

Dear D51 Families and Colleagues:

The first quarter of the school year is over, and we have so much to celebrate. I'm proud of our school and district staff members who have worked tirelessly to ensure that we had a smooth start to the school year. The positive comments I receive from students, families, staff, and community members are a tribute to the great things happening in our buildings.

Great things don't happen by chance, and our D51 staff have been working hard the past two days while our students were off. Thursday was a productive day for our staff with a workday for teachers and Leadership Academy for administrators. A lot of planning and collaboration happens on these days so that our educators can be at their best for our over 21,000 students. Today was elementary school conference day and secondary school in-service day. I was able to swing by the secondary teacher in-service training to see district and campus staff working together to analyze student interim assessment data and plan for how to respond to gaps in the data so that our students are more successful. I appreciate the commitment by our outstanding D51 teachers and staff who are putting in the time and effort to make sure we have prepared and supported students in our schools.

I hope that all our students and families are enjoying a fun and relaxing long weekend, and I hope y'all are taking time to get outside and enjoy this beautiful weather. We are so fortunate to live in this beautiful space, and time outdoors is good for our physical and mental well-being. Speaking of getting outside, shoutout to Mr. Leistico, one of our dedicated D51 parents who I've mentioned in the past for raising money for our high school theater programs across the district. His fundraising efforts culminated in him attempting to run the Moab 240 Endurance Race, a 240 mile ultramarathon through some of Utah's most stunning and challenging terrain. Mr Leistico crushed the course & raised a lot of money for our schools in the process. Congratulations on a huge accomplishment, and thank you for being an engaged and supportive partner with D51.

We have some awesome high school students who have also been getting outdoors lately and crushing the mountain biking trails across the state. Many in our community may not be aware of the Grand Valley Youth Cycling High School Program, but, through this program, students from each of our D51 high schools train together and compete as individual school teams throughout the fall against other riders from across the state in the Colorado High School Cycling League. Many of our D51 students have been racking up the awards this season, including the GJHS team who finished in 2nd place at the most recent competition. The State Championship races are coming up on Oct. 22 and 23, and many of our D51 students will be competing. If you are in the Glenwood Springs area that weekend, be sure to come out and cheer on our riders! Thanks to the coaches who have put in the time to help train our student athletes. To learn more about the GVYC high school and middle school programs, check out their website here.

SCHOOL FAMILY AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

Stronger connections with families is a Priority Area in our Strategic Plan, and while this is an area we are working to improve on as a district, I have enjoyed getting out to some of the events that our schools put on for students, families, and community members. Last week I was able to attend the Dual Immersion Academy family carnival as both the Superintendent and a dad. Principal McLaughlin, the DIA staff, and the DIA PTA put on a great event for students and families complete with games, food, and an amazing ballet folklórico performance by students. It was a great celebration of community and culture.

Wednesday night I had the pleasure of attending the first annual R5 Fall Festival with my family. We thoroughly enjoyed seeing y'all dressed up in your fun and creative costumes. Even more fun than that was seeing the smiling faces of our kids and community as they took part in the various activities. From face painting and games, to the mobile planetarium and delicious foods and sweets, there wasn't a dull moment to be found. I love seeing our staff come together to put on such amazing events for our students, families, and community. Great job to Principal Steinmetz and his staff. We are already looking forward to next year!

Last night I was able to attend the opening night of the Central High School Theater production of Puffs with my family! Puffs is a spoof on the Harry Potter series, and our family loved it. The cast did an amazing job, and I think we laughed for 2 hours straight. Shoutout to Ms. Meltzer and the CHS students for such a wonderful performance. Your hard work paid off through the production of a great show. If you missed opening night, you can still catch the show tonight or Saturday at 7 p.m.

While some of our D51 events are more school specific, many of our school events are open to the entire district and community. From theater performances like CHS's Puffs, to choir and orchestra performances, to sports, if you're looking for something fun to do with your family I would highly encourage you to attend one of these events. Not only are they well produced, but the proceeds go to support our D51 students.

COLORADO FREE APPLICATION DAYS

If you have a high school senior, you'll want to pay close attention to this. Colorado Free Application Days are coming up next week Oct 18-20. This program allows current high school seniors to fill out admission applications to specific Colorado colleges and universities and submit them for free! While the application must be submitted during the three day window, we encourage your student to begin working on their application(s) now so they can submit them stress-free next week. Use this link for more information: https://bit.ly/3rQUYcE

UNITED WAY PACESETTER CAMPAIGN

We're gearing up for our annual United Way Pacesetter Campaign. Every year School District 51, along with other local organizations, kickoff the annual United Way Campaign, helping to set the tone and lead by example. United Way currently funds approximately 40 local programs within our community, offering assistance to those programs and working with several community groups throughout Mesa County to continue making a difference. We look forward to this fundraising effort every year. Because of our impact as a district, y'all are making a difference every day for so many lives. We cannot tell you enough how much we appreciate you! Be on the lookout for additional information on how you can donate towards this campaign at the end of October.

UPDATE: FAMILY AND STAFF SURVEY

As part of the District 51 Strategic Plan, one of our Strategic Priority Areas is to develop communication strategies that ensure all our students and families have clear information that is available in multiple languages to meet the needs of everyone in the community. One way for us to develop these strategies is to collect baseline data from our families and staff. We invite you to share your open and honest feedback with us through the following survey: bit.ly/D51commssurvey

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School District 51
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