



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues,

I hope y'all had a restful and enjoyable Thanksgiving break. With District 51 offices closed on Thursday and Friday last week, our family had the opportunity to spend some quality time together, participating in the GJ Turkey Trot alongside 2,000 other community members and participating in our new annual tradition of snowshoeing and cutting down a tree on the Grand Mesa...something we didn't have the opportunity to do in Texas.

As November has come and gone, and Winter Break is right around the corner, we still have a lot going on in D51. This week, I was able to meet with the last of my five Superintendent Student Advisory Groups. I have advisory groups at our 4 comprehensive high schools and R-5, and this week I got to meet with the students at Fruita Monument High School. I value hearing directly from our D51 students, and I appreciate them taking the time out of their busy high school days to meet with me over food to talk about what's working well in D51 and what we can improve. Thanks to Principal Klusmire for setting this meeting up. I look forward to meeting with all five groups again in the spring semester. I also met with my Superintendent Principal Advisory Group this week. This group of principal representatives from all levels across the district came together to focus on things we can improve upon in D51, and we started the conversation on solutions to address those areas for improvement. I appreciate each of the principals who have volunteered to serve this year, and I look forward to continuing the solutions-oriented conversation in the spring semester. I look forward to meeting with my Superintendent Teacher Advisory Group next week!

This week, we also had a Board of Education meeting to swear in our two newest D51 School Board members. I want to again say thank you to Doug Levinson and Dr. Kari Sholtes for their service on the Board, and I want to congratulate and welcome Barb Evanson and Jose Luis Chavez to the team. Join me in thanking our outgoing members and welcoming our newest members. You can read more about our two new Board Members below.

I was also able to get out to some of our schools this week for some celebrations and student activities. The naturalization ceremony at GJHS, which you can read about below, was a great opportunity for our students to experience this important ceremony in person. Thank you to Principal Sorensen and Dr. Justin Whiteford for inviting me to participate. I also had the opportunity to visit Shelledy Elementary School to celebrate the donation of 24 new Strider bikes for their PE program! You can read more about this donation below, as well. Shoutout to Principal Kidd and Coach Hassler for their work in securing the donation! Last night I visited Central High School to watch some of our D51 boys basketball teams in action at the tournament hosted by CHS. Shoutout to our student athletes and their coaches for their hard work. You can catch all of our boys teams in action at CHS tonight and tomorrow, too! Lastly, I was able to visit Rim Rock Elementary School this morning for their winter assembly to present them with a banner for earning the highest academic rating in the state of Colorado as a Performance School! That's six years in a row that RRES has been a Performance School! Shoutout to Principal Huddle and the RRES students and staff for all of their hard work.

As we move into December, a season that's both busy and exciting, we find ourselves nearing the conclusion of another successful fall semester. While I know this time of year is filled with various celebrations and fun events for our students and staff, let's all be sure to prioritize our focus on academics and continue to motivate our students to show up and finish the semester on a strong note.

Shelley Elementary Receives Strider Bike Donation

In an effort to encourage physical activity and foster healthy lifestyles among our youngest learners, District 51 is excited to share news of a generous donation that was recently made to Shelley Elementary. Read more [here](#).

Nisley Elementary Provides Dental Exams for Students

We have the most incredible, dedicated, and hardworking staff at District 51 who continuously go the extra mile, actively seeking ways to support the needs of their students and meet them where they are by offering valuable resources and access to opportunities. Nurse Morgan Leyda of Nisley Elementary took the lead in organizing on-site dental exams for students who required or desired them, showcasing Nisley's proactive approach to student well-being. Read more [here](#).

GJHS Hosts Naturalization Ceremony

On Wednesday, I had the opportunity to participate in a naturalization ceremony held at Grand Junction High School. The event, facilitated by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, welcomed over 20 new U.S. citizens. The ceremony was officiated by U.S. Magistrate Judge Gallagher, who administered the Oath of Allegiance and presided over the ceremony. All five members of the D51 Board of Education, along with representatives from the District and District 51 Foundation, various elected officials from Colorado, and students and staff from GJHS, joined for the event. Read more [here](#).

D51 Students Selected for Best of the West Music Festival

We're excited to announce that several students from our four D51 high schools have been nominated to participate in the Select Band Performances during the upcoming Best of the West Music Festival. Read more [here](#).

Application Deadline Approaching for CMU Concurrent Enrollment

Did you know you can earn college credit as a D51 high school student **for free**? Read more [here](#).

State of the District Address & Presentation

As mentioned before, in early November we hosted our inaugural Strong Schools, Strong Community Luncheon, made possible through the generous sponsorship of Dr. Angela Christensen and the D51 Foundation. This event served as a dynamic platform, bringing together a diverse group of community stakeholders to foster collaboration with D51 school and district staff. If you wish to view the full State of the District Address, you can watch it [here](#).

Meet Our Two Newest D51 Board of Education Members

The Board of Education plays a pivotal role in guiding and shaping the educational direction of our community, ensuring the District sets a strong foundation for academic excellence and growth. During Tuesday night's Board of Education Organizational Meeting, District 51 welcomed two new members to the District 51 Board of Education. Click the links to learn more about their backgrounds and contributions to our community.

- [Director Jose Luis Chavez, District A](#)
- [Director Barbara Evanson, District B](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Downtown Parade of Lights
December 4, 5 p.m.
Join us in supporting our District 51 bands as they march and showcase their musical talent at the Annual Parade of Lights Festival in Downtown Grand Junction!
- Independence Academy Craft Fair
December 2, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Independence Academy
- Central High School STEM Info Nights
 - December 4, 6-7 p.m., at Bookcliff Middle School
 - December 5, 6-7 p.m., at Orchard Mesa Middle School
 - December 7, 6-7 p.m., at Grand Mesa Middle School
- Fruita Monument High School Orchestra Concert
December 5, 6:30 p.m. at Fruita Middle School
- Fruita Monument High School Bands Concert
December 6, 7:00 p.m. at Fruita Monument High School
- Palisade High School IB Program Info Nights
 - December 6, 6-7 p.m., Bookcliff Middle School
 - December 7, 6-7 p.m., Orchard Mesa Middle School
- PHS Musical - White Christmas
December 7, 8 at 7 p.m. and December 9 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at Palisade High School
- Independence Academy Musical, The Music Man
December 8 & 9, 6:30 p.m. at The Art Center - Admission is free
- Best of the West Prism Concert
December 9, 3 p.m. at Colorado Mesa University
- High School Social Studies Curriculum Open House
December 13, 4:30 - 7 p.m. at R-5 High School/Harry Butler Board Room
We are adopting new resources to support social studies instruction in our high schools. Community members are invited to view the resources under consideration and offer feedback to the selection committee.

For more events happening across the district, visit:

- [Fall Athletics Schedule](#)
- [District Upcoming Events](#)

If you have good news to share with us, we'd love to highlight your program, event, story, and more. Please share it with our communications department by emailing communicate@d51schools.org.

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