



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues:

It has been a busy week for our students and staff as we begin to wind down the fall semester. I have enjoyed being present in our schools and attending several events put on by our students and staff in D51. It always makes me smile when I see our students so engaged and enthusiastic to be in the school setting. I was able to visit Monument Ridge Elementary School to witness their Hour of Code events, sat on a Project-Based Learning panel at Pomona Elementary School, and met with students from some of my Superintendent Student Advisory Groups. I love being able to visit our schools and be reminded of why we do what we do. And I loved hearing from students about how their schools are creating a culture of belonging and high expectations, which is what our students need most. Thanks to our school administrators, teachers, and staff for your work in creating great places for our kids to learn.

This week, I was able to visit 22 of the 25 D51 schools that earned the top rating of "Performance School" from the Colorado Department of Education. I had the opportunity to celebrate these schools, recognizing their staff for their outstanding leadership and academic growth. We presented each school with a "Performance School" banner to hang with pride in their halls. We are proud of all of our D51 schools, and we wanted to recognize these 25 schools for not only putting in the effort and working hard over the past year, but also for their outstanding academic success. Schools earning the distinction of "Performance School" do so by earning high marks on academic success, academic growth, and postsecondary workforce readiness. I could not be more proud of the teachers and staff we have in D51, and this is just one example of the many amazing things happening in our schools every day.

It is taking me a bit longer to get out to the 25 schools that earned the Performance School rating because we have so many schools to recognize, but that is a good problem to have! I have three more schools to recognize next week, and all 25 schools will be recognized by the Board of Education at next week's Board of Education Business Meeting. Shoutout to our students and staff, and thank you to our families for partnering with us as we move towards our Strategic Plan Focus Area goals for having Prepared & Supported Students. Thank you to members of our Board of Education and the D51 Foundation for making it out to some of the school visits, as well. You can check out pictures from the school visits on my [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#) page.

#### ALL-STATE CHOIR AND ALL-STATE JAZZ CHOIR STUDENTS

As our fall semester wraps up, high school students from across the district put their skills and talent to the test this year. After a rigorous audition, we congratulate the following students selected for All-State Choir and All-State Jazz Choir program.

#### Central High School

Mat Coronado, Director  
Maxwell Bardell  
Sophia Johnson

#### Fruita Monument High School

Jessica Hazard Hanley, Director  
Daisy Aggen  
Megan Davis  
Abigail Johnson  
Kai McRorie  
Lauren Scott

#### Grand Junction High School

Brad Hirsh, Director  
Izzy Cornelison  
Corran Gandy  
Sam Guddat  
Noah (Axel) Haugseth  
Brayden MacDonald  
Jaden Phillips  
Gracelynn Stone  
Kaden Winn

#### Palisade High School

Matt Doty, Director  
Solomon Brown  
Serena Flanigan  
Jane Pitcher  
Paolo Reitz  
Jaeda Rogal  
Alivia Sanchez  
Maya Znamenacek

I am constantly impressed by the time and effort our students put into their extracurricular activities. I love to see these efforts culminate with well-deserved recognition of their hard work and talents. I would be remiss if I didn't give a shoutout to all our high school choir directors, as well. Your guidance and expertise in the field continue to propel our music programs forward year after year as our students grow and thrive under your leadership. Congratulations to everyone involved!

#### D51 MUSICAL EVENTS

- **GJHS 24th Annual Holiday Extravaganza**  
The GJHS Holiday Extravaganza Concert is held at the First Church of Nazarene and features a set of holiday-themed performances from multiple GJHS choirs. Shows began yesterday evening but will continue tonight at 7 p.m., with two more tomorrow at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- **Palisade High School *Sounds of the Season* Performance**  
Palisade High School is hosting its Choral Music Program's Holiday Performance and Fundraising today and tomorrow, December 9 and 10. The concert will showcase holiday choral music and raise funds to support the PHS choral music students.
- **Central High School Winter Fest**  
Central High School is holding its winter fest tonight at 6 p.m. in the CHS Auditorium. Tickets are available at the door and the concert will feature choir, band, guitar, drama, and piano performances.
- **GJHS Orchestra Concert**  
Grand Junction High School is hosting its winter concert next Tuesday, December 13, at 7 p.m. in the GJHS Auditorium. Proceeds from the event will go towards supporting our D51 Orchestra program.
- **Fruita Monument High School Choir Concert**  
Fruita Monument High School is hosting its winter Choir Concert Tuesday, December 13th, in the FMHS Auditorium at 7 p.m.
- **GJHS Swingin' Sweets Jazz Performance**  
Grand Junction High School is hosting its "Swingin' Sweets" jazz band performance on December 16 at GJHS. Proceeds from the craft fair and concessions will continue to support our GJHS Bands.

