

May 2026

Strategic Planning Roadmap

East Otero





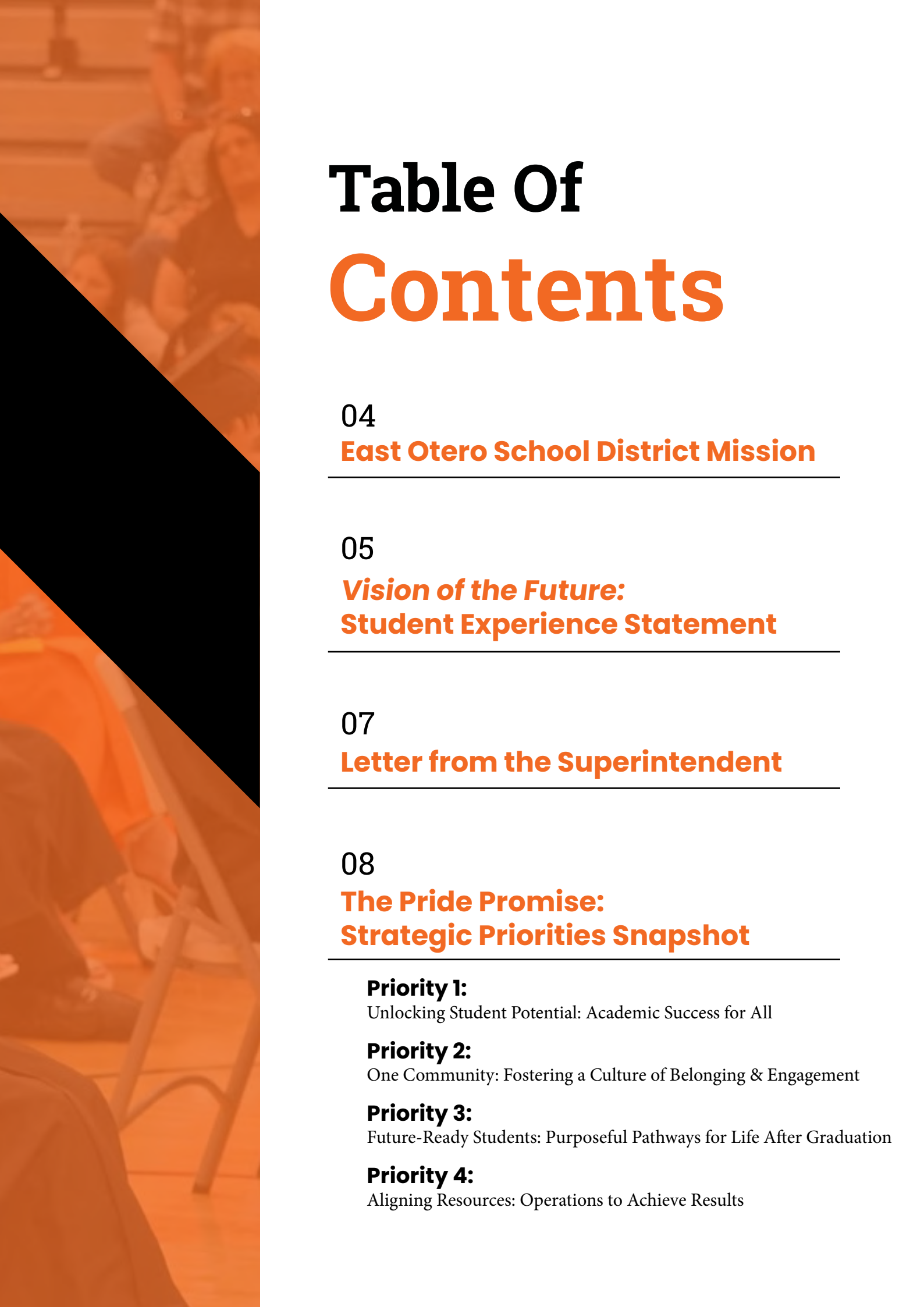


Table Of Contents

04

East Otero School District Mission

05

Vision of the Future:
Student Experience Statement

07

Letter from the Superintendent

08

The Pride Promise:
Strategic Priorities Snapshot

Priority 1:

Unlocking Student Potential: Academic Success for All

Priority 2:

One Community: Fostering a Culture of Belonging & Engagement

Priority 3:

Future-Ready Students: Purposeful Pathways for Life After Graduation

Priority 4:

