

Stakeholder Input Report for

***East Otero School
District
La Junta, Colorado***

submitted by

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EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT

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**East Otero School District
La Junta, Colorado
District Stakeholders Report, February 2024**

Executive Summary

On Friday, February 16, 2024, consultant Dr. Henry C. Roman conducted meetings with the district stakeholders representing five different groups associated with the La Junta School District to gather input regarding the selection of the new superintendent. The consultant received input from over 30 individuals during the meetings.

Outlined below is an Executive Summary of the major themes expressed by the participants at these sessions. Following the Executive Summary is a compilation of all the input received from these groups and individuals in response to the four questions asked of each group and participants. The final section of the report consists of responses by individuals who completed the online survey.

1. Tell us the good things about your community:

- The weather is excellent
- City atmosphere but slower
- Extreme small town community feeling with bigger town amenities
- Diverse community, all cultures represented
- Proudful
- It is home!
- Everyone knows everyone
- Many community and recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, canyons, dinosaurs' tracks, etc.
- Great place to raise kids
- Cultural events such as plays, Childrens' Theater, Indian Dancing "Koshare"
- Train transportation—Amtrac
- Lots of historical and archeological sites
- A town with lots to offer
- People know you

2. Tell us the good things about your school district:

- Tiger Pride—school spirit
- Good relationships between schools
- Good Administration “Team”
- Risk takers in a reasonable way
- “Fail forward” attitude
- Every kid gets a shot to succeed
- Alternative setting—final best setting
 - Won’t lose kids
- See the need/fill the need
- SCAP—Student Centered Accountability Program
 - Team visits
 - Graduation rates are higher as a result—from 85% to 92%
- Concurrent enrollment program
- Small district, not too big
- Everyone knows everyone on a personal level
- The staff really cares
- Always have the kid’s best interest
- Kids given more opportunities than anywhere else
- Good quality education
- Payroll issues have been addressed and only a few exceptions remain

3. What are the issues the incoming superintendent should be aware of as he/she comes into the district?

- Lack of parent engagement
- Recruitment and retention of teachers is an issue
- Past year and a half, a need to check your check
- Lack of consistency and continuity
- Each building is on its own island
- Buildings need to be upgraded
 - Asbestos issues
 - Roof issues at high school
- Testing is not considered important by some parents
- Intermediate building is on Year 4 but working hard on this
- Some issues with payroll
- Math and reading scores behind in performance
- Growing special ed population

4. What characteristics should the new superintendent have to be successful?

- Personable
- Good at listening to concerns
- All voices need to be heard
- Have experience with similar districts/schools, especially rural districts

- Good communication skills
- Not afraid to make a decision and able to live with it
- Significant strength in finance and budget
- Knows grant writing
- Knows turnaround
- Familiar with La Junta demographics such as size, low socio-economics, etc.
- Supportive of mental health care
- Background in curriculum implementation
- Training in work with high poverty populations
- Passionate about education
- Community focus
- High level of integrity
- Transparent

Stakeholder Group Responses

Name of Stakeholder Group: *Administrators (10)*

1. Tell us the good things about your community:

- The weather is excellent
- Small town, fewer stop lights
- Slower city atmosphere
- More diverse families, all cultures represented
- Proudful
- It is home!
- Many community activities and sports
- Extreme small town community feeling with bigger town amenities
- Everyone knows everyone
- “Real World” culture and acceptance
- Otero College here—offer concurrent enrollment classes
- City Youth Council
- Businesses are committed to the school district

2. Tell us the good things about your school district:

- Tiger Pride—school spirit
- Good relationships between schools
- Good Administration “Team”
- Risk takers in a reasonable way
- “Fail forward” attitude
- Every kid gets a shot to succeed
- Alternative setting—final best setting
 - Won’t lose kids
- See the need/fill the need
- SCAP—Student Centered Accountability Program
 - Team visits
 - Graduation rates are higher as a result—from 85% to 92%
- Concurrent enrollment program
- Odyssey Program
- CDLS Program
- Pre AP and AP program
- Higher level math classes such as college algebra and pre calc
- OJC courses offered up to 9 credits
- CNA program
- Strong Arts program, K-12
 - Now building back the music program with marching band and concert band
 - Theatre Program
- Strong AG program

- District Social Worker helping with mental health issues
 - Started a mentorship program
 - K-6 and Jr/Sr high included
- Schools share teachers and programs
- Instructional coaches at each building
- With district wide initiatives, staff is always on board
- Teacher turnover is beginning to stabilize
- Salaries are competitive with the other districts in the Valley
- La Junta kids return to become La Junta teachers
- Partnership with CU Boulder through Otero for Teacher Prep Program
- Alternative Licensure Program

3. What are the issues the incoming superintendent should be aware of as he/she comes into the district?

- Some issues with payroll
 - W-2, checks not correct
 - Some taxes not taken out
 - Gives staff an uneasy feeling
- Transparency of funding is in question
 - How much and where is the funding going?
- Perhaps much information was lost with staff turnover and change in accounting systems
- Central Office competency is in question
- Buildings need to be upgraded
 - Asbestos issues
 - Roof issues at high school
- Testing is not considered important by some parents
- Intermediate building is on Year 4 but working hard on this
- Need to attract teachers sooner

4. What characteristics should the new superintendent have to be successful?

- Good at listening to concerns
- All voices need to be heard
- Have experience with similar districts/schools, especially rural districts
- Good communication skills
- Not afraid to make a decision and able to live with it
- Someone with experience at all levels
 - Teacher, assistant principal, principal, etc.
- Building construction experience
- Experience with Sp Ed, La Junta numbers are high at 20-25%
 - Tend to be a draw for Sp Ed
- Prisons add to this
- Experience with mental health and other behaviors
- Transparency for difficult decisions
- Able to build a team

