

## BOARD BRIEFS

Board Special Meeting | June 7, 2022  
Board agendas and materials: [bit.ly/d51boardagendas21](https://bit.ly/d51boardagendas21)  
Board meeting livestreaming: [facebook.com/schooldistrict51](https://facebook.com/schooldistrict51)

### Mesa County Blueprint to End Hunger

More than half of District 51 children qualify for free or reduced-price school meals based on income, and 14% of all Mesa County



residents are food insecure. Tackling this issue is the goal of the Mesa County Hunger Alliance. The alliance presented the board with their Blueprint to End Hunger at Tuesday's meeting. The blueprint contains five goals:

1. Develop a coordinated emergency and short-term hunger relief system that encourages greater collaboration and increases operating efficiencies and effectiveness in addressing hunger.
2. Maximize enrollment in food assistance programs and expand use of federal nutrition programs for hunger relief.
3. Increase access to quality, nutritious foods available for people who are hungry.
4. Expand and systematize grocery rescue and food recovery efforts so that nutritious food is not thrown away but directed to hunger relief efforts.
5. Increase public awareness that hunger is an issue in Western Colorado and affects the larger community.

D51 and its partners in the 21-member alliance are already doing their part to achieve these goals. The Lunch Lizard mobile food service program served 29,225 meals last summer and is running again for its eighth summer June 6-July 28. More than \$1 million in grants have helped bring tools to D51 kitchens to make meals from scratch and introduce salad bars for kids. School lunch participation has increased steadily each year since 2018, especially when all school meals were free in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

The district uses as many Colorado vendors as possible for ingredients (for example, potatoes from the San Luis Valley, carrots from Greeley, and lettuce from Brighton are all served in D51 cafeterias), and students visit the CSU Extension on Orchard Mesa to see how fruits and vegetables are grown. In addition, a pilot program brought five Snack Stations to our highest-need schools pre-COVID to give kids a place to pick out snacks kids didn't open or eat in the cafeteria.

The blueprint creators said ways the community can help include eating school meals and encouraging neighbors and friends to utilize school meals and the Lunch Lizard, volunteering in D51, donating to the Western Colorado Community Foundation or another organization that's part of the alliance, and learning about a 2022 ballot measure that proposes free meals for all students in Colorado schools.



### Early Childhood Education Update

For every \$1 invested in high quality early childhood education, society gets a return on investment of \$7-\$12. Kids who participate in early childhood education

programming are more likely to read by third grade, more likely to graduate high school, and more likely to be in good health and earn higher wages than their peers.

In D51, the Colorado Preschool Program provides funding for up to 585 students who are 3 or 4 years old (or 5, if their birthday is after the cutoff date for kindergarten) who are at risk for later school failure. In addition, D51 has 336 preschool spots for children with special needs. Starting in July 2023, all Colorado children will be entitled to at least 10 hours per week of free preschool the year before they start kindergarten (D51 offers 12 hours of preschool per week). Three-year-old children will still need to meet state at-risk factors or have an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) to qualify for preschool. D51 also offers Child Find, which is a free and mandatory service that ensures kids with special need are identified, evaluated, and appropriately served age 0-21.

D51 preschools are licensed child care facilities and D51 has earned the top level a district program can earn (Level 4). Preschool curriculum focuses on the whole child, including social-emotional and academic development. Anyone interested in D51 Preschool can pick up an application at the new Early Childhood Education location in the Basil T. Knight Center at 596 N. Westgate Dr.



### Grand Junction High Groundbreaking

The official groundbreaking ceremony for the new GJHS took place June 1.

Superintendent Sirko said the ceremony was a nice thank you to voters and taxpayers as well as everyone involved in the campaign. More information about the construction project can be found [here](#).



### Legislative Update

Amy Attwood, contract lobbyist for D51, debriefed the board on the 2022 legislative session which ended in May. The biggest education news in 2022, she said, was the opening of the new state Department of Early Childhood and the governor signing a bill to implement universal pre-K for students the year before they enter kindergarten starting next fall.

Other news included a statewide increase of \$80 million for special education, a change in the percentage of a teacher's evaluation score attributed to student test data (now at 30%, down from 50%), and district performance frameworks not being impacted by student data this year. Issues to watch in the future include the possible elimination of the Budget Stabilization Factor (which has taken money from districts since 2009-10 to shore up other parts of the state budget) and a revamp of the School Finance Act.



### Future Meetings

June 14 - Board Special Meeting, 6 p.m., HBRR.

June 21 - Board Business Meeting, 6 p.m., HBRR.



### Note from School Board President Haitz

Hello D51 and Mesa County Community!

The Board of Education had a productive work session this week. As mentioned above we had some great updates on the Blueprint to End Hunger which included the Lunch Lizard; Early Childhood Education Program; and an in-person Legislative Update from Amy Attwood.

The Board had open discussion on the progress of Grand Junction High School and how the project is coming along. The Board will hold a Special meeting Tuesday, June 14, at 6:00 p.m. to get some more detailed information from our Owner's Representative, Colleen Kaneda, and some items the Board will need to be made aware of. There is no public comment at special meetings, so if you'd like to share something please email the Board ahead of time.

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