



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues,

I hope everyone is excited for a three-day weekend. The weather should be nice, so I hope everyone is able to get outside and enjoy the beauty of our community in Western Colorado.

Speaking of getting outside, I continued to meet with my Superintendent Student Advisory Groups this week, and we talked more about responsible technology use, cell phones and other tech in schools, and the impacts of social media. I have been able to gain valuable insight from our students on these topics, and this week I specifically met with my advisory groups from GJHS and FMHS. While we know there are definite benefits to technology, and even social media, many students shared that after limiting technology use and social media for themselves, that they were more inclined to get outside and hang out with friends in a face-to-face setting. Tech is all around us, and it is a great tool, but I hope you'll take some time this weekend to put it aside and enjoy the great outdoors, too. It's good for our mental and physical health.

This week, we held Level Meetings with all of our D51 principals and admin team. This is a great opportunity for our school leaders to gather for a half day to grow professionally, share best practices, and plan for ways to better support our D51 students. Shoutout to our school admin for all that they do to create a great learning environment in our schools that is welcoming to all, and shoutout to our Central Office staff for supporting our school admin in the process. I talked to the school admin at these meetings about the topic of tech use in schools, much like I did with my student groups, and it was great to hear their perspectives. All of this feedback will help us as we continue to discuss how to create the best learning environment possible in all of our schools.

On Thursday, I was able to visit FMHS twice! In the morning, I had the honor of attending and speaking at the Naturalization Ceremony held in the auditorium. You can read more about it below. Shoutout to Principal Klusmire and his team for organizing a great event that was a learning experience for many of our D51 students. I was back at FMHS that evening for the fifth meeting of our D51 Long Range Facility Masterplan Committee. After getting a tour of the building from Principal Klusmire, the committee (made up of D51 teachers, admin, staff, families, and community members) continued the process of developing a 25-year roadmap for how we, as a community, are going to address the capital improvement needs that exist in our district. Thanks to everyone who has volunteered their time to this important cause. We are looking forward to the completion of our plan soon.

Lastly, I want to share some exciting news about the Grand Junction High School construction progress. In 2021, our community said Yes! on GJHS by overwhelmingly approving a bond to replace the school. The project continues to be on schedule and on budget, and we're making great strides! Thank you to everyone who has been a part of the planning and construction process so that the project can remain on time and on budget, especially in this time of increasing construction costs. Be sure to watch our latest progress [video](#), highlighting the continuous transformation of the school. We are looking forward to welcoming our students to this new learning facility in the fall of 2024, and we are committed to delivering on the promise we put out in 2021 when our community supported us at the ballot box! Be sure to come out and join me and many alumni tonight at GJHS to support our student-athletes as they compete for the final time in the old GJHS gym!

As a reminder, all D51 schools will be closed on Monday in observance of President's Day (Charter Schools may have varied schedules; please refer to your school's calendar for details).

Solo/Ensemble Festival

On February 9 and 10, D51 hosted its yearly Band Solo/Ensemble Festival at Grand Mesa Middle School, showcasing the musical talents of our students. Read more [here](#).

RMAC Athletes Read to Students at OAE

Morning Den Time learners at Orchard Avenue Elementary received a special treat on Monday, as athletes from across the region visited our OAE learners, joining them for their morning reading sessions. Read more [here](#).

Valentine's Day Highlights

Valentine's Day in D51 was filled with gestures of kindness and camaraderie. Several of our schools participated in fun events, including students exchanging handwritten cards, sweet treats, and tokens of appreciation with their classmates and teachers, fostering a sense of belonging, community, and friendship. Read more [here](#).

National School Resource Officer Day

On Thursday, districts across the nation celebrated National School Resource Officer Day as an opportunity for us to recognize the valuable contributions of our District 51 Safety and Security Team. Read more [here](#).

GJHS Academic Team Advances to State

Our Academic Teams continue to excel postseason, placing first and second and tying for third at the regional competition, earning them a spot at the Knowledge Bowl State Championship in March. Read more [here](#).

Naturalization Ceremony at FMHS

Fruita Monument High School held a Naturalization Ceremony in their auditorium on Thursday. The event, facilitated by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and FMHS staff, welcomed 20 new U.S. citizens from 16 countries. Read more [here](#).

Grand Junction High School Celebrates Final Athletic Event at GJHS Gym

Tonight, Grand Junction High School will bid farewell to its current gymnasium with a final regular-season athletic competition, marking the end of an era as the beloved gym is slated for demolition later this spring. Read more [here](#).

Colorado State Wrestling Championships

All four D51 comprehensive high schools and the D51 Phoenix Girls Wrestling Team are competing in the CHSAA State Wrestling Championships, which started yesterday at Ball Arena in Denver. Read more [here](#).

D51 Secondary Schools to Host Say Something Assemblies

Thanks to the generous support of our community, middle and high schools across District 51 will host the dynamic and engaging "Say Something School Assemblies." These assemblies are structured to captivate students' attention while equipping them with the skills to identify and address issues affecting their well-being. Read more [here](#).

Board of Education Special Meeting Recap

On February 13, the Board of Education held a Special Board Meeting in the Harry Butler Board Room. For highlights from the meeting, click [here](#). To view the recording of the meeting, click [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

- CHSAA State Wrestling Championships
February 15 - 17 at Ball Arena in Denver
- Rocky Mountain Color Guard
February 17 at Palisade High School
 - Central High School at 4:06 p.m.
 - Fruita Monument at 4:13 p.m.
 - Palisade High School at 4:37 p.m.
 - Fruita Monument JV at 5:01 p.m.
- National History Day
February 20, 4 - 5:30 p.m. at Orchard Mesa Middle School
[Learn more](#). Click [here](#) to view the schedule.
- FMHS Jazz Concert
February 22, 7 p.m. at Fruita Monument High School

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