



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues:

Our D51 students & staff continue to do amazing things every day. Even though the fall semester is coming to a close, the hard work has not stopped. Shoutout to our D51 teams that competed at state in the F.I.R.S.T Lego League competition last weekend. We sent qualifying teams from Mesa View Elementary, New Emerson, Tope Elementary, and Independence Academy. The students had a great experience competing and represented D51 with pride! Way to go, y'all!

At the board meeting on Tuesday evening, we recognized our 25 Performance Schools that received the highest academic rating from the Colorado Department of Education based on their school performance frameworks. Having all 25 schools in the room (represented by principals and staff) was great to see. I was delighted to see the room filled with additional staff and students from each school there to support their campuses, as well.

These ratings are essentially report cards for our schools. We have 44 schools that are eligible to earn a rating. Four schools didn't receive a rating because of having a small sample size, so 40 of our schools received a rating this year. Of those 40 schools, 25 of them received the top rating of Performance School (62.5%), and 36 of the 40 earned the top two ratings of Performance or Improvement School (90%). We have great things happening in D51, and our schools are proving that. One of our Strategic Plan Priority Area goals is to have 100% of our schools in the top two rating categories by the end of the 2024-25 school year. We are on our way, but we still have work to do. I want to thank the great leadership at our schools and at our central office for their hard work. I want to thank the great teachers and staff at our schools for their hard work. And, I want to thank the great students and supportive family partners for their hard work. Congratulations to our 25 Performance Schools...y'all deserve all of the credit and praise. Please join me as we congratulate them.

For some additional information on the schools that were recognized, click [here](#).

STATE SPIRIT COMPETITION

- **GJHS CHEER**

Last week, all four of our D51 high schools competed in the State Spirit Competition on the front range. These teams spent hours practicing, learning, and performing this year. They fought hard, showing determination and poise, and should be proud of their accomplishments this season. Shoutout to the coaches and everyone who has supported our student athletes to get to this point.

Grand Junction High School's team cheered their way to a third-place finish. The team earned a spot on the podium for the first time in 30+ years! GJHS cheer should be proud. Congratulations!

- **WILDCATS POMS TEAM**

Fruita Monument High School sent 16 members to the State Competition to represent the Wildcats POMS Team - Hip Hop. After a well-fought battle, they placed fourth overall in the 5A competition. Way to go, Wildcats!

ALL-STATE ORCHESTRA/JAZZ BAND

As our musical ensembles close out the year with their winter performances, the following high school students from across the district were named All-State Jazz Band and All-State Orchestra. These students work all semester, dedicating hours of practice and sacrificing many evenings to perfect their craft. Band Directors nominate these students to audition for a spot on the All-State team. Congratulations to all nominated students for your hard work. The following students excelled through a challenging audition process and were named All-State:

- **ALL-STATE ORCHESTRA**
Nicholas Berry, Grand Junction High School
- **ALL-STATE JAZZ BAND**
Jake Mason, Palisade High School
Max Warren, Palisade High School

I would also like to shoutout our band directors. Under your leadership, our students continue to show tremendous growth and success. The lessons and skills they learn through extracurricular activities will continue to follow them as they leave our D51 family. Not only are you making a difference in the musical landscape, but in the lives of our students. Thank you for doing what you do, and congratulations!

STUDENT OF THE QUARTER LUNCHEON

Next Tuesday, D51 will host the second quarter Student of the Quarter Luncheon. This event serves as an opportunity to celebrate and recognize D51 8th-grade and 12th-grade students who go above and beyond academically and show outstanding leadership among their peers.

Students are invited, with their families, to attend an awards banquet at Colorado Mesa University, where they receive their recognition, a plaque, and a \$500 scholarship, should they choose to attend higher education at CMU.

Our students continue to show commitment to education and service within our schools and community. I look forward to connecting with these students and their school administration and to learning more about why they have been selected for this award.

Congratulations to our Students of the Quarter on a well-deserved achievement:

- Valerie Ortiz, Bookcliff Middle School
- Angel Moreno, Bookcliff Middle School
- Diana Harvey-Soluna, East Middle School
- Donavin Brown, East Middle School
- Braelyn Clement, Grand Mesa Middle School
- Ian Reyes Ortega, Grand Mesa Middle School
- Venti Haffer, Mt. Garfield Middle School
- Logan Waggoner, Mt. Garfield Middle School
- Addison Stover, Orchard Mesa Middle School
- Grayson Walker, Orchard Mesa Middle School
- Zoey Tumas, Redlands Middle School
- Brody Kuster, Redlands Middle School
- Kambelle Hotard, West Middle School
- Spencer Conner, West Middle School
- Ashlyn Franklin, Fruita 8/9
- Andre Petik, Fruita 8/9
- Flora Jeanne "FJ" Mottillo, Central High School
- Bowen Clement, Central High School
- Klynn Tanner, Fruita Monument High School
- Ryland Hoisington, Fruita Monument High School
- Kaitlyn Akers, Grand Junction High School
- Chrisitan Tuttle, Grand Junction High School
- Avere Toft, Palisade High School
- Layton Tobin, Palisade High School
- Olivia Gardner, MVCS
- Stephen Bruner, MVCS

D51 SPORTS TOURNAMENTS

- **PALISADE WINTER CLASSIC**

The Boys Winter Classic Basketball Tournament is off to a great start. Tonight, Central boys take on Delta at 4:30 p.m., Fruita takes on Mead at 4:30 p.m., Grand Junction takes on Cortez at 7:30 p.m., and Palisade will compete against Silver Creek at 7:30 p.m. The teams that advance to the finals will face off tomorrow. Good luck; we'll be there cheering you on!

