



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues:

Welcome back, D51 students, families, & staff! We hope y'all enjoyed your Winter Break. It has been fun to welcome all our students and staff back onto campus and see the excitement build for the new semester.

New beginnings are always a great time to level-set, take stock of where we are, and focus on what needs to be done to achieve our goals. As we gear up for all the amazing things ahead, we continue to make great strides towards meeting our year one Strategic Plan goals. Each Focus Area of our community-driven 3-year Strategic Plan (***Prepared and Supported Staff, Prepared and Supported Students, and Engaged and Supportive Community Partners***) and the Priority Areas under them has one, two and three year goals, and we are making great strides towards achieving those goals, together. A quote I like states, "If you're in the business of making something, be in the business of making something great." We are making something great in D51, together, and we're excited to continue sharing our progress with our students, families, staff, and community in the spring semester.

Speaking of supported students, one of our own could use our help. Many of you know Sofia Grasso and her story, but if you don't, you can find more information and updates her family provides [here](#). Sofia is a junior at Grand Junction High School and has been part of the D51 Family since elementary. Unfortunately, she tragically suffered a spontaneous brain bleed in September and has since been on her journey to recovery. On January 21, a cornhole tournament and silent auction will raise funds to help support her recovery. I hope you'll consider joining me to support Sofia and her family ([event flyer here](#)). Sofia is D51. We are all D51. Thank you in advance for your support of a member of the D51 Family.

#### MLK DAY OBSERVATION/EVENTS

In observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, there will be no school on January 16. D51 administrative offices will be closed. This national holiday is often called "MLK Day of Service," as people of all ages join in acts of kindness for others.

Several events throughout the city have and will continue to take place in observance of the holiday. Our family was able to attend the MLK Kids Read last night hosted by Black Citizens & Friends and the Mesa County Public Library. It was great to see so many D51 families, students, and staff at the event as stories were read about the life and legacy of Dr. King.

Shoutout to the Palisade High School Choir, who will be performing at the MLK event taking place in front of City Hall on Jan. 16. Thank you to Director Matt Doty and his students for your participation in this event. Click [here](#) for more details on upcoming events.

D51 schools will also be closed on Jan. 17 for teacher inservice day. All schools will resume on Jan. 18.

#### SCHOOL OF CHOICE

School District 51 is committed to providing families with choices when it comes to choosing a school that is right for their child. All of our schools offer students strong academic and extracurricular opportunities, but we know that every student is different, and what works well for one child may not work well for another child. Therefore, we strive to give all our students access to an effective, challenging, and motivating educational environment and experience that meets their needs.

If families and students are looking for a specific program or academic opportunity that will engage, equip, and empower them for their brightest future, and it's not available in your neighborhood school, you have a choice. Consider applying through our School of Choice application process.

The School of Choice application will be available starting at 10 a.m. on Jan. 23, and will be accepted until 4 p.m. on February 3. The application is available in electronic form only and is available on the District's [website](#).

Applications are made through ParentVue. If you do not have a ParentVue account, please create one before Jan. 22 [here](#). If you have questions, please contact your school.

#### NETWORK IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITIES

During our first week back on campus, elementary school teacher leaders and school admin spent three days in our Network Improvement Communities, working together to dive deeper into data and discuss how to meet student needs through data-informed instruction. I am proud of the outstanding school leadership and staff in our D51 family. They are genuinely committed to serving our students and fostering positive learning environments to achieve student success, which was evident as we all gathered this week to listen and learn from one another.

Shoutout to Chief Academic Officer, Jen Marsh and her team for organizing these professional learning experiences for our staff. This helps address Focus Area 2 of our Strategic Plan to have Prepared & Supported Staff. NIC's will continue the week of Jan. 23 with our secondary schools.

#### SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE

Our D51 teachers and students continue to do amazing things every day. Ms. Carla Haas and Mr. Larry White are teachers at Central High School who have found a way to combine their love for learning and engineering with their passion for serving our community. Ms. Haas and Mr. White looked for ways that their Geometry in Construction students could use the skills they are learning to give back to our community. That's when they found Sleep in Heavenly Peace!