- Not afraid to work and put in the time necessary
- Be visible in the buildings
- Willing to do what it takes—pick up the mop if needed

Name of Stakeholder Group: Classified (2)

1. Tell us the good things about your community:

- Strong sense of community
- Many community activities such as hunting, fishing, canyons, dinosaurs' tracks, etc.
- Recreation activities
- Great place to raise kids
- Cultural events such as plays, Childrens' Theater, Indian Dancing "Koshare"
- Dance schools
- Competitive cheer
- Family opportunities

2. Tell us the good things about your school district:

- Small district, not too big
- Everyone knows everyone on a personal level
- The staff really cares
- Always the kids best interest
- Kids given more opportunities than anywhere else
- Good quality education
- "Medium" teacher turnover
- Some of the kids are the type that sometimes run teacher out
- Many "generationally poor" families always with a hand out
- Young leadership—very inspiring
- Good technology—Chromebooks
- Internet is good

3. What are the issues the incoming superintendent should be aware of as he/she comes into the district?

- Many buildings issues at high school
- Parents not as involved as they should be
- Seem not to take responsibility for their kids' behavior
- Maybe higher expectations from staff
- Budget—custodial equipment is old
- Recruiting teachers
- Discipline and attendance issues

4. What characteristics should the new superintendent have to be successful?

- Experience
 - financial background
 - Education background—some supervisory experience
 - Classroom
- Experience outside of La Junta
 - New perspective
 - Fresh set of eyes
- Personable
- Honesty
- Integrity

Name of Stakeholder Group: Students (1)

1. Tell us the good things about your community:

- Many Sports
 - Football
 - Basketball
 - Wrestling
 - Track
 - Baseball
- Fundraisers—Chocolate and popcorn

2. Tell us the good things about your school district:

- Excellent courses
- Workshops
- Art classes
- Lunch is good—paid for by the district
- Safe
- Good teachers
- 7th hour is for 6-8 sports practice then 9-12 teams practices after school avoiding conflicts on use of fields and locker rooms

3. What are the issues the incoming superintendent should be aware of as he/she comes into the district?

- Some bullying
- Bomb threat drill did not go well
 - Recommends more practice
 - More lock down drills
 - More evacuations

- Maybe purchase a mechanism he saw on a video that can be moved in front of the classroom door preventing the intruder entering the classroom
- Need better Wi-Fi, maybe better computers

4. What characteristics should the new superintendent have to be successful?

- Be visible at the assemblies
- Know he/she is there for the kids

Name of Stakeholder Group: Teachers (8)

1. Tell us the good things about your community:

- A dynamic culture in this community
- Support of the schools by
 - The hospital
 - The Churches
 - The Colleges
- Many activities
 - Hiking
 - Fishing
 - Etc.
- Small but close to big cities
- Train transportation—Amtrak
- Lots of historical and archeological sites
- Various festivals
- A town with lots to offer
- People know you
- Still can ride a bike in the street, play in your front yard and be safe
- College now offers a 4 year degree
- Teacher Prep program at college
- Nothing like Denver in a good way
- It is people focused –reason so safe
- Lower cost of living

2. Tell us the good things about your school district:

- Family friendly—staff members
- Very supportive of each other
- Bus provided for staff children to be transported from teacher/parent’s school site to the child’s school site
- Positive changes these last few years
- Leadership is stable

- District has partnered with OJC
- Alternative licensure with BOCES
- Concurrent enrollment can lead to AA degree upon high school graduation
- Arts, Theater, Children's Theater
- Academics and extra-curricular programs are strong
- Good sports programs
- Tiger Track School--Skills and trades programs
- Alternative Teaching Program for dropouts
- Online schooling
- Good BOCES for Sp Ed programming
- Online programs for high achieving kids
- Talented senior staff—teach high level courses
- Many students earn scholarships
- Very invested school board
- Salaries and benefits are competitive
- Low cost of living

3. What are the issues the incoming superintendent should be aware of as he/she comes into the district?

- Lack of parent engagement
- Need to have a school community culture shift
- Generational Poverty
 - Not expecting much more
 - Got by so far so why change
- Grandparents raising kids now
 - Much more than in the past
- Recruitment and retention of teachers is an issue
- Past year and a half, a need to check your check
- Lack of consistency and continuity
- Each building is on its own island
- Facilities are good
- Need drivers, sometimes coaches have to drive
- Leadership in transportation not getting it done
- Tiger Track Academy has asbestos issues

4. What characteristics should the new superintendent have to be successful?

- Significant strength in finance and budget
- Knows grant writing
- Knows turnaround
- Familiar with La Junta demographics such as size, low socio-economics, etc.
- Supportive of mental health care
- Classroom experience
- Building facilities awareness

- Not use La Junta as a stepping stone
- People person
- Values the staff
- Trust the staff
- Not a micro manager
- Knows the staff
- Willing and able to go into the classroom
- Values extra-curricular activities
- Willing to be part of the community
- Be visible at community events
- Needs to identify problems and the clean them up
- Need to plan for the replacement of Saxon Math
- Must have a thick skin

Name of Stakeholder Group: Parents/Community (10)

1. Tell us the good things about your community:

- Wonderful place to live
- Small town – no traffic
- Personal touch
- 2 year community college
- Many opportunities at the college including employment
- Kind, genuine, and welcoming
- People will do anything for you
- Many opportunities
 - Multiple sports
 - Cost is lower
- Not far from big cities
- Community bands together when needed
- Good mental health
- Local hospital
- Art district
- Non-sports programs as well
- AG culture
- Historical
 - Santa Fe Trail
 - Kiva
 - Bents Fort
 - Tarantula Fest
 - Early Settlers Day

