



Dear D51 Colleagues:

It is an exciting time in the district right now. It is also a very busy time, and it is important that in the middle of all of the hustle and bustle we remember why we do what we do...and that is supporting and celebrating our students. I value every chance I get to connect with our students each week.

One of the goals in my 100 Day Plan was to create a Superintendent Student Advisory Group. Instead of asking students to travel to a centralized location after school, when they are busy with extracurricular activities, work, etc., I have decided to meet the students where they are. I asked the principals at our 5 high schools to select a group of about 10 students to represent their schools. I also requested the group be a diverse representation of their student body. This week, I was able to meet with two of my Superintendent Student Advisory Groups (PHS & FMHS), and I look forward to meeting with the remaining groups next week. These meetings are an opportunity for me to hear directly from D51 students about what's working well, what needs improvement, and ideas/initiatives that can make the D51 experience better for our over 21,000 students.

Thanks to the students on my Superintendent Student Advisory Groups for taking time out of your busy school schedules to hang out, eat pizza, and connect around topics that are important to you.

UPCOMING STUDENT PERFORMANCES

Shoutout to our high school students who have upcoming theater performances scheduled. Tonight, I'll be attending Palisade HS's performance of Enchanted April with my family. There is still time to purchase tickets for the performance tonight at 7 p.m. or tomorrow night at 7 p.m. Click [here](#) to purchase tickets.

Next week, our Grand Junction HS Performing Arts Department will present Brainstorm: The Inside Life of the Teenage Mind. Shows are being held October 28 at 7 p.m. and October 29 at either 1 p.m. or 7 p.m. You can purchase tickets [here](#).

Get out and support our D51 fine arts students. They work so hard and put on great shows. Shoutout to our D51 staff who support our students in the area of fine arts.

STUDENT OF THE QUARTER LUNCHEON

Earlier this week I had the privilege of attending our first Student of the Quarter Luncheon of the year. This is an opportunity to celebrate and recognize D51 8th-grade and 12th-grade students who are going above and beyond academically and are great leaders on their campuses.

Each quarter of the academic year, Colorado Mesa University and Alpine Bank honor two students from each Middle School and High School in District 51. Students are invited, with their families, to attend an awards banquet at the university where they receive their recognition, a plaque, and a \$500 scholarship, should they choose to attend higher education at CMU.

I could not be more impressed with our students. It was great to hear from their teachers and school admin about why they were selected by the staff at their schools. These students are not only excelling, but thriving in all aspects of their education, and that is truly something we can all celebrate.

Congratulations to our Students of the Quarter on a well deserved achievement:

- Bookcliff MS - Jadilyn Walsh & Isac Fuentes-Herrera
- East MS - Riley Smith & Alec Pierce
- Grand Mesa MS - Jadie Truong & Kayden Buzzell
- Mt. Garfield MS - Alizae Martinez-Quintana & Kaleb Boss
- Orchard Mesa MS - Emily Foss & Blake Rooks
- Redlands MS - Hailee Wagner & Jacob Smith
- West MS - Grace Horner & Ivan Dobinski
- Fruita 8/9 - Abby Hollingshead & Gage Chelewski
- Central HS - Delaney Pinnt & Joseph Ryan Jr.
- Fruita Monument HS - Meilyn Recker & Ryer Roberts
- Grand Junction HS - Emma Ellis & Treyton LeFebre
- Palisade HS - Lindsay Inman & Joshua Contreras-Alejandre
- Grand River Academy - Kaydence Cline & Alex Havens-Jensen

LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL

Yesterday, I was joined at Chipeta Elementary by Kristen Lummis & Joy Hudak (Riverside Education Center), Sheryl Fisher (Extended Hours), Jenn Moore (Eureka! After School), Tawni Kelley (Alpine Bank), and Dr. Angela Christensen (D51 Foundation) to celebrate Lights On Afterschool, a national campaign to promote awareness of the importance of safe supervision, nutrition, after-school activities, and extended learning time for students in grades K-12 during the after-school hours. It was great hearing from one of our GJHS students about the importance of after school care, and we had a lot of fun celebrating with students from each of the after school programs.