Aligning Resources: Operations to Achieve Results



East Otero School District Mission Statement

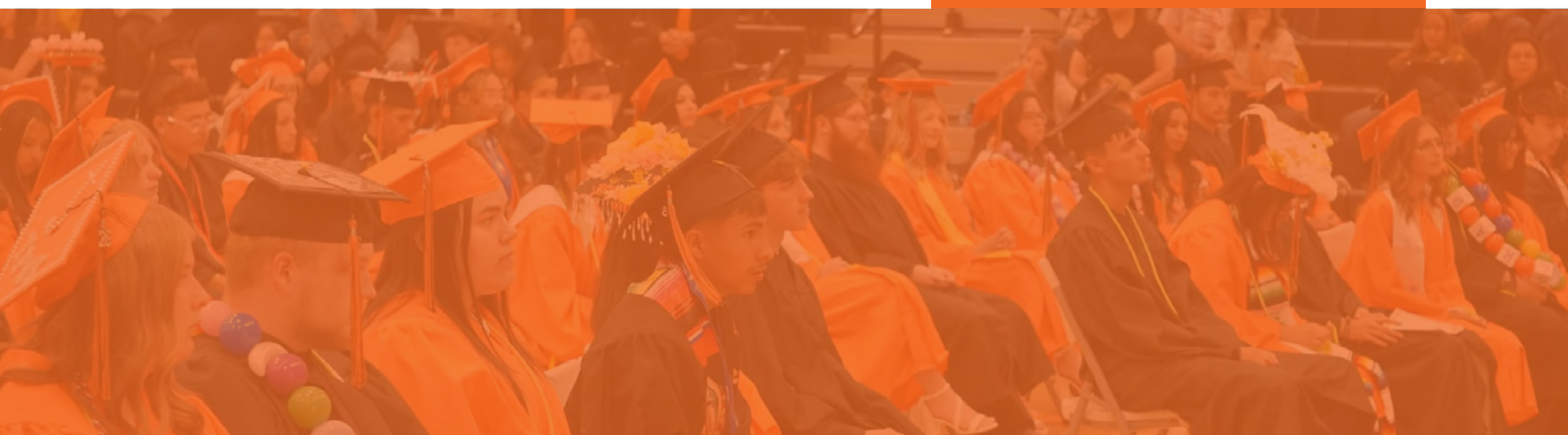
At East Otero School District, we believe that the key to our community's success lies in nurturing capable, thoughtful, and adaptable students. We aim to graduate individuals who are empowered to lead lives of purpose and impact. By fostering a culture of inclusion, respect, and continuous learning for all stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, community members, and businesses - we strive to ensure that everyone feels valued and supported. Our journey to success is a collaborative effort, reminding us that we are all in this together.



Vision of the Future: Student Experience Statement

We will ensure that all students
in East Otero:

- ▷ experience **consistent, engaging high-quality instruction** through grade-level materials, strong instructional practices and high expectations
- ▷ in a **safe and supportive environment** where they feel a strong sense of **belonging, respect, and empowerment**
- ▷ so they are prepared for **purposeful lives beyond graduation** as the best version of themselves, whether focused on career, military, and/or college.





Letter from the Superintendent

Dear East Otero Community,

It is an honor to serve as your Superintendent. I am thrilled to share our new strategic plan, which marks the beginning of an exciting and positive new direction for La Junta schools. Our students deserve the absolute best, and to provide that, we have united around a clear, student-centered vision.

A large planning team consisting of community members, leaders from Otero College, parents, students, school board members, and staff met to develop a strategic plan that was designed for La Junta and our students. Our plan is built on four core pillars designed to elevate every aspect of the student and community experience:

- ▷ **Unlocking Academic Success for All:** We are dedicated to providing high-quality, engaging instruction tailored to meet the needs of every learner. By setting higher expectations and providing the right support, we ensure every student can achieve their full potential.
- ▷ **One Community:** Education is a partnership. We are committed to actively listening to our families, building strong local partnerships, and ensuring our schools remain the pride of the La Junta community.
- ▷ **Future-Ready Students:** Our goal is to prepare every student for life after high school. Whether a student is headed to a four-year university, a technical or trade school, the military, or directly into the workforce, we will provide the guidance and skills they need to thrive.
- ▷ **Aligning Resources:** To best serve our students, we must have a highly efficient, transparent, and responsive behind-the-scenes operation. We are streamlining our district management and operational processes to ensure resources are maximized and directed where they matter most, the classroom.