- Housing is good for purchase but not so much for rent
- Career opportunities—great business
- College is “hands on”
- CTE programs are growing

2. Tell us the good things about your school district:

- Primary school is awesome
- K-2 building is awesome
- Staff is great
- Very hands on
- You can talk to your child’s teachers
- Strong graduation rate
- Small class size—better communication
- All facilities are great
 - Indoor pool
 - Gyms
 - Tiger Stadium
- Many specials are offered—Art and Music
- STEM
- Teachers are invested
- Not as high turnover rate
- K-6 similar training as other levels
- 2nd grade transition to 3rd grade not so drastic for students
- Good retention of leaders at K-6
- Older kids get to see the younger kids in the building and on campus
- K-6 social worker started a mentorship program with the students
- Food banks available
- Big Brother/Big Sister program
- Out sourced mental health service through Willow Tree as needed
- Opportunity for younger kids to get involved with older kids
 - Cheer competition
 - Theater
- Many rec sports
- Stability on school board
- Dedicated teachers—willing and open to new opportunities
- Diversity in district

3. What are the issues the incoming superintendent should be aware of as he/she comes into the district?

- Math and reading scores behind in performance
- Roof at high school in need of repair
- Growing special ed population
- In high school special needs kids are expected to take regular classes(?)

- Many nonverbal kids need more individualized classes
- Sp Ed para may need to be trained to redirect instruction for the special needs kids
- Intermediate school teachers not following the curriculum—not differentiating

4. What characteristics should the new superintendent have to be successful?

- Background in curriculum implementation
- Training in work with high poverty populations
- Passionate about education
- Community focus
- High level of integrity
- Transparent
- Financial acumen
- Data driven decision maker
- Knows conflict resolution and negotiations
- Visionary
- Patient
- Not using La Junta as a stepping stone
- Has a backbone—can say “no”
- Home grown may be good, but need an outside perspective
- Has high expectations
- A leader
- Knows how to lobby state leaders
- Grant funding abilities
- Knows can’t do all things, but will do many things well

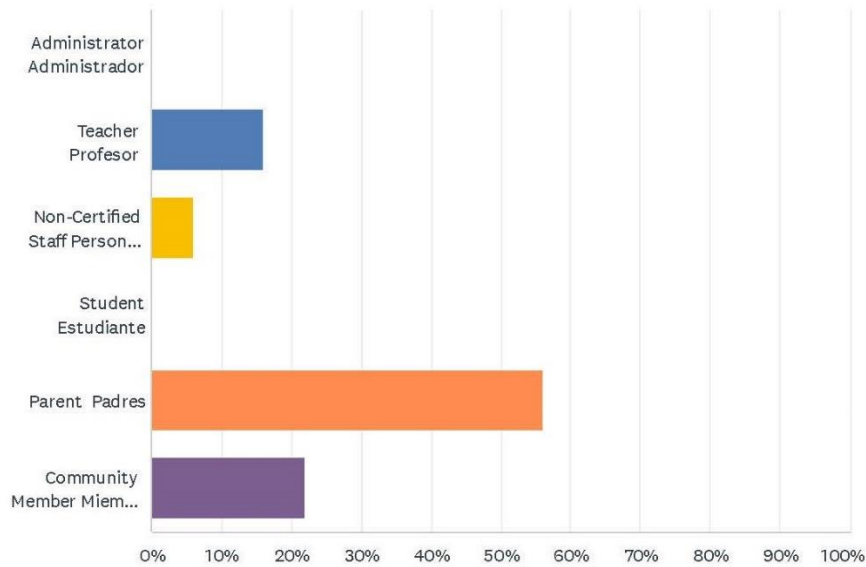
*Survey Monkey Results for East Otero School District
February 2024*

*(NOTE—these responses have not been edited,
they are printed as entered by the stakeholders)*

50 responses

Please indicate the stakeholder group you represent:
Indique el grupo de interesados al que representa:

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Administrator Administrador	0.00% 0
Teacher Profesor	16.00% 8
Non-Certified Staff Personal no certificado	6.00% 3
Student Estudiante	0.00% 0
Parent Padres	56.00% 28
Community Member Miembro de la comunidad	22.00% 11
TOTAL	50

Q1 Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.) Cuéntenos las cosas buenas de su comunidad. (Esta información se utiliza para ayudarnos a reclutar candidatos de calidad).

involved tight knit community resources children living rural opportunities pride
small local great library lot parks community
Small town people supportive families need city caring good town live
La Junta many

Q2 Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.) Díganos lo bueno de sus escuelas. (Esta información se utiliza para ayudarnos a reclutar candidatos de calidad).

many primary intermediate children parents kids sports need building district
activities students amazing teachers things
schools community good go staff families work dedicated
care intermediate really Great

Q3 What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.) ¿Qué cuestiones debe tener en cuenta el superintendente al llegar al distrito? (Esta información se comparte con los candidatos finales).

retaining held accountable Will consistency sports working problem always
high school discipline families teach people education lack great
district good students staff school areas
teachers feel need Teachers need issue paras
parents Big community huge kids back children one lot challenge
support follow think don t help learning

Q4 What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.) ¿Qué aptitudes, cualidades o características debe poseer el nuevo superintendente para tener éxito aquí? (Esta información se utiliza para seleccionar a los posibles candidatos).

staff rural make qualified work things will new schools parents
community experience good person need also
students area Someone changes understanding
Listening superintendent come job think important district

Community Member Miembro de la comunidad

1. Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

Cuéntenos las cosas buenas de su comunidad. (Esta información se utiliza para ayudarnos a reclutar candidatos de calidad).