We are fortunate in D51 to have great partners like REC, Extended Hours, and Eureka! who provide after school care options for our D51 families and students. Thank you to these organizations for being Engaged & Supportive Community Partners, and thank you to Alpine Bank for supporting these efforts. We cannot do this alone, and we are grateful for all that you do. Thanks to the other folks who joined us in the celebration, and thank you to the city leaders for their proclamations celebrating Lights on Afterschool. To learn more about these organizations, visit this [link](#).

LEADERSHIP D51

On Wednesday, we kicked off our inaugural class of the Leadership D51 program. This class is designed to engage various community leaders and organizations, with goals to:

- Learn more about District 51 through balanced and open discussion.
- Deepen community relationships in order to support student career exploration, mental health and deepened family partnership.
- Recruit and secure new partners and team members to support the efforts of District 51 and its Strategic Plan.

Members of this cohort will come together for five sessions throughout the year to have open and engaging conversation, as well as learn some educational content on various topics and departments throughout our district. We have 21 cohort members this year, and we are excited to engage these various leaders and organizations to help propel the mission and vision of School District 51 into the future. Thank you to Timberline Bank for sponsoring the first meeting and offering your space and support.

2022 CO ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE TEACHERS, TEACHING AWARD

Every year, a Colorado Science teacher is awarded the C.A.S.T. Teaching Award. I'm excited to announce that this year, the winning teacher is from District 51. Our very own Liz Henrickson has been named the Secondary Science Teacher of the Year for the State of Colorado.

The winner of the Colorado Association of Science Teachers award is someone who demonstrates exemplary leadership and knowledge in the science field. Ms. Henrickson has been with the D51 Family for 17 years, and is currently a 6th-grade Science teacher at Fruita Middle School. She embodies the mission and vision of our school district in all that she does. Her enthusiasm for science, her knowledge and depth in the industry, and her continued dedication to the students and staff of D51 is unparalleled. Please join me in congratulating Ms. Henrickson on an exemplary achievement. We are lucky to have her as an educator in our D51 Family, and thankful for her representing our district. Well deserved!

CBA WESTERN SLOPE REGIONAL STATE MARCHING BAND COMPETITION

This year I have had the pleasure of attending many events and competitions within our Marching Band community. I thoroughly enjoy watching not only our marching bands take the field and compete, but witnessing how involved and engaged our community is with our local marching bands.

Yesterday afternoon, the stands were packed with families, spectators, and even some school field trips, as the Colorado Bandmasters Association Western Slope State Qualifying Marching Band Festival took place at Stocker Stadium. Eleven bands from across the Western Slope competed, and all four D51 High Schools qualified for the state competition.

Palisade HS, Central HS, Grand Junction HS, and Fruita Monument HS will all compete in quarter finals, and, depending on their scores, will earn a spot in the state championships.

The 4A-5A State Marching Band Championships will be held October 28 and October 29 at the CSU Stadium in Fort Collins. The 1A, 2A, and 3A State Marching Band Championships will be held October 31, at Stocker Stadium.

FMHS SOFTBALL HEADED TO STATE

Our Fruita Monument Wildcat softball team is headed to State this weekend! Last Saturday, our Wildcats played in a regional softball game against Valor Christian. The game was called after the 5th inning due to darkness, and we were left unsure if they would earn a spot at state. On Monday, the Colorado High School Activities Association made the decision that the two teams would need to complete the final innings of the game. That game was played last night, and the Wildcats brought it home in an 8-3 win.

There has been such amazing community support for our Wildcats. I want to give a huge shoutout to our [Rim Rock Elementary kids](#), who took to the streets to send our Wildcats off in style. What an exciting time to be a Wildcat.

