



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues:

Every day is a good day to thank a veteran for their service to our country. Today especially, I want to personally thank all of our veterans for the sacrifices they have made in order to keep us safe. This morning, I had the pleasure of attending one of many school Veterans Day celebrations across D51. Lincoln Orchard Mesa Elementary School students and staff held an outstanding celebration in front of their school. Students shared why we celebrate Veterans Day, a new flag was raised at the flagpole, students led us in the pledge of allegiance and sang the National Anthem, and local veterans in attendance were given thank you notes made by LOM students. Thank you to Lincoln Orchard Mesa Elementary School Principal Randy Foster, Ms. Carmel Wilson, and the LOM staff, students, and community for putting on a great celebration today. It is always inspiring to watch our students, staff, and community come together for something larger than themselves. Veterans Day is a great reminder that our freedom isn't guaranteed, but rather protected by the amazing men and women of the Armed Forces. Thank you to all veterans.

We also had the opportunity to celebrate the academic performance of some of our D51 schools today. Every year, schools across the state of Colorado are given a "School Performance Framework" rating that is based on their previous school year's academic achievement levels, growth, and post-secondary workforce readiness (high schools). For the 2021-22 school year, D51 has 24 schools (more than half) that earned the "Performance" accreditation. Today, myself, Board President Haitz, Board Secretary Lema, members of our Senior Leadership Team, and Dr. Christensen from the D51 Foundation were able to recognize two of our 24 "Performance" schools with a banner that they can hang with pride in their buildings. Shoutout to West Middle School for moving from "Priority Improvement" to "Performance" and Chatfield Elementary School for moving from "Turnaround" to "Performance." This is not only an exciting accomplishment for these schools, but it also speaks to our Strategic Plan Focus Area of having Prepared & Supported Students. I'll be making the rounds in the coming weeks to deliver banners to the other 22 D51 "Performance" schools, so let us give a huge round of applause to those schools listed below!

#### 2021-2022 D51 Performance Schools:

- Appleton Elementary School
- Bookcliff Middle School
- Broadway Elementary School
- Chatfield Elementary School
- Chipeta Elementary School
- Dual Immersion Academy
- East Middle School
- Fruita Monument High School
- Fruitvale Elementary School
- Grand Junction High School
- Lincoln Orchard Mesa Elementary School
- Loma Elementary School
- Mesa View Elementary School
- Monument Ridge Elementary School
- Orchard Avenue Elementary School
- Orchard Mesa Middle School
- Pomona Elementary School
- Redlands Middle School
- Rim Rock Elementary School
- Scenic Elementary School
- Taylor Elementary School
- Tope Elementary School
- Wingate Elementary School
- West Middle School

#### 100 DAY RECAP VIDEO

The first 100 days on the job have been amazing. I feel so honored to have the opportunity to serve as the Superintendent of D51. For more on how the first 100 days have gone, check out the video linked here. [English Version](#) or [Spanish Version](#)

#### GJHS PLACES TWO TEAMS IN TOP THREE AT SCIENCE BOWL

The GJHS Academic Team had a great showing this past weekend at the 2nd Annual Dinosaur Ridge Science Bowl Tournament. The GJHS team brought home 1st and 3rd place finishes. The tournament, sponsored by Friends of Dinosaur Ridge and PBS, featured schools from all over the state. Teams competed in topics such as Geology, Paleontology, and all things science.

The GJHS Academic Teams have worked so hard this year, and I'm excited to share their success at the recent Science Bowl. A huge shoutout to Coody Shawcroft and his team for their amazing leadership and dedication to their students. We are looking forward to more championships in the future.

#### F.I.R.S.T. LEGO LEAGUE ROBOTICS TOURNAMENT

Tomorrow, the District 51 STEM program is hosting *the largest* F.I.R.S.T. (For Inspiration and Recognition in Science and Technology) Lego League Challenge Robotics Tournament in the state of Colorado at Fruita Monument High School! There are a total of 45 teams attending, 29 of which are from District 51. There will be robot matches, STEM exhibits from our students, delicious food trucks, and a special visit by the WCCC Mechatronics Lab. STEM exhibits open at 11 a.m., the opening ceremony and robot matches begin at 12:45 p.m., and the closing ceremony will begin at 4:30 p.m.

Our students work hard all year long and are eager to share their knowledge with you. This is an exciting event for our STEM program. and we hope you'll consider stopping by as it is open to the public. Shoutout to Jessica McDivitt, D51 Coordinator of STEM Programming, and all of the staff who are helping to put on this event. And special thanks for allowing me the opportunity to MC the closing ceremonies. I can't wait to see what our amazing students create.