- La Junta is a safe, tight-knit community. People look out for each other and come together to help those in need. The cost of living is affordable, and we don't have to spend our lives in the car commuting in traffic! I feel there is a great deal of hometown pride and locals are supportive of our schools and community events.
- La Junta is a small, involved community. Many opportunities exist to become involved from the Elks 701 to Chamber of Commerce. Youth programs are run from the City of La Junta. It is a quiet little inviting town.
- Good quiet place to live
- This is a tight knit community that truly cares for one another. And supports our students academically and athletically
- We have a strong agriculture, and our farmers' markets are the highlight of the summer! We have great amenities such as our outdoor and indoor swimming pools, a golf course, a senior center and a library. Broadband internet is widely available.
- I enjoy the close knit community. If I don't know where to find specific resources or information, there will be friends who can lead me in the right direction. There are plenty of people willing to help with what they can, when they know about a situation.
- It is a close knit community. We look out for each other.
- Our community members are smart and resourceful. We unite in times of crisis and need, and many long time residents are genuinely committed to the welfare of all.
- Small town living, close community, community pride.
- There are so many good things about this community. Our community cares about our children. We have a lovely little library that is a valuable resource. A desire to provide quality programs and opportunities for growth. We have a slower pace of life but are close enough to larger communities that have all the extra amenities you need.

2. Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

Díganos lo bueno de sus escuelas. (Esta información se utiliza para ayudarnos a reclutar candidatos de calidad).

- Our schools are safe and led by passionate and knowledgeable administration. We have some truly amazing educators working in our schools, and their passion for their work is evident!
- A majority of the teachers in our schools are committed the calling of teaching. Those teachers go above and beyond. The commitment level of many teachers is high; they will work after school hours. The majority of students are amazing kids. They have involved parents and are very active in activities offered in the schools. Parents don't play as an active role in their students school life, as they should.
- Beautiful schools

- There are a lot of gifted students who care and give back to the community through service. Last year alone the graduating class had well over 1 million dollars in scholarships combined.
- Not much from I can tell, kids are just being pushed on through no accountability.
- I really like how the schools can work together. My exchange student gets to go to the primary and intermediate for her mentorship class. They also use the gym of the intermediate for different kids sports.
- Since it is a smaller town, class sizes are still large but not overwhelmingly. There is also good return rate with staff and teachers.
- We have strong vocational programs in place, and our partnership with Otero College is beneficial to students and staff.
- I choose to send my children out of district
- Our schools have the most caring and dedicated teachers I've ever met, especially the primary school.

3. What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

¿Qué cuestiones debe tener en cuenta el superintendente al llegar al distrito? (Esta información se comparte con los candidatos finales).

- I think the biggest issue facing La Junta schools is teacher burn-out and turnover. We have difficulty filling positions in our schools and often end up hiring people who don't have experience in education. Our rural location can also be challenging for new hires who aren't from the area.
- Payroll issues have plagued our district for the last 2 years. Students are not always held accountable for their actions. The consequences usually don't prevent another bad action from happening. Some teachers are burned out at not always being supported. Some classes have become dumping grounds for badly behaved students.
- Priorities should not be sports, should be academics. Teachers need to be held accountable and teach to the standards not push students on through if they are not learning what is being taught.
- While most parents/guardians care there are issues with some parents so therefore their children act as such.
- There for one thing should be rules that are followed and discipline consistency throughout the district. Teachers need to dress like teachers. More needs to be done to make sure students are being taught the necessary subjects. Follow a curriculum not fly by the seat of your pants teaching.
- We have relied too heavily on "growing our own" in our schools, and are noticing limited perspectives and experiences in certain areas. Also, our administrative functions (Accounting/Finance, Payroll and People) need to be strengthened.
- As a previous employee, one issue I struggled with is communication. There never seemed to be specific set of policy and procedures to follow. Because it is a smaller community there choices based off of personal preference rather than equity for all employees and families. Our teachers are stressed and stretched to the limit so one thing that they should not have to worry about is their pay or if enough federal taxes are being

taken from their paycheck. They don't need the extra stress of possibly having to pay back taxes.

- It can be very catty. There are people in power who should not be in power- gossiping about students with other students, favoritism, etc.
- We have settled into a culture of mediocrity in the past decade. The reputation of the district within the valley is dismal. In particular, the high school has the reputation of being a dangerous place to send students with an absence of meaningful discipline.
- Low test scores. Low staff retention. Poor reputation in the community
- Of course the ability to find and retain quality teachers is a nationwide issue.

4. What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

¿Qué aptitudes, cualidades o características debe poseer el nuevo superintendente para tener éxito aquí? (Esta información se utiliza para seleccionar a los posibles candidatos).

- I think it's important for the new superintendent to be a visionary, but also to recognize the good things we are doing and not reinvent the wheel! They also need to understand small town culture and the challenges that can come with living in a rural environment. We have a great deal of families living in poverty in this area, so it's important that they have experience working with low-income families and the challenges that can create in a school environment i.e. disengaged families, apathetic students, behavior issues, mental health impacts, etc.
- The person should have some previous administration experience Be truthful Understand the financial/payroll side but not take on the responsibility Hold people accountable, including his or herself, for what they are not doing for the good of our district. Do research about how some schools are being presented and labeled. Dig deep and find the truth
- Show no favoritism to any staff member, use allocated money on what it needs to be used on. Be open to communicate with the parents and community. Don't let the school board dictate to him/her just what they want done. We could have a great school district but the superintendent needs to stay on top of things and keep principals accountable, visit buildings often...
- Personable, caring, but also professional and stern
- Focus more on what kids are learning not just the athletics, students are "Students First"
- Two qualities that come to mind when choosing a superintendent is discernment and transparency.
- Patience and empathy. Our students are struggling, they need guidance, but it is going to take someone who is willing to understand them, not just send them to TTA from the HS when they do something wrong.
- A commitment to excellence, patience, strength to confront significant challenges and institutional inertia, and the ability to recognize and value the particular gifts of teachers, staff, and administrators.
- Good problem solving. Child focused and lead with what is best for children not what is best for staff retention
- You have to be willing to join the community and experience life with us.

