



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues,

Today, our schools spent the day wrapping up the fall semester, and I wanted to take a moment to share my appreciation for y'all and all of your hard work and dedication throughout the year.

Thank you to our families for being engaged and supportive partners with D51. Thank you to our students for your dedication and commitment to finishing out a great semester. Special thanks to our school administrators, teachers, and staff for your continued support and guidance in working with our students and families. And last but certainly not least, thank you to our district leadership and administrative staff for the continued support of our educational community.

Despite a short week, there continued to be a lot happening across the district. I was able to visit the Fruita Monument High School art show on Monday night. The student artwork that was on display in the library was amazing, and I want to shoutout Ms. Widhammer and everyone at FMHS who supports our students and the arts. I look forward to the spring art show. On Wednesday I was able to swing by a retirement celebration for Mr. Petie Pope. The room was packed with supporters, all showing their appreciation for Petie and his over 20 years of service to D51. We will miss you, Petie, and we are excited for your next phase in life. Wednesday evening I was able to visit the Social Studies Curriculum Open House. This was an opportunity for the public to view the curriculum that our Teaching & Learning Department is reviewing for possible adoption. Thank you to the folks who took advantage of this opportunity, and thank you to our hard working team in the Teaching & Learning Department for putting this on.

Today, I was able to swing by Wingate Elementary and Monument Ridge Elementary to present them with their Performance School banners. They were the last two schools to visit on my "Performance School banner tour," and I'm so proud of our students, staff, and families at these schools for their hard work in earning the highest academic rating in the state. Wingate has earned this distinction for 14 years in a row, and Monument Ridge has earned it every year that they have been eligible since the school opened. Shoutout to Principal Schraeder and Principal Larsen for your leadership, and shoutout to the amazing staff at each of these schools. It's been fun getting out to all of our schools that earned the Performance School rating, and during Tuesday evening's Board of Education meeting, we recognized all of our Performance Schools in D51. Witnessing the representation of more than 2/3 of our school principals and staff in the room once again reminded me and our team of why we do what we do. You can read more about this below, but I wanted to give an additional shoutout to all the administrators and staff who showed up to be recognized. Your hard work and dedication continue to pay off, and we are grateful for everything you do to help our students excel academically.

***As a reminder, while our Central Office will be open, D51 schools will be closed from December 22 to January 9.*** I want to wish all y'all and your families a wonderful and relaxing winter break and a Happy New Year! Y'all deserve it. We look forward to welcoming our students back on January 10 to kick off another great semester!

#### **Clifton Area Elementary Schools Partner with Alpine to Recognize Student Academic Growth**

I am always amazed by the proactive initiatives undertaken by our staff to acknowledge student achievement. Clifton area elementary schools and Alpine Bank recently joined forces to celebrate and incentivize student academic growth. Read more [here](#).

#### **R-5 High School Holiday Extravaganza**

Every year, the First United Methodist Church on Grand Avenue organizes a wonderful holiday meal for our R-5 learners. This year, the event took on an even more special significance, as families were invited to join. Read more [here](#).

#### **Shelley Elementary Continues Caroling Tradition at Fruita's Civic Park**

In one of their favorite traditions, students at Shelley Elementary spent the day spreading holiday cheer at the Fruita Civic Center. Read more [here](#).

#### **D51 Recognizes Performance Schools**

Over the last few months, I have had the privilege of visiting our D51 schools that have earned the "Performance School" rating for the 2022-23 academic year and celebrating their achievement with a recognition banner. During our Board of Education meeting on Tuesday evening, we were excited to publicly acknowledge these Performance Schools, which have earned the highest academic rating from the Colorado Department of Education based on their school performance frameworks. Read more [here](#).

#### **Warrior Classic Update**

Last weekend, Central High School successfully hosted the 2023 Warrior Classic Wrestling Tournament...the largest wrestling event in Western Colorado. The tournament featured over 40 of the region's top-ranked teams, drawing participants from Colorado and neighboring states. It showcased the incredible athletic talent we have in D51, and we are proud to share that multiple teams and individuals placed during the competition. Thanks to our coaches and everyone who helped to put on this great event for our student athletes. Read more [here](#).

#### **CHSAA Spirit State Competition**

Last week, we acknowledged the outstanding performance of our D51 High School Cheer Teams at the state competition. Not only did the Fruita Monument High School Poms Team secure a 6th place finish in the 4A/5A Division finals, but they also achieved a historic milestone by having an individual named to the All-State Dance Team.

Shoutout to FMHS Senior Neveah Drysdale for earning a well-deserved spot on the All-State Dance Team, and a special mention to the following individuals who received honorable mentions:

- Annabelle Reeves, Junior; Fruita Monument High School (Gameday Cheer)
- Cheyanna Ruppelius, Sophomore; Grand Junction High School (All-Girl Cheer)
- Alexa Talavera, Junior; Palisade High School (Gameday Cheer)
- Savannah Wilson, Senior; Grand Junction Central High School (Co-Ed Cheer)

Thank you to our coaches who support our student athletes throughout the year, and congratulations to all of our D51 student athletes who competed.

#### **School of Choice Opens Mid-January**

At District 51, we are dedicated to offering a diverse range of educational options that align with our mission of empowering families to choose the educational setting that best suits their unique preferences and aspirations. Read more [here](#).

#### **Leadership D51 Class**

On Wednesday, we hosted the second session of our four-class series, Leadership D51. In this series, business & community leaders learn more about the inner workings and operations of our district, gaining invaluable insights into our comprehensive three-year, community-driven strategic plan. Read more [here](#).

#### **Social Studies Standards Forums and Curriculum Open Houses**

Recently, District 51 hosted community forums and open houses, seeking valuable community input regarding the updated K-12 Colorado Social Studies Standards in Civics and History. Read more [here](#).

#### **Fruita 8/9 School Update**

On Tuesday evening, the District 51 Board of Education unanimously approved the resolution to close Fruita 8/9 School at the end of the 2023-24 academic year. This decision is part of a broader effort to normalize the configuration of secondary schools in the Fruita area, aligning them with the rest of the district. Read more [here](#).

#### **Board of Education Recap**

On December 19, the Board of Education held a Business Meeting in the Harry Butler Board Room. For highlights from this meeting, click [here](#). To watch the live stream of this meeting, click [here](#).

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