This strategic plan is more than just a document; it is a promise. It represents our proactive commitment to growth, excellence, and working together. I look forward to sharing our progress with you as we build a brighter, more successful future for La Junta.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our students.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Krumholz, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Priority 1

Unlocking Student Potential: Academic Success for All

Commitment

We will ensure that our **academic outcomes** reflect the full talent and potential of our students, by providing ALL learners with...**1) high-quality, grade-level materials, 2) strong instructional practices and 3) data-informed support** designed to identify and respond to student needs

5-Year Goals

GOAL 1.A: All East Otero students attend a high-quality school.

Key Result: By the end of the Academic Year 2030-2031, all East Otero schools will earn the highest rating possible (Green) on Colorado's School Performance Framework.

GOAL 1.B: East Otero students demonstrate strong, grade-level literacy skills and knowledge.

Key Result: By the end of the Academic Year 2030-31, the percentage of East Otero students that Meet/Exceed expectations in Reading and Writing will surpass the state average (as measured by CMAS [Grades 3 - 8] and P/SAT [Grades 9 - 11])

GOAL 1.C: East Otero students demonstrate strong, grade-level mathematical skills and knowledge.

Key Result: By the end of the Academic Year 2030-31, the percentage of East Otero students that Meet/Exceed expectations in Math will surpass the state average (as measured by CMAS [Grades 3 - 8] and P/SAT [Grades 9 - 11])

“

“It was great to be a part of East Otero School District's Strategic Planning. The process was engaging and collaborative. The experience highlighted areas in which we can co-create learning opportunities for students in the valley.”

”

- Dr. Kim Zandt, President, Otero College

Priority 1

Key Initiatives and Actions

Initiative #1.1:

Planning and Implementing High-Quality Instructional Materials

Key Actions:

- ▷ Adopt and implement HQIM in ELA & Math (Grades K - 11)
- ▷ Train and support teachers on use of HQIM in ELA/Math
- ▷ Monitor and measure implementation of HQIM via classrooms walkthroughs
- ▷ Establish PLCs (weekly, groupings at Jr/Sr) for Collaborative Planning (unit/lesson internalization)

Initiative #1.2:

Strengthening the consistency and quality of Instruction

Key Actions:

- ▷ Leverage Vision of Instruction to define Quarterly Instructional Priorities and Look-Fors to serve as basis of Quarterly "Sprint Cycles"
- ▷ Train and support teachers on Quarterly Instructional Priorities at start of each Quarter
- ▷ Monitor and measure teacher implementation of Instructional Priorities via Classroom Walkthroughs
- ▷ Build capacity via Instructional Coaching

Initiative #1.3:

Data-Driven Supports to Identify and Respond to Student Needs

Key Actions:

- ▷ Create district-wide Assessment Strategy
- ▷ Train teachers on how to analyze student data/work and plan retreaches
- ▷ Establish systems and structures for tracking student data
- ▷ Facilitate Collaborative Data Analysis (in PLCs and/or with coaches) to identify and respond to student needs
- ▷ Strengthen systems for Tier 2/3 interventions
- ▷ Strengthen approach to Credit Recovery in HS



Priority 2

One Community: Fostering a Culture of Belonging & Engagement

Commitment

We will **foster a culture of belonging and engagement** where...1) **students** feel safe, respected, invested and engaged in their learning, 2) **families/caregivers** are treated as critical partners in their child's education, and 3) **teachers/staff** feel valued and supported in their critical work.

5-Year Goals

GOAL 2A. East Otero Students feel safe, supported and invested & engaged in their learning.

Key Result: By the end of the Academic Year 2030/2031, 90% of students report feeling safe and sense of belonging via Spring Survey

Key Result: By the end of the Academic Year 2030/2031, the district's Chronic Absenteeism rate is below the state average

GOAL 2.B: East Otero Caregivers feel they are treated as critical partners in their child's education.

Key Result: By the end of the Academic Year 2030/2031, 90% of families/caregivers report feeling satisfied with their child's school

GOAL 2.C: East Otero staff feel valued and supported in their work.

Key Result: By the end of the Academic Year 2030/2031, 90% of staff report feeling valued and supported in their work



"Exciting things are happening in the East Otero School District. Our partners and stakeholders came together during strategic planning to draw the roadmap we need to steer this district toward success for our students and staff. I am excited by the momentum and the investment being made by our community in the process."