Non-Certified Staff Personal no certificado

- 1. Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

Cuéntenos las cosas buenas de su comunidad. (Esta información se utiliza para ayudarnos a reclutar candidatos de calidad).

- safe setting and good to raise a family. affordable housing
- We have a good amount of supportive people in our community.
- -Our community is small, but mighty. When something happens, we tend to all put a little bit of our part to ensure the people in our community are okay and safe

- 2. Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

Díganos lo bueno de sus escuelas. (Esta información se utiliza para ayudarnos a reclutar candidatos de calidad).

- smaller class size and friendliness can know you by name or on personal level. honestly not to many good things.
- Our schools have a good amount of staff and educators that care for the students in their buildings.
- -Our schools have some amazing and valuable teachers. Our teachers work with a different generation and continue to show patience even with a much ore challenging generation

- 3. What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)**

¿Qué cuestiones debe tener en cuenta el superintendente al llegar al distrito? (Esta información se comparte con los candidatos finales).

- budget and careless spending, nepotism, student discipline, drugs in schools. (vape, marijuana) OUR BIGGEST DOWNFALL communication from the top down it is very discouraging on the lack of communication here at EOSD
- We do have a huge behavior problem throughout our district and we do need a stricter administration to get it under control.
- -Diversity within student family home situations. Our students are being raised by siblings, grandparents, and parents who have some sort of mental illness, or substance use disorder. These challenges create children who do not have motivation and are surviving or wanting extra attention as they literally do not know what consequence, problem solving, and a loving environment is. These children often display ongoing behaviors and challenge the schools to their limits.

- 4. What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)**

¿Qué aptitudes, cualidades o características debe poseer el nuevo superintendente para tener éxito aquí? (Esta información se utiliza para seleccionar a los posibles candidatos).

- CPA education ahead of sports manager skills budget minded budget budget is a big concern here NOT here to make friends here to do a job communicator is another big area of concern.
- The new superintendent should have a back bone, be stern and strict (when need be), but also understanding and caring.
- Integrity, patience, and overall be a natural nurturing person. Children now a days have no empathy as they do not have a nurturing person at home. It is important for our new superintendent to be aware of what is best for our children and be involved and aware of what happens at all of our schools

Parent Padres

1. Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

Cuéntenos las cosas buenas de su comunidad. (Esta información se utiliza para ayudarnos a reclutar candidatos de calidad).

- A lot to do in the city, good amount of local businesses and growing
- The community supports school activities and sports.
- Great Community, wonderful hospital, thriving college
- Small town feel. Tight-knit community with friends you can rely on. Small businesses that cater to your needs. Volunteer opportunities with many local organizations that provide our community to various options for entertainment, etc...
- Residents watch out for each other and their neighbors.
- N/A
- Good town to live in - opportunities with manufacturing, railroad, hospital and ag industries for spouses or other family members. Otero College is a great partner in our community.
- We're a small community allowing people to really get involved to the degree that interests them. You get to try on a lot of "hats" in small towns and develop a lot of skills and strengths as a result.
- We are a small town with a vested interest in our community. We are relatively free of the big city influence and political pitfalls. We find strengths in what the rest of the state would call weaknesses. We are resilient, caring and dedicated.
- Clean water, parks, museums, fishing, hiking trails, lakes and affordable living.
- Our community is multicultural and highly proud of The sports connected to the school district. Also, multiple generations of families have lived here, so it's a very tight knit community. We have a beautiful historic downtown, many parks and a lot of outdoor activities in the area. La Junta is a beautiful small towns in southeastern Colorado plains. The weather is absolutely awesome here because it doesn't snow much or rain so we have lots of sunny days!
- Some of the people are nice. City administrators try to engage the community and give people things to do.
- Lots of parks for the kids, two pools, great library with lots of activities, lots of local shops and family restaurants.

- Simple to get from point A to B.
- Active
- Family, support sports as Football
- La Junta is a community with adequate property values which provide a small city with resources a lot of other rural areas do not have.
- It is full of culture! A great place to grow up!
- People know each other and take care of each other. Very friendly. Short drives to larger cities
- Living in a small community is so great. People here are always willing to lend a helping hand.
- Close knit, share resources, great involvement.
- We are small and those who are actively involved create a positive and friendly environment.
- Everyone is Family. We all take care of each other, our families and children. It truly is the best town to live in.
- Tight knit community.
- There are parents that want to help and be involved
- There aren't any anymore. We are filled with low income families who can't afford necessities. If you want drugs and crime come on down to LJ.
- We have an amazing City Library lots of teen and children's programming. The city park is beautiful well maintained and we just got a new park Brick and tile. Commute to grocery store post office and gas station are all within 5 mins of each other makes errands and paying bills easy.

2. Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

Díganos lo bueno de sus escuelas. (Esta información se utiliza para ayudarnos a reclutar candidatos de calidad).

- There is a good admin team in place in all buildings. What I've experienced with those in an administrative position, they are honest and ethical. They communicate what they can when questions occur regarding issues that arose in schools (like bullying and other issues)
- Involved and adaptive teachers. Great activity programs
- La Junta is willing to help all types of students unlike surrounding communities that don't wish to take the time to help troubled students.
- Wonderful principals and a great selection of teachers
- Small class sizes. Teachers who care.
- My kids go to TTA and they really like it there. This is a big deal coming from kids that didn't like school before. The staff are great and really care about the students.
- N/A
- The teachers are very dedicated. My child has had very good experiences with many of the teachers individually.
- East Otero Schools communication is SUPERB. When the school has an event, I receive a call, a text, an email and it's usually posted in Class Tag and on their social media pages. Similarly with alarming events, the Superintendent posts a personal video of him

speaking to the community quickly and addresses common questions or concerns people may have. [REDACTED] has demonstrated wonderful district accountability and he's always timely in speaking to the community. It's something I will miss dearly when he leaves and hope his replacement will mirror. Overall, I love that I have to really go out of my way to *NOT* know what's going on at my child's school. I would rather receive several reminders than none at all so 100/10 for communication.

