



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues:

One of my favorite things to do at the end of the school year is to visit schools as they are having different celebrations. It is always fun to see the smiles on the faces of our students, the joy from our teachers as they wrap up a year of hard but rewarding work supporting our students, and the excitement our families feel from seeing their kids end another school year academically, socially, and emotionally stronger than when the year started.

One of the many events I have been able to attend this past week was the Military-Bound Graduate Recognition & Family Picnic last Saturday. It was great to recognize all of our D51 graduates who will be going on to serve our country in the military, and to see the joy on the faces of the families as we all came together to honor the next steps for our brave students. Thank you to the Western Slope Blue Star Mothers for putting on a great event.

This week I was also able to attend the D51 Special Olympics, an awesome robotics competition at Independence Academy, the 5th grade Seal of Biliteracy Ceremony held at DIA, a tree planting event at Orchard Mesa Middle School with the Rotary of Grand Junction, the Annual Broadway Elementary Bear Walk, and the Fruita Monument High School Best Buddies Friendship Walk which supports "inclusion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities." So much fun was had at all of these events, and I want to thank our school communities for not only putting these events together, but also for inviting me to participate alongside y'all. These events are the highlight of my week.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Over 375 students representing 35 schools throughout Mesa County Valley School District 51 competed in the Special Olympics Colorado Track and Field meet on May 2nd. Read more [here](#).

6TH GRADE STRING CLINIC

Recently, our 6th-grade orchestra program participated in our Annual 6th Grade String Clinic, where every 6th-grade orchestra program comes together for one gigantic concert. This year it was held at GJHS and featured three different performing groups. Read more [here](#).

UGANDA BOOK DRIVE

It is inspiring to witness the positive impact that our students, past and present, have on their communities. One of our own D51 alumni, Nicole Katongole, a 2016 graduate of Palisade High School, has chosen to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others in an extraordinary way. Read more [here](#).

SEAL OF BILITERACY

On Thursday, we celebrated our 5th-grade students who earned their Seal of Biliteracy. District 51 awards a Seal of Biliteracy in recognition of a student who has attained proficiency in English and one or more other world languages (Spanish, French, or German). Read more [here](#)

BOBBY G HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC AWARDS

I am incredibly proud to announce that our Central High School Theatre Program has been nominated for five Bobby G Awards. Read more [here](#).

ROTARY CLUB DONATES TREES TO D51 SCHOOLS

The Grand Junction Rotary Club donated \$10,000 worth of trees from Valley Grown Nursery to eight D51 schools. Today, Dr. Christensen (D51 Foundation Executive Director) and I joined students, staff, and Rotary members at Appleton Elementary and Orchard Mesa Middle School in celebration and recognition of the donation. Read more [here](#).

NEW PRINCIPAL HIRES

On May 2nd, the Board of Education unanimously approved the hiring of six principals to lead our schools beginning July 2023. We take the hiring of leadership positions very seriously. We want to make sure we have candidates who we feel strongly about and believe they can lead their schools effectively, and we want to make sure that they are a good fit for their school communities. We are excited to welcome these leaders to their new roles, and we know they are going to do great things for their school communities. I want to thank these individuals for their commitment to lead our schools, and I want to thank the school staffs, families, and students who served on the interview committees to help in the process to select these individuals. Thank you to our D51 Human Resources Department for all of their hard work in recruiting candidates, scheduling and facilitating committee interviews, and preparing information for the Board of Education to vote on. Please help me in welcoming our new school leaders. Our new principals include:

- **Kris Friesen** (Current Principal in Nebraska) - **Scenic Elementary School Principal**
- **Shawn Wilson** (Current Assistant Principal at Chatfield Elementary in D51) - **Taylor Elementary School Principal**
- **Daniel Medved** (Current Director of Professional Learning in D51) - **Orchard Mesa Middle School Principal**
- **Tracy Arledge** (Current Assistant Principal at Central High School in D51) - **Central High School Principal**
- **Newton Klusmire** (Current Assistant Principal at Fruita Monument High School in D51) - **Fruita Monument High School Principal**
- **Jory Sorensen** (Current Principal at Redlands Middle School in D51) - **Grand Junction High School Principal**

D51 UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **SENIOR WALKS**
Congratulations to all our graduating seniors! We are incredibly excited to send you off to your next adventure, but know that you will always be a part of our D51 family! [Click here](#) for a list of all upcoming Senior Walks.
- **MESA VIEW 40TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT**
Thursday, May 11, 2023 - 2:30 p.m.
Mesa View Elementary proudly celebrates its 40th anniversary with a series of special events and activities this year. For more information, [click here](#).
- **CHS CHORAL POPS CONCERT**
Tuesday, May 9, 2023 - 7 p.m. at Central High School
- **D51 ATHLETICS**
Spring sports continue. Click [here](#) for the D51 athletic calendar.

BOARD RECAP

On May 2, the Board of Education held a Work Session in the Harry Butler Board Room. For highlights from the meeting, click [here](#).

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