- Cameron Salzbrenner, East Otero Board of Education Vice President and Parent of two students in the district

Priority 2

Key Initiatives and Actions

Initiative #2.1:

STUDENT Culture of Belonging & Engagement

Key Actions:

- ▷ Strengthen systems, routines, and procedures for strong student culture, including...
 - ▷ Clear and consistent expectations, grounded in school values
 - ▷ Safe and orderly school-wide routines and procedures (i.e. arrival/dismissal, hallways, lunch/recess, classroom routines, etc)
 - ▷ Student recognition and celebrations
- ▷ Attendance team + interventions for absent students
- ▷ Advisory system to strengthen relationships, goal-setting, community-building, etc.
- ▷ Student perception surveys to gather feedback and respond to student needs

Initiative #2.2:

FAMILY/CAREGIVER Culture of Belonging & Engagement

Key Actions:

- ▷ Provide clear, consistent, respectful communication with families/caregivers about student progress and student learning
- ▷ Opportunities for families to provide input and receive updates on school and district efforts
- ▷ Family/caregiver perception surveys to gather feedback and respond to needs

Initiative #2.3:

TEACHER/STAFF Culture of Belonging & Engagement

Key Actions:

- ▷ Clear communication to staff re: school and district efforts
- ▷ Opportunities for staff to provide input and receive updates on school and district efforts
- ▷ Staff celebrations and recognition (tenure, performance, values, etc)
- ▷ Staff perception surveys to gather feedback and respond to needs



Priority 3

Future-Ready Students: Purposeful Pathways for Life After Graduation

Commitment

We will ensure that all students have access to **robust pathways and opportunities** to support them in **identifying, pursuing, and (ultimately) achieving their goals beyond graduation.**

5-Year Goals

GOAL 3.A: East Otero students will have access to purposeful pathways for life after graduation.

Key Result: By the end of the Academic Year 2030/2031, The district will increase the % of students attaining each of the Big Three, **as evidenced by 60% of East Otero graduates** having:

- 12 college credit hours (via concurrent enrollment or AP/IB)
- an industry recognized credential (IRC), **or**
- a work-based learning experience by the end of their East Otero K-12 experience

GOAL 3.B: East Otero students will be set up for success as they transition to High School.

Key Result: By the end of the Academic Year 2030/2031, the district will increase the % of 9th Graders being "On Track" to 80%+, as measured by:

- Students completion of 9th Grade ICAP milestones
- Documented identification of an "East Otero Pathway" to pursue over their 9-12 experience
- **and,**
- earned credits of 9th grade core content classes (ELA, Math, Sci, and SS)

“As a parent of three La Junta School District students, the process of creating and committing to the district’s plan has given me full confidence in the district to educate and prepare my daughters for any career path they so choose. I am confident they will support the wellbeing of my daughters, protect them from unsafe and unchallenging environments, and push them to reach their full potentials.”

- Zach Miner, parent

Priority 3

Key Initiatives and Actions

Initiative #3.1:

Establish robust "Post-Secondary Pathways" programming

Key Actions Year 1:

- ▷ Establish and Define the EO Pathways Team to Research and Gather Data, and draft the East Otero Pathway Map/Framework/Vision/Guide

Key Actions Years 2 - 5:

- ▷ To be established via the EO Pathways Team, including potential actions such as:
 - › Solidifying concurrent enrollment courses and process for students to enroll and successfully complete
 - › Identify Industry Recognized Credentials to build preparation pathways around
 - › Forge partnerships with private sector industries/businesses and process for student work-based learning

Initiative #3.2:

9th Grade ("On-Track") Success

Key Actions Year 1:

- ▷ Develop 9th Grade Success plan/roadmap focused on monitoring and supporting students' "on-track" status

Key Actions Years 2 - 5:

- ▷ To be established as part of the 9th Grade Success plan, including potential actions such as:
 - › Establish 9th Grade Success team and criteria for "on-track" status (along with systems and structures for collecting and monitoring data)
 - › Implement interventions to support 9th grade students "at risk" of becoming off-track



Priority 4

Aligning Resources: Operations to Achieve Results

Commitment

We will develop **data-driven, district-wide systems and practices** to ensure that...1) our **district-wide goals, priorities, and progress** are clear to all community members, 2) allocation and **management of resources** is strategic, efficient, and transparent, and 3) **operations (including facilities)** support student success and teacher effectiveness.

5-Year Goals

GOAL 4.A: The district establishes, monitors, and regularly communicates district-wide goals, priorities, and progress to the wider East Otero School District community.

Key Result: 90% of families/caregivers Agree/Strongly Agree with the statement "I am aware of the district's goals and priorities and receive regular updates on progress towards goals."

GOAL 4.B: The district is financially healthy and leverages resources in a way that is responsible, strategic, efficient, and transparent.

Key Result: By the end of the Academic Year 2030/ 2031, the district will a) achieve timely, error-free annual financial audits, b) have an annual budget approved by the school board by the end of June, c) have CDE-recommended resources in reserve funds, and d) adopt a competitive salary scale

GOAL 4.C: Operations (including facilities) support student success and teacher effectiveness.