- The schools have some amazing people working in and for them. Some of the best people you'll ever meet. Nowhere is perfect but sometimes we feel mighty close here.
- Student activities, encouraging area to learn, and good security
- The pride for sports here is very strong. Parent involvement is very high with sports, because we have done really good over the years with ranking high in the performance of many sports. The new leadership at the schools is very positive and eager to learn. The school district is located in the same town with the BOCES that serves the area. The school district's graduation rates are very good and what's even better is that they have a really good rate of graduates, finding jobs and going into college better than most districts in the state.
- Most of the teachers and staff are really nice. They seem like they care. My kids seem happy and are thriving here.
- Great teachers, good communication, fun environment for kids.
- Good staff. Nice facilities.
- Great communication
- .
- La Junta Schools have good leadership in their principals who have their hearts in the right place to do right for their students. They listen to input and genuinely seem to want to create better.
- At the intermediate the teachers go above and beyond. They do hold their students to a high level. From what I can see the other schools are doing good too.
- Very few things come to mind. Nearly 35% of teachers do not have a license. All schools need major help. Need to get away from the good ol boy system. But we do have a beautiful primary school building and a very beautiful intermediate school building.
- We have many good teachers and some go above and beyond for their students. Staff at some of the schools do extra for kids/families that are in need of things other than education.
- Lots of pride by past and present and community, try to work with parents. Free lunch program, safe
- We are diverse and encourage student participation.
- Our district is amazing. They are very family oriented and available for all inquiries and needs the best they can.
- Again tight knit, listen to the parents and children, lots of involvement with our children, always trying to better the schools and curriculum.
- The [REDACTED] that I have dealt with are caring and act in concerns quickly.
- The schools are close to the neighborhoods. The security as far as getting into the buildings there are buzzers and cameras to let staff see who goes in and out. Primary teachers and staff are amazing communicate well. Jr high has great leaders [REDACTED] is wonderful. The highschool needs some work with admin staff. Maybe more training

definitely need to recruit more teachers. There are some teachers teaching from you tube videos.

3. What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

¿Qué cuestiones debe tener en cuenta el superintendente al llegar al distrito? (Esta información se comparte con los candidatos finales).

- The minority population is high and so are those who are considered low income or homeless. This leads to different issues than communities face that contain a different mix of minority people. Differences are even greater when comparing mid-income communities to those like us in Otero, Crowley and Bent counties that contain such a high poverty rate.
- Lack of advocacy Lack of behavioral implementation (next steps when there's none) Lack of paras and para education Big diversity and a lot of mental and emotional support needed Curriculum losses of several different types
- As with most small communities last names and money cause individuals to receive privileges they may not have earned. In addition there are a few teachers that are being retained because it's easier to deal with the chaos they cause than to look for replacements.
- Aging facilities that desperately need updating. Behavior issues in the upper grades.
- Dealing with bullying.
- Systemic racism, no representation of the Hispanic population in studies, drug problems without resources, high cost of living with the lowest income households throughout the state, 6/10 of the poorest counties are in this southeast region, and a mental health crisis nobody wants to address.
- The over emphasis of sports historically in this community is holding back the school from being excellent - or even just competent - in other areas. Kids in the school know what is valued by where emphasis is put during pep rallies, send offs, announcements, etc. Also, financial transparency needs to be a bigger priority for the next superintendent.
- I think balancing staff retention and parent needs is always a fine line. The staff at the school have families of their own and they're dealing with parents who's primary concern will be their own child/family. I always worry about retaining great teachers because it's so hard to get them here in the first place but also ensuring they're held to high performance standards and that students are learning. It's a fine line and one that I think anyone in education relates to.
- We need help. Our kids are out of control and our families are hurting. We have low school interest, little to no family support in a lot of cases and no money to invest in a campaign to change that. If you have a bag of miracles, please bring it along. There are a LOT of us here that can and will help, but we will need a leader with the steadfast and resolute intention of working just as hard as we will
- The school board is very biased against new policies or policies they don't like.
- I believe that a lot of the kids that are behavioral problem children have learning disabilities and they're undiagnosed. If the district could get some kind of help with that, I think the academic problem would be fixed. I'm hoping with the Colorado Read Act there

will be funding in the future and proper training for teachers to help children with learning disabilities.