The state semifinals are at 10 a.m. on Saturday, with the championship game being played later that afternoon. Join me in cheering on our D51 student athletes.

GRAND VALLEY YOUTH CYCLING MOUNTAIN BIKE TEAMS HEADED TO STATE

I gave a short shoutout to our Grand Valley Mountain Bike Club in my letter last week, but as they head to Glenwood for the State Championships this weekend, I want to highlight a little bit more about the team.

We have three Division 2 teams this year: Fruita Monument High School, Grand Junction High School, and Palisade High School. 35 students from schools around the valley will compete for one of these teams during the State competition.

To qualify for state, varsity riders must be ranked in the top 25 riders in their region based on overall points earned throughout the regular season, and all other categories must be ranked in the top 40.

Our riders will have some healthy competition as they take on riders at State, and we're excited to see how they do. Join me in wishing our student athletes good luck as we cheer them on.

BOARD NEWS

The Board of Education held a Business Meeting on Tuesday evening. Highlights from the meeting included:

- The recognition of Ms. Dawn Cruickshank, who was awarded the ARC of Mesa County Child Advocate of the Year for 2022.
 - The Action Team for our Strategic Plan, Focus Area #2: Engaged and Supported Staff, gave their update.
 - Principals and APs from 4 schools attended the meeting to give a presentation on their Unified Improvement Plans for their schools as they are currently rated as Turn Around or Priority Improvement Schools. Presentations were heard from Clifton Elementary, Grand Mesa Middle, Juniper Ridge Charter School, and Mt. Garfield Middle Schools.
 - The Board of Education discussed the following resolutions:
 - J-1. Resolution to Opt Out of the Family Medical Leave Insurance Act Program
 - J-2. Resolution to Contract With Monument Health
 - The Board of Education had a Policy Second Reading/Adoption for the following policies:
 - J-3.a. BCB, Board Member Conduct/Conflict of Interest Act
 - J-3.b. BEC, Executive Sessions/Open Meeting
 - J-3.c. IMB, Teaching About Controversial Issues
- Click [here](#) to read President Haitz's message following this week's Board Meeting. To find out more about the meeting this week you can watch it by clicking on this [link](#). As always, our BOE meeting details can be found on our [website](#).

OPEN ENROLLMENT AND EDUCATION SESSIONS

Open enrollment for 2023 benefits has officially opened. We want our staff to be equipped with as much information as possible, in order to make the best decision for you and your families. Below, you will find some helpful information regarding benefit changes, as well as Educational Sessions offered by our HR department. These listening sessions are free for all staff and family members to attend and we hope will assist you in understanding the changes being made to our benefits.

The D51 Medical Plan is changing January 2023!

Come learn about your benefits, meet Monument Health providers, receive help completing open enrollment, and get entered to win great prizes like YETI coolers and more! No registration required.

- **Saturday, October 22 - 9:00 - 11:00 am**
 - Harry Butler 22nd St
 - 455 N 22nd St
 - Bilingual Translator On Site
- **Monday, October 24 - 12:00 - 2:00 pm**
 - [Virtual Zoom Meeting](#)
 - Option to call in:
(720) 707-2699 or (719)359-4580
Meeting ID: 603 635 9631 Passcode: 278662
- **Monday, October 24 - 5:30 - 7:00 pm**
 - Palisade HS Cafeteria
 - 3679 G Rd
- **Tuesday, October 25 - 5:30 - 7:00 pm**
 - Central HS Library
 - 550 Warrior Way
- **Wednesday, October 26 - 4:30 - 6:30 pm**
 - [Virtual Zoom Meeting](#)
 - Option to call in:
(720) 707-2699 or (719)359-4580
Meeting ID: 603 635 9631 Passcode: 278662

If you're unable to make one of the listening sessions above, click [here](#) to watch a previously recorded educational session online at your convenience.

As always, if you have questions or need additional information, please reach out to us at Benefits@d51schools.org and we would be happy to assist you.

D51 2023 Benefits Open Enrollment Website

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