Key Result: By the end of the Academic Year 2030/2031, the district will have a plan-in-motion to build/improve Jr/Sr High School facilities.

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"The experience of being part of the Strategic Planning was both informative and enlightening. It was a great experience, and I learned about a lot of resources the district has to support our students. It was a great experience."

”

- Toni Lee Martinez, parent

Priority 4

Key Initiatives and Actions

Initiative #4.1:

District Communication Plan

Key Actions:

- ▷ Develop and implement communication plan with multiple communications avenues (campus portal, social media, emails, leveraging online and local media) - celebrating successes, providing accurate info, engaging trusted influencers, and communicating progress on strategic plan
- ▷ Develop "Scorecard" and systems for monitoring and reporting on progress towards strategic plan goals/priorities

Initiative #4.2:

District Financial Health

Key Actions:

- ▷ Establish strong financial management, controls, and monitoring systems
- ▷ Board training on fiduciary management and oversight role (building board handbook, provided training on how to read the monthly financials, etc)
- ▷ Complete financial analysis and set annual goals for replenishing reserves and goals for updating steps and lanes for the next several years, anticipating health benefits increases (Longer term - competitive salary scale analysis and planning)

Initiative #4.3:

District Operations & Facilities Planning

Key Actions:

- ▷ Complete facilities master plan in 26-27 school year and prioritize needed investments
- ▷ Developing and implementing long-term maintenance plan and priorities for existing facilities and aligning annual budgets to address priorities





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“It was a great experience to be on the strategic planning committee. I definitely felt heard and valued by all of the staff and parents. It was really enlightening to hear things from the different perspectives on the committee. Learning about the improvements being made at the elementary level and how it will eventually impact the secondary schools was enlightening. It was a great experience.”

”

- Josia Martinez, rising senior, Class of 2027

Our Strategic Planning Process

This Strategic Plan was built by and for the East Otero community. The work began with a multi-day visit to our schools, conducted in collaboration with a team of external experts, where classroom observations and conversations with teachers, students, and staff helped surface our greatest strengths and our most important opportunities for growth.

In April, around 30 people came together for a two-day retreat: district and school leaders, teachers, students, caregivers, Board members, and partners from our broader community. Together, this group studied our performance across our schools and dug into the data behind our academic outcomes, our culture, and our students' experiences. From there, they began shaping a Student Experience Statement, defining what we want to be true for every student in East Otero, along with four Strategic Priorities to guide our work over the next five years.

That draft vision didn't stay in the room. It went out to every student, staff member, and caregiver in the district, and for four weeks, we listened. The feedback we received shaped what came next: a smaller team of district and school leaders spent two more days refining the Student Experience Statement and Strategic Priorities based on what the community shared, then mapped out concrete goals and actions to bring this plan to life.

The result is a plan grounded in real classroom experience, built on real data, and shaped by real voices from across our community.

Extended and Core Design Team Members

Patrick Krumholz
Superintendent

Jared Wilson
Chief Academic Officer

Heather Maes
DAC Chair

Julie Miller
Principal
LJPS

Claudia Apodaca
Principal
LJIS

Dr. Kimberly Zant
Otero College President

Kyle Lasley
VP of Academic Affairs
Otero College

Sara Hines
School Board President

George Ferguson
Principal
TTA

Skye Sisson
Instructional Coach
LJPS

Carolanna Traver
Instructional Coach
LJIS

Kellie Buhr
Instructional Coach
LJ Jr.Sr. High

Cameron Salzbrenner
School Board

Greg Kolomitz
School Board

Natalie Brown
Executive Director
Santa Fe Trail BOCES

Megan Bender
Assistant Principal
LJPS

Gina Griffy
Assistant Principal
LJIS

Scott Goheen
Assistant Principal
LJ Jr.Sr. High

Brenda Woodyard
Principal
LJ Jr.Sr. High

Shayla Yochum
Primary Teacher

Courtney Monarco
Intermediate Teacher

Justin Samora
Jr./Sr. High Teacher

Hallie Romero
District Social Worker

Leila Berg
Intermediate Student

Brylie Schmidt
MS Student
LJ Jr.Sr. High

Josia Martinez
HS Student
LJ Jr.Sr. High

Hailey Wold
Primary Parent

Zach Miner
INT. Parent

Lauren Berg
MS Parent

Toni Martinez
HS Parent

Joshua Smith
TNTP Facilitator

Vanessa Valencia
TNTP Facilitator



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