- We live in a poor area. It seems like a lot of families are struggling.
- I think low scores would be alarming.
- Hard to keep parents actively involved in the school especially in high school
- Rendimiento académico y disciplina.
Academic performance and discipline.
- Teachers are not adequately trained to meet the emotional needs of their students.
- Parents always siding with their child. So angry parents. The high school building is falling apart. The roof always leaks. The intermediate building smells like rotten eggs. Each school is their own and it doesn't seem like they do anything together. Finding teachers is a challenge and some of the teachers are not qualified and don't know how to teach so they use a lot of computer programs that are great to help fill the gap, however that is not a curriculum! I keep hearing about payroll issues and Colorado Para issues. The schools outside areas in different places don't look good. I don't know whose job that is to make sure the outside is cleaned and looking nice.
- Unqualified staff, education staff only believes in helping their own, favoritism, good ol boy system tries to control, unqualified board of education (not newly elected members) who follow the good ol boy system
- I feel a huge issue in our district is lack of consequences for students who are breaking rules in the schools. Especially at the junior/senior high. Also, I feel teachers do not get enough support from the administration. I feel as though nothing is done for the kids that are there to learn and are following the rules. They are not challenged and have to sit through assemblies where they are yelled at for things that don't pertain to them. We've been in this district for a long time and this has been a problem once you get to the intermediate school level. It gets old when you are a good kid and continue to get punished for the things the bad kids do. With this being said, my children highly dislike going to school.
- Teachers need backing, we need licensed teachers, most teachers are very caring and want what is best
- Large percentage of parents who are checked out of their kids lives. Blame teachers and school for their students problems. Use social media to vent versus coming to school admin. Poor attendance and eligibility are too high.
- I believe our main issue is where funding is spent. My opinion is that the Athletic programs mainly High school level get alot of upgrades that may not be particularly needed. Example being a new scoreboard for football when the old one worked great. I would like to see funding go to more educational programs.
- Lots of favoritism, really depends on who you know and who you are in a small town like this, focused more on sports than other extra curricular activities. Needs to focus on learning rather than the sports.
- I feel like the district lacks competent teachers. A lot of kids aren't at level and when they do reach level they don't stay there. I don't want to do school with my children after they've already done school all day. A little bit at home is fine, but it should supplement, not replace what should be done in school. Bullying is an issue. The district needs better policies for this and then I forced consistently.
- That quite a few teachers are bullies and pick on special needs students.

- Building maintenance in all buildings. Clogged toilets asbestos falling from the ceiling in the highschool.

4. What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

¿Qué aptitudes, cualidades o características debe poseer el nuevo superintendente para tener éxito aquí? (Esta información se utiliza para seleccionar a los posibles candidatos).

- Everyone will know who they are. The community will be watching them both on and off duty. They need to be one who sets a good example and can stand withstand public scrutiny of both home and personal life.
- Someone that can huggle, maybe break the job into two jobs to better manage. Someone that can handle curriculum as well as business aspect (grants)
- They should be able to become a part of the community and take into consideration what the district needs but not allow the community to dictate how they do their job. We need growth in ALL areas.
- able to communicate and be very transparent with things
- Multi-tasking Peacemaker Fair Conservative Faith
- I think a good candidate should care about kids and have a good understanding of our schools and students, like someone that grew up here and teaches here.
- Be open to listen to new ideas
- Skills in budgeting, managing staff, navigating state policies and requirements, and networking with partners (Otero College, city of LJ, other schools, employers for students/graduates)
- I think it's most important to not be prideful about the big shoes they'll be filling. [REDACTED] was WONDERFUL so there's no need to totally reinvent the parts of the wheel that work! I hope the new Sup makes the role their own and retains some of the pieces that [REDACTED] used because he was a wonderful Superintendent. When someone departs who was really successful in their role, it's easy to feel intimidated or, to avoid being compared too frequently, to veer totally away from the previous person's way of doing the job. I would encourage the new person to continue the parts that were so successful for [REDACTED] but find new ways to make it their own.
- Understanding. Listening. INTEREST IN BETTERING THE COMMUNITY. The school should not be the dumping ground of all of our communal issues, the community holds that responsibility, but we will need strength, compassion, devotion and decisiveness to make this work.
- Needs experience, preferably successful from wherever they came from and educated
- Listening skills, and then following up skills, keeping a positive mind frame, Definitely have to be caring and open-minded. Manager skills with regards to holding people accountable. Everybody's related here and I think that's been our issue in the past.
- Patience. Creativity. Kindness. A love of learning and the ability to inspire that in the students. Knowing how to potentially work with less than you really need.
- Respectful, understanding, good communication, honesty, effective leadership and compassion.
- Must love people, especially kids. Important to be seen & heard.

- Thick skin
- Honest, moral values, experience as educator, and understand the rural area.
- Transformative leadership skills, emotional intelligence, well-adjusted, aware of issues in rural school districts relative to how that works at a state level
- Someone who is invested in our children. Someone in our area would be best because they know how we work! He/she needs to be kind, respectful, personable, upfront, and honest. Someone who takes ownership of his/her mistakes. Honestly someone from our district would be best in my opinion.
- Independent, strong leader not a manager, qualified, ability to ask for help, using and joint forces with community partners
- I think it would be very important to have a superintendent that has previous experience as a superintendent. They need strong leadership skills, and are going to bring some new fresh ideas to better our district.
- Problem solver, ok to confront people, transparent, back the teachers, don't make shady deals.
- Empathy but go by policy. Don't allow parent to bypass the chain of command and go straight to superindenant.
- The applicant needs to be family oriented and able to understand our community is a low to middle class based community. Compassion and respect for our current flow of things but also a person not afraid to research and make tough changes that would benefit our students.
- Someone from out of town would be preferred so no one gets favored. Very hands on and gets to know the parents and students.
- Communication with teachers and principals to come up with a way to increase students comprehension. Keep these kids at level and engaged. Not just for taking a test. The kids are bored and getting lazy. Listen to parents concerns and truly care, not just listen then pass it off.
- The ability to not play favorites
- Friendly when need be, but most communication. Facebook east otero page has been working great for our superintendent here in LJ. I am very interested and happy to hear we will have training for drills for our schools. This is so important as with no training there will be chaos.

Teacher Profesor

1. Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

Cuéntenos las cosas buenas de su comunidad. (Esta información se utiliza para ayudarnos a reclutar candidatos de calidad).

