

*La Junta Jr/Sr High School*  
*Paul A. Jebe, Principal*  
*John Haberman, Assistant Principal*  
*Dan Nuschy, Athletic/Activity Director*



Dear Families,

East Otero School District, as all school districts in Colorado, has been assigned a performance rating by the Colorado Department of Education. These performance ratings are based on student achievement and growth using the TCAP (Transitional Colorado Assessment Program) data in reading, writing, math and science as well as graduation rates and ACT scores. There are 5 categories for performance that determine each districts' accreditation with the Department of Education. The categories include:

- Accredited with Distinction
- Accredited
- Accredited with an Improvement Plan
- Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan
- Accredited with Turnaround Plan.

Our District Performance Framework indicated that our district is Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan. The district was assigned this plan type based on low-performance in the areas of achievement, growth and growth gaps. A Unified Improvement Plan is being developed during the 2013-14 school year. This plan identifies 3 areas we are working toward as a district.

1. Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum – Curriculum documents identify what should be taught and when the teaching should occur at each grade level and content.
2. 8 Core Practices – There are 8 Core Practice that have been identified as highly effective strategies to improve student learning. These are:
  - learning targets and expectations
  - success criteria and description of mastery
  - active engagement
  - evidence of learning
  - responding to different learners and styles
  - encourage student responsibility for their own education
  - feedback from peers,
  - feedback from teachers
3. Teaching and Learning Cycle – This cycle focuses on what teachers should teach and what students should learn.

An additional strategy that is specific to the Junior/Senior High School is a focus on writing in all classes. This writing focus is a little different than the typical language arts approach. It is about having students explain their thinking and sometimes describing a process. This is one of the higher-order thinking skills that are required from our students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skillset, and should help them improve their scores on state assessments as well. Another strategy used at the Junior/Senior High School is the Aleks math program, which is used for all 8<sup>th</sup> graders and some older students as well. This program is diagnostic and shows the “holes” in students' previous learning. It then generates lessons to help instruct the student and fill those holes. This will allow our students to have a stronger performance in the regular math class, and complete some learning that they have missed in previous years.

The district is required to submit the Unified Improvement Plan to the Colorado Department of Education on January 15, 2014. The School Board has reviewed the data from the District Performance Framework and will be discussing it further at the November 11, 2013 regular board meeting at 6:30 p.m. Wendy Dunaway, Director of School and District Improvement for Colorado Department of Education, will also be in attendance to review the plan.

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