Round two for the girls' bracket of the Palisade Winter Classic begins this afternoon at PHS. Central girls take on Delta at 3:00 p.m., Fruita Monument girls take on Mead at 3:00 p.m., and Palisade will face Grand Junction at 6:00 p.m. Teams that advance to the semifinals, and finals rounds will compete this weekend. Come on out and help us cheer our high schools on to victory!

- **WARRIOR CLASSIC WRESTLING**

This weekend, Central High School will host the 2022 Warrior Classic Wrestling Tournament, the largest Wrestling Tournament in Western Colorado. The tournament will bring over 40 of the top-ranked teams from across the state of Colorado and neighboring states. Good luck to all our wrestling teams; go get 'em!

D51 BOE PRESIDENT ELECTED TO COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

In early December, Andrea Haitz, President of the District 51 Board of Education, was elected to the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) board of directors as the Region 10 representative.

CASB is governed by a 23-member board comprised of representative school board members from each of CASB's 12 regions. The organization represents and advocates for more than 1,000 school board members and superintendents statewide to groups within and outside the K-12 education community. CASB provides services, information, and training programs to support school board members as they govern their local districts. They work to cultivate relationships with dozens of governing bodies and other education stakeholders at the state and national levels to ensure a unified and effective voice and presence on behalf of its members.

Congratulations to President Haitz on being elected the Region 10 Representative. It is certainly well deserved, and we are proud to have a D51 Board of Education Member representing our district and region at the state level. Please join me in congratulating President Haitz for achieving this accomplishment.

D51 30+ YEAR DIRECTOR RETIREMENTS

- **CATHY EBEL**

Cathy Ebel, our Director of Social Emotional Learning and Behavior, has been an instrumental employee at District 51 and will retire at the end of December with over 30 years of service to the D51 family. Cathy has held various positions in D51, including teacher's aide, Elementary School Teacher, and TOSA. In 2006, Cathy became a Prevention Services Coordinator, where she spent 12 years before becoming the Director of Academic Options. In July 2019, she became the Director of Social Emotional Learning and Behavior. Cathy's leadership has led several of our departments to great success, and her depth of knowledge in her industry is unparalleled. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to our students and families. We will miss you and wish you all the best in your next endeavor!

- **ERIC NILSEN**

I'd like to take a moment to recognize Eric Nilsen, our Maintenance and Operations Director. Eric Nilsen will retire at the end of the month with more than 30 years of service to our D51 family. Eric was hired in August of 1992 as a carpenter, working his way up to his current position of Director. Eric has overseen multiple bond projects to build and replace schools and helped lead the Maintenance and Operations Department, which oversees care for over 50 buildings. Eric is known for always putting our staff and students first. He is a wealth of knowledge for D51 and has been an invaluable asset to our community. Thank you for all you have done for our district; you will be sorely missed.

BOARD HIGHLIGHT

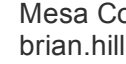
The Board of Education held a business meeting on Tuesday in the Harry Butler Board Room. Highlights from the meeting included:

- The following executive session was held before the Board of Education public meeting:
Executive session to discuss the purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer, or sale of any real, personal, or other property interest under C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(4)(a), specifically to discuss the Orchard Mesa Pool.
- Recognitions for the following:
 - Colorado Council for Social Students President Select, Mr. Scott Finhold, Central High School
 - Dinosaur Ridge Science First Place Finisher, Grand Junction High School A-Team, and Third Place Finisher, Grand Junction High School B-Team
 - 25 D51 Schools Received a "Performance School" rating from CDE.
 - Governor's Bright Spot Award Recipients: Chatfield Elementary and Bookcliff Middle School
- Board Report and D51 Happenings
- Superintendent Evaluation Update
- Chief Finance Office, Melanie Trujillo, presented the Mill Levy Certification.
- Alex Carter with CEI gave a midyear update regarding the D51 Strategic Plan.
- Business Items
 - Mill Levy Certification Resolution - Adopted
 - 3-Year Calendar Resolution - Adopted
 - Wildflower Montessori School Resolution to be released for application with CCSI - Adopted
 - Financial Request from Housing Standing Committee - Not adopted
- Board Open Discussion

Click [here](#) to read President Haitz's message following this week's Board Meeting. As a reminder, you can watch the meeting by clicking on this [link](#). As always, our BOE meeting details can be found on our [website](#).

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