



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues,

As we wrap up our final full week of February, it's important that we reflect on the start of the 2024 spring semester and celebrate all the good things happening in D51. And while it may feel like the spring semester has just begun, the 2023-24 