- People know each other and can be supportive. Several businesses and individuals support the school and activities by providing resources and opportunities (this can also be strengthened). There is community and school pride still present, especially in the older generations. Faith organizations are present and active in the community.
- Rural but not too rural and small businesses can thrive here

- People are willing to help each other. The community is open to change and growth. No rec or med weed stores.
- We are supportive of each other and of our youth! There is a lot of talent and passion in our community.
- For a town of our size, we have lots of fun things to do and opportunities for people of all ages. We have a great pool, library and golf course. We have Otero College right here which is amazing. We also have things like gyms, dance studios, Frisbee golf, a bowling alley, a ceramics studio, and community theater.
- Our community is small. We care about each other. We care about our children and we are very supportive of our school district
- Our community is filled with good and well intentioned people, and we have pride in our schools.
- As a former La Junta Tiger Alumni, I came back to my hometown after being gone for several years. I wanted to raise my own children in a community where there are opportunities and neighbors look out for each other. I have an excellent relationship with my students' and their families. The community comes together to help those in need or suffering from a traumatic event.

2. Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

Díganos lo bueno de sus escuelas. (Esta información se utiliza para ayudarnos a reclutar candidatos de calidad).

- Compared to some other districts nearby, there is more diversity in our schools. There are more opportunities and classes offered here compared to nearby smaller districts. Many families have been here for generations and/or have ties to multiple families in the community. Historically, sports teams have experienced success and have been supported by the community.
- Principals are hands on and off. They allow us to make decision and offer support when we ask for it. They are supportive of trying new ideas.
- The younger schools are good. The high school needs so much work. Need a strong person to clean it up.
- Tiger Pride is a real thing. We have some excellent, devoted educators and staff who know their students and care.
- I love that our schools represent students from all socioeconomic levels and from diverse backgrounds. As a teacher, I also love the freedom I have to bring interesting experiences to my students. I feel supported in trying new things in my classroom and in the classes I offer.
- Our schools are very dedicated to our students. From teachers, administration, kitchen staff, custodians
- The good things: we have well intentioned staff, and for the most part admin backing of teachers.
- Our school district allows families to work in the same district. They support their staff when they need to attend their own children's events or activities. They provide a small bus to transport staff children so that staff can be at school on time. Schools work

together to provide opportunities to our youth. Both the High School students and the Tiger Trades Academy volunteer time at the Primary and Intermediate Schools.

3. What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

¿Qué cuestiones debe tener en cuenta el superintendente al llegar al distrito? (Esta información se comparte con los candidatos finales).

- The quality of education offered in the district has decreased over the last 10 years. The expectations for teaching, learning, and student behavior have also decreased. Students aren't held accountable for learning or behavior as evidenced in various ways. We've made it so easy to get and recover credits at the high school level, the diploma is nearly meaningless. We give tests because we have to, but nothing meaningful is done with the data we have. At the junior high level, there are no ultimate consequences; students can fail all classes for two years and continue on to high school- ill-prepared. We have very little parent involvement at the secondary level. Teachers lack support and guidance from administrators and any attempt to hold students to standards is met with resistance from parents and district administration. Recruiting teachers, growing them into effective leaders, and retaining them is a huge concern.
- Payroll is a mess for staff. Taxes are messed up and payroll has been a mess for two years and there are still issues that aren't fixed. When issues are addressed they are not direct and clear about what is truly going on.
- Mental health and a lack of some resources is an issue. Many parents are struggling financially. There is a need for consistency.
- I think we have a great deal of treating some people differently than others. Some people count and some don't around here. So many people are related or have known each other for generations that it can feel very off-putting for anyone who doesn't fit that category. Also, we have a history of poor communication and lack of consistency when it comes to enforcement of policies.
- Not consistent with discipline
- There is large community support for sports in our community. Though I know sports are important, I believe the emphasis and amount of money poured into it is excessive. We live in a community where we are short on doctors, nurses, teachers, accountants, veterinarians, attorneys, skilled tradesmen etc... and all our efforts are put into sports, and sending kids on scholarships. We need to be working on pushing students to fill jobs that are in demand in the very community they live in. It just seems like there is a large disconnect there.
- Human resource issues have been a concern for over a year! Paychecks have been late, wrong or extra duty not given. This has caused frustration and tension among employees. There are opportunities in the district to move to new positions, which is a positive, but people are not always qualified for the new position they are acquiring. Allowing family members to work in a district together in a district is often positive however, there are times when you are unable to talk to administration about an issue because it involves their family member. Having an alternate chain of command without repercussions would have been very helpful!

**4. What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)
¿Qué aptitudes, cualidades o características debe poseer el nuevo superintendente para tener éxito aquí? (Esta información se utiliza para seleccionar a los posibles candidatos).**

- The new superintendent should be an educational leader and strong communicator willing to make necessary changes to improve the current quality of education in our schools. This person should inspire a renewed faith and focus on learning and teaching in our community- the purpose of education and should hold reasonable, but high expectations for staff and students.
- We need a superintendent who has a backbone. How many times can a person make mistakes that should cost them their jobs still be allowed to keep working for the district. We shouldn't be bending the rules for individuals because of their last name or who their family is. We need to have qualified people in as many positions as possible and not just let anyone keep a position they aren't qualified to do.
- Someone who can implement change. Someone from outside our community so that there is no favoritism shown and hopefully no nepotism.
- An good understanding of La Junta and the unique socio-economic challenges that exist. An open mind and the ability to communicate with staff on all levels (not just admin). An understanding that not everything needs to be changed. Many things are working well.
- Backbone, resilience, imperviousness to whining and insults and uneducated criticism, creativity, flexibility
- The current superintendent did a good job of respecting individuals, trusting people to do their work, and allowing academic freedoms. I would like that approach to continue, but more emphasis on education and connecting students to solutions and jobs in our community!
- I believe that our superintendent needs to have a tough skin as there will be difficult conversations that need to be held to improve our human resources, transportation and maintenance departments. This will help with the stress of staff and maintaining quality personnel. I also would like the superintendent to be part of our community. Living in La Junta and supporting our programs are necessary.