This organization is a national nonprofit comprised of volunteers dedicated to building, assembling, and delivering beds to children and families in need. Through their Geometry in Construction class, which is part of the STEM program at CHS, students will take part in a "build day," where they will earn credit for the course by building and assembling beds in collaboration with Sleep in Heavenly Peace. Students and staff have worked hard to collect donations of bedding and are excited to finally get to take the skills they've learned in class and apply them to life outside the classroom.

Huge shoutout to Ms. Haas and Mr. White for your dedication and commitment to supporting our D51 students and helping them develop skills to apply in life beyond the walls of your classroom. Our students and our community are lucky to have you!

#### DISTRICT 51 FOUNDATION AMBASSADOR MEETING

On Thursday evening, over 50 D51 Foundation Ambassadors joined together for the 2023 Winter Ambassador Meeting hosted at Timberline Bank. Myself, Dr. Christensen (Executive Director of The D51 Foundation), and members of the D51 Foundation Board had a chance to thank the Ambassadors for their hard work and dedication and highlight accomplishments so far this year. Every year, schools identify key family members to serve as Ambassadors who share information at their school about D51 Foundation activities. Last night's focus was on the upcoming 11th White Iced Celebration on Feb. 4, at the CMU Ballroom from 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. You can purchase tickets to the event here: [White Iced Celebration Tickets](#).

#### BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

On Jan. 3, the Board of Education held a work session in the Harry Butler Board Room. Highlights from the meeting included:

- Board Appreciation Month Recognition
- District 51 representatives, in collaboration with United Way, gave an update on the dollar amount our organization raised during our United Way Campaign. The D51 Foundation Director, Dr. Christensen, also conducted a drawing for free White Iced tickets to attend the D51 Foundation Gala in February.
- D51 Staff, Blythe+co., Dynamic Program Management, and FCI Constructors gave a construction update on the progress of the new Grand Junction High School.
- Chief Academic Officer Jennifer Marsh, Director of Professional Learning Dr. Danny Medved, Bookcliff Middle School Principal Jim Butterfield, and Fruita Middle School Principal Jeremiah Johnston presented data on the benefits of a K-12 Early Release.
- Juniper Ridge presented their request for additional financial support from District 51 to continue to develop their campus through additional CoPs.
- Marillac Health Clinic proposed moving forward with a School-Based Health Center inside the new Grand Junction High School. The board heard information from Marillac and will schedule an additional time/meeting to discuss the topic.
- There was a first policy reading for the following policies:
  - 7.a. IC/CA, School Year/School Calendar
  - 7.b. IKF(2), Graduation Requirements
  - 7.c. IKD/JKE, Student Suspension/Expulsion
- Board Open Discussion

#### BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING UPDATE

On January 11, the Board of Education held a Special Meeting to continue the conversation on the topic of a potential School-Based Health Center at the new GJHS. Marillac Health Clinic was present to answer questions, as well as District staff and FCI. Highlights from the discussion are below.

- In 2018, Marillac Health Clinic and D51 conducted a needs analysis to determine if a School-Based Health Center in Grand Junction High School would be beneficial. Objectives, outcomes, and recommendations from the finalized needs assessment were reviewed.
- Discussion of what a School-Based Health Center is, who the School-Based Health Center would serve, possible services provided, utilization data, and partnerships/advisory committees that would take place to operate the Health Center.
- Marillac Health discussed the current Health Center in Central High School and the services they provide.
- Discussion regarding services for dental, medical, and behavioral needs, as well as parental consent for clinic use.
- Space has already been designed within the construction plans for the new GJHS building for the potential use of a School-Based Health Center.
  - In addition, the construction plan utilized an Ad-Alt list, which details the cost to finish out the space.
  - The Board of Education will decide/vote on how to utilize the space.
  - The Board requested additional information before they will take action.
  - Deadline for the decision: March 2023

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