has a huge goal of each teacher being observed six times per quarter. Teachers are also receiving feedback three times per quarter in their coaching meetings. He also said the district is looking at more aligned coaching between the buildings.

Director Hines asked why goals aren't being met on Big Rock #2. Mr. Wilson said with goals, there needs to be a little wiggle room and with the Primary students there are many variables. Sickness has played a part in this. She said she is happy to hear the number of observations we have is the golden standard. Mr. Wilson said the state requires six observations per year.

Director Kolomitz asked how long a teacher is observed. Mr. Wilson said it depends, but most times it is 10-15 minutes, sometimes 20. He also said teachers are being observed for COMTSS (Colorado Multi-Tiered Systems of Support), which has different categories to observe. Mr. Wilson said less formal observations at the beginning, middle or finishing of the lesson shows more a picture of what is happening in the classroom.

Mr. Wilson said Josh Smith with TNTP (The New Teacher Project), meets weekly with the leadership teams. He said those meetings are either in person or via Zoom. He shared every minute spent with Mr. Smith is valued time and used wisely.

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Quarter 3 will focus on academic ownership. This is putting the responsibility on the students. Director Salzbrenner asked Mr. Wilson if he has confidence in meeting benchmarks in the upcoming quarters. Mr. Wilson said he does. He stated he doesn't hear any excuses for things not being met. He said staff is responsive and leadership is asking every staff member to do more now than this time last year. Director Hines asked if this is something that is planned to be implemented after the TNTP partnership is ended. Mr. Wilson said yes and right now the plan is in the skeleton phase, but academic structure will be in place. Director Kolomitz asked how long the TNTP partnership is for. Mr. Wilson said next year for sure and depending on scores will dictate further time.

10. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION -

Superintendent Krumholz shared the administrative team traveled to Oklahoma City for the UVA (University of Virginia-Arlington) winter conference. He said it was a good workshop with a lot of homework for staff to complete. Superintendent Krumholz said UVA is the big plan and TNTP is the daily plan for district academic improvement. He stated this was a good opportunity to grow as leaders. Superintendent Krumholz clarified this is all funded by CDE grants. He said it is helping the district to get out of turnaround and to never go back. Staff learned a lot at this conference. The district is almost done with UVA partnership.

Superintendent Krumholz said the district will partner with TNTP to create the district's strategic plan. He said the process is beginning and he will make notifications soon. TNTP will be here in the first week of March collecting data from schools; they will look at where the district is and will report what they see. There will be two work sessions in April and Superintendent Krumholz will get the dates to the Board as soon as he has them. He said input from all stakeholders will be received. An academic, financial and communication plan will be created.

The annual Meet and Confer meeting with the Board and staff will be held February 17.

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Approve Revised Policies GCBA, GBGD, GCCAA, GCCBA and BE on Second/Final Reading (Krumholz) **APPROVE ON SECOND/FINAL READING AS PRESENTED**

12. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Approve the 2025-2026 Final Budget and Appropriation Resolution (Krumholz) **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
- b. Approve the 2026-2027 And 2027-2028 Calendars (Krumholz) **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**
- c. Designate Official Posting Sites for Board Meeting Notices (Krumholz) **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**

13. BOARD COMMENTS

- ✓ Director Kolomitz said he briefly attended the La Junta Chamber of Commerce banquet and said it was nice to see La Junta Junior/Senior High School choir there. He thanked Tiger Trades Academy for the cool mug. He also thanked the maintenance for clearing the sidewalks of the snow.
- ✓ Director Salzbrenner also thanked Tiger Trades Academy for the mug. He thanked Mr. Wilson for his presentation.
- ✓ Mrs. Ayala thanked Mrs. Dellinger for making the accommodations for the CASB Convention in December. She shared she took the policy and budgeting classes at the convention. She also liked the class which showcased the presence of high students being on the Board. She enjoyed the Gifted and Talented class and said the kids were amazing. Director Ayala said the Santa Fe Trail BOCES recently held a Board training and she thanked Natalie Brown for providing that. She said the Board is participating in a lot of training. Director Ayala said she and Director Kolomitz will be attending the CASB Winter Legislative Kick-Off at the end of this week. She is looking forward to attending. Director Ayala thanked the staff for all they do.
- ✓ Director Hines thanked Tiger Trades Academy for the cup. She said she appreciates the late start notification being done last night in order to give parents time to make plans. Director Hines acknowledged all the work that is happening in the classrooms by teachers.
- ✓ Director Ayala added she observed TNTP at CASB and said it shows so much hope.

14. ADJOURNMENT – MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:22 p.m.

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