

Dear D51 Families and Colleagues,

As I start to wrap up my first 100 days as your new superintendent, I continue to be amazed by all that y'all do for our students and all of the great things happening throughout our district each and every day.

This past weekend I had the opportunity to participate in the dunk tank at the Rocky Mountain PBS Kids Fest held at Long Family Memorial Park. It was great seeing all of the D51 families, students, and staff at the event. While the water was pretty cold, getting dunked by D51 students and the excitement that brought to their faces made it all worth it. I can say that we have a strong future ahead of us in sports based on the number of bullseyes that dunked me.

I would like to give a huge thank you to the staff who volunteered their time to help make this day possible. Dan Sharp, Kim Torbic and Kim Balsiger from our D51 Nutrition Services Department brought one of our Lunch Lizard food trucks to serve baked treats to the community, and Karrie Kuklish from our Communications Department organized the D51 events. And I wasn't alone in getting dunked. I want to thank our other dunk tank volunteers Misty Queen, Laura Adams, Megan Davis, and Dan Sharp. Y'all were amazing. Way to represent the D51 Family!

CHS JROTC
I want to thank the Central High School JROTC members who visited Clifton Elementary on September 21. They shared with the Clifton 5th Grade students how to properly care for our US, State, and School Flags. Students were taught proper flag techniques for adding and removing flags on the flag pole as well as the proper way to fold flags. Clifton Elementary students were excited to see the cadets in their uniforms and anxious to learn from them. They are also excited to start practicing these techniques on their own at their school. Thank you to C/CSM Matthews, C/CPT Pitout, C/LTC Edwards, and their leader Ted Leblow for taking the time to arrange this wonderful event for our Clifton Students. To learn more about the CHS JROTC, please visit the CHS Website.

Family & Staff Surveys
There are two family surveys that will be shared this week and next week that we would like your feedback on. The first survey (open now) is our **2022–23 Calendar Survey.** As the Calendar Committee begins work on developing the 2023–24 school calendar, they would like your thoughts and opinions about the current 2022–23 school calendar. While we hope to keep the 2023–24 school calendar similar, your feedback helps us understand and work to meet the needs of our staff and students. **Spanish Calendar Survey**

The second survey that will open soon is a communications survey. As part of the District 51 **Strategic Plan**, one of our Strategic Priority Areas is to develop communication strategies that ensure 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 feedback with us.
Please be on the lookout for that survey email next week.

Palisade Homecoming
Today is the last day of D51 homecoming celebrations. I was able to attend Palisade High School's homecoming parade today in downtown Palisade. It was a great celebration for our students and staff. Thanks to the PHS families & community who came out to support. Join us tonight, and cheer on the team, as the Bulldogs take on Eagle Valley at 7 p.m at Stocker Stadium for their homecoming game. Good luck, Bulldogs!

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

- Nikki Jost, Executive Director of Human Resources, gave an overview of the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program being offered through the state of Colorado. This program was designed to ensure Colorado workers have access to paid leave during life circumstances that require time away from their jobs, such as a medical emergency of paternity/maternity leave. The Board will decide at the Board Business Meeting in two weeks whether or not to opt into the program.
- Jennifer Marsh, Chief Academic Officer, and her team gave a presentation on the District Performance Framework and the School Performance Frameworks that were released to the public recently. This presentation discussed the academic results for Mesa County Valley School District 51 and compared our data to that of the state and other comparable districts. (See the section below for additional information)
  - The Board of Education had a first policy reading for the following policies:
  - 4.a. BCB, Board Member Conduct/Conflict of Interest
  - 4.b. BEC, Executive Sessions/Open Meeting
  - 4.c. IMB, Teaching About Controversial Issues
- During open discussion, the BOE facilitated a conversation regarding the current housing market in Mesa County and the topic of teacher housing.

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.

School & District Performance Frameworks
During the Board Work Session this week, our academics team presented data on how our district performed last school year on our District Performance Framework compared to the state and other comparable districts. While we still have much work to do to raise the level of achievement in District 51, and to close the achievement gaps that exist for our student groups, we do have much to celebrate.

While successfully remaining open to in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, our district made many gains. As a district, our District Performance Framework score grew from where it was in 2019 (the last year we had statewide assessment data). We also had many schools who performed well on their School Performance Frameworks. 82% of our D51 schools scored with the top two ratings on their SPFs. Our Strategic Plan has a goal of having 100% of our schools at the top two ratings in the next 3 years. When comparing the percentage of D51 schools with the top two ratings to the state's percentages, we are outpacing the state in both. We also want to highlight our elementary schools as they showed the most growth in academic achievement and academic growth in the district with an overall increase of 7.9 % since 2019.

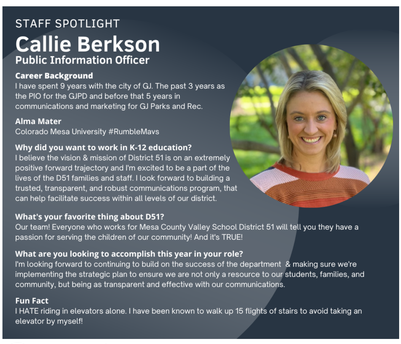
In addition to 82% of our schools being at the top 2 levels on their SPF's, 18 of our schools improved on their SPF scores since 2019, and 11 of our schools moved up at least 1 level on their SPF ratings. Shoutout to our D51 schools who scored at the top 2 levels and who showed improvement over 2019. Also, shoutout again to Chatfield Elementary who had the largest gain in the district on their SPF score and was able to jump from Turnaround (the lowest possible SPF rating) to Performance (the highest possible SPF rating). Amazing work by our schools!

We owe a lot of this success to our families supporting us as we opened schools back up to in-person learning in 2020, our staff who showed up every day and worked hard to support our kids in the middle of a pandemic, and our students who put forth the effort to improve. We also owe a lot of our success to the families and community who voted for and passed the 2017 Mill Levy Override. Because of the support of our community, the MLO allows D51 to have 5 additional student instructional days, funds to purchase updated curriculum that is aligned to the Colorado academic standards (many curriculum hadn't been updated in decades), and additional funds for technology and professional learning. These funds have gone a long way to supporting D51 since 2017. These funds will sunset in 2027 without the continued support of our community. Again, thank you to the voters who supported the 2017 MLO. Your support is paying off for our students, and we thank you for that. More information on the 2017 MLO can be found here.

Mr. Leistico
I mentioned in my letter weeks ago that one of our D51 parents, Mark Leistico, was raising money for our high school theater programs across the district. He has been raising money by taking on the challenge of running the Moab 240 ultra running race. Well, his race started today, and we want to send all of the encouragement we possibly can to Mr. Leistico as he runs over the next few days. We'll be tracking you and cheering for you Mr. Leistico. Thanks for all that you are doing to support our D51 theater students.

While he has already raised thousands for our students, it is not too late to donate. To contribute to his efforts, and support our D51 high school theater programs, visit d51foundation.org, click on the Donate button, and select 240 Mile Theater Fund.

Welcome Our New PIO
We recently welcomed our new Public Information Officer, Callie Berkson, to the D51 Family. Emily Shockley left D51 earlier this semester to work on the Front Range, which temporarily took our communications team of 2 down to 1. We want to thank Karrie Kuklish, our Marketing and Communications Specialist, for her hard work in ensuring that our communications continued without a hitch after Emily's exit, and we're excited to have Callie join Karrie in continuing to improve D51 communications moving forward. Callie comes to us with a wealth of knowledge, and you can learn more about her in the Staff Spotlight below. Join me in welcoming Callie to the team.



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Engage. Equip. and Empower

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