#### NATIONAL EDUCATION MONTH

November is recognized as National Education Month, and since 2012 Colorado has designated November as a month to celebrate the importance of the partnerships between our families, schools, and community.

There are many things that impact our students' education, but research shows that if school districts can foster positive family, school, and community partnerships, that will lead to improved student attendance, higher education rates, and a deeper sense of belonging within the schools. This is also a Focus Area within our Strategic Plan: Engaged and Supportive Community Partners. As a school district, we understand that every family wants to be involved in their child's education. We also know that not only every child, but every family deserves to feel welcomed, engaged, and connected with their school. During the month of November, we celebrate the partnerships that we have made along the way, and look forward to continuing to find new and improved ways to build bridges with our students and families in D51.

#### ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF YES! ON GJHS

We're excited to announce that construction for the new Grand Junction High School building has officially gone vertical. Work on the foundation continues, and walls are beginning to form.

It's been one year since Mesa County voters said YES! on GJHS, and there is so much progress happening on-site. A huge thank you to our voters for their continued support of this project, and a special shout out to FCI for providing us this awesome drone footage of the construction progress. [Click here](#) to watch.

#### FIVE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF 2017 BOND/MILL

Earlier this month we celebrated the five-year anniversary of Measure 3A and Measure 3B which were both passed by our community in 2017. We would like to share how the passage of both of the measures has impacted our students and our schools. Since the mill levy was passed in 2017, District 51 has been able to add an additional 5 student contact days in the school calendar beginning with the 2018-19 school year. We have also been able to update our curriculum and instructional materials, as well as the training our educators receive. We have extended the life of some of our buildings through priority 2 and 3 maintenance, and added additional technology support.

The bond measure that passed in 2017 has significantly helped the district improve and maintain our buildings. Since its passage, the funds have been used for priority 1 maintenance projects across the district, replacing Orchard Mesa Middle School (the new building opened in 2019), technology updates, installing multiple gyms within our schools, and adding safety and security features, such as security vestibules, at all schools across the district.

Without the tremendous support of our community, none of this would have been possible. Our school district does not receive additional funding from the state for many of these needs, so we rely on our community to support these efforts through bonds and mill levy overrides. These funds, in turn, provide direct support to our students and staff. Because of your support, our students are now provided the necessary resources and additional school days to grow academically. While these monies will unfortunately sunset in 2027 without future voter support, we cannot thank you enough for standing behind our students, administration, and our school district. Thank you for being Engaged & Supportive Community Partners.

#### BOOK VENDING MACHINES

An exciting project is beginning to unfold in some of our schools. Every year, based on school needs, our schools that receive Title I funds have the opportunity to choose how they would like to spend those funds that they receive. Title I funds are provided to schools with a large percentage of families who qualify for free and reduced lunch to ensure that all children have a fair, equitable, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and close educational achievement gaps.

Many of our Title I schools choose to budget their title funds for their school libraries or individual classroom libraries. This year, several of our title schools chose to budget funds for a "Book Vending Machine" to be placed in their school. The vending machines are filled with exciting titles for our students. Our students then earn vending machine coins from their teachers and principals based on criteria such as good behavior. They can use the coins to select a book that interests them. Every school has different parameters, but this is a great way to recognize those kiddos that are going above and beyond at our schools.

I was excited to get to use a coin and select a book, myself, at one of my school visits earlier in the semester. This is a creative way for schools to celebrate the love of reading, and I look forward to our schools coming up with even more creative ways to engage our students in learning.

#### CHAMBER LEADERSHIP DAY

Yesterday, I had the pleasure of presenting, along with many of our staff and students, at the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program. This program was designed to help facilitate community dialogue and discussion between local community partners and businesses. Every year, School District 51 has the opportunity to share all of the great things happening in our schools with the Leadership Program members. Several departments within the school district presented to the participants about the inner workings of the district and the vision we have for where we are headed. Thank you to our department leaders for their time, to Principal Steinmetz for sharing about R-5 High School, to Board President Haitz and Vice President Jones for sharing about the Board experience, to Principal Dr. Birdsey for opening up Orchard Mesa Middle School to the group, and to Ms. Horn and her Career Center Culinary Arts students for providing lunch from the Career Center Fresh Side Cafe. A special thank you goes out to the leadership team at the Chamber of Commerce for the opportunity to present, and to Dr. Angela Christensen from the D51 Foundation for organizing the entire visit. A strong school district helps build a stronger community, and we are thankful for the Engaged & Supportive Community Partners we have in the Grand Valley.

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