If you have yet to attend a band, orchestra, or musical ensemble performance, not only will you have the opportunity to see these fantastic musicians in action, but this is a chance for us to come together to celebrate and support our D51 students outside the classroom. I hope you'll take advantage of these events, and we'll see you there!

#### STEM STATE COMPETITION

In November, we highlighted the F.I.R.S.T Lego League Tournament held right here in Grand Junction. 45 Robotics Teams, 29 from District 51, were represented at the tournament. D51 had four teams qualify for the State Competition; two teams from Mesa View Elementary, a team from New Emerson, and a team from Independence Academy. The State Competition occurring today, December 9, and tomorrow, December 10, is held at the University of Colorado in Denver. Shoutout to Jessica McDivitt and her team for their leadership with this program. A big thank you to our teacher and parent coaches for dedicating your time and energy beyond the four walls of your classroom, and to our school administrators for supporting STEM in schools. You are truly making a difference! Good luck to our students as they compete at the state level.

#### CHSAA STATE SPIRIT COMPETITION

The Colorado High School Activities Association State Cheer Competition occurred this week, and all four D51 High Schools were represented. Teams that advance to the final competition will perform this evening. Congratulations to all our Cheer teams who competed! A lot of work goes into being a great cheer team, and we thank you for representing our school district.

In addition, Fruita Monument High School will be competing in the dance portion of the CHSAA State Competition tomorrow morning. We wish you all the best and look forward to celebrating your success. Go, Wildcats!

#### MURAL DEDICATION AT WINGATE ELEMENTARY

Myself and members of our Board of Education and the D51 Foundation were able to attend a mural dedication at Wingate Elementary School. Wingate already has one of the best views in the district, and now they have a beautiful and colorful mural outside their school to enhance that view, as well.

From the mural's online description, "*Beginning with our Wingate Explorers, artist (and D51 parent) Anna Hileman aimed to demonstrate the vast world ahead for our kids while integrating the extraordinary features of this place we call home, a stepping stone for the journey ahead. As no two butterflies are alike and each butterfly contains every color of the rainbow, each student and staff member's hand print has been placed within a ROYGBIV (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet) spectrum, signifying their vital part and attribution to the Wingate community and the world. Additionally, students and staff chose a letter or shape to make their handprint even more distinctive. The final prints to be placed were from Trigger, Wingate's adored therapy dog. The monarch butterfly was chosen for its locality to this area and as a symbol of the transformation, strength, and journey of Wingate's students and families.*"

*"Furthermore, Ms. Hileman included local characteristics such as the monument, wild horse, dinosaur fossil, native wildflowers, petroglyphs, and bicycle tracks. The scorpion pays homage to Wingate's history, signifying the connection of our past, present, and future, while the stars remind us all to reach for our dreams."*

Thank you to Principal Schraeder and the Wingate PTO, who planned, funded, and supported this art installation, along with support from FCI Constructors, Lowe's, and Home Depot. Thank you to Ms. Hileman for your time and extraordinary talent dedicated to creating this piece of art. For more information on the project, check out this incredible [timelapse of the mural production](#).

#### CITY OF GRAND JUNCTION INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT DAY PROCLAMATION

On Wednesday evening, I attended the City of Grand Junction City Council meeting to participate in the presentation of a proclamation recognizing Dec. 18 as "International Day of the Migrant" by the United Nations. I was joined by members of our D51 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education Department, Migrant Education Program, and community organizations that support our migrant students and families, including Ms. Vasconez from Mutual Aid Partners. Members of the City Council presented the proclamation and recognized the many contributions our migrant families provide to the community, and I was able to speak about the support we provide our migrant students and families in D51. Thank you to the City of Grand Junction City Council and Mayor Stout for recognizing and supporting our migrant students and families, and thank you to the community organizations and D51 staff present that support them, as well.

#### BOARD HIGHLIGHT

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

- Affordable Housing Committee Update
- Presentation by our Chief Operating Officer, Clint Garcia, and Manager from Student Transportation of America (STA), Shane Anderson, who presented a comprehensive transportation update from the district.
- The Executive Director of Student Services, Patti Virden, gave a presentation on behavior prevention and management in D51 schools.
- The 2023-24 Calendar Committee, led by Chief Academic Officer Jennifer Marsh, proposed two calendar options for the 2023-2024 school year. The board will vote on adopting these calendars at the next Board Meeting on December 13, along with the option to adopt calendars for the two years following the 2023-24 school year..
- Board Open Discussion
- An executive session was held following the Board of Education public meeting.
  - Executive session for discussion of an individual student where public disclosure would adversely affect the person or persons involved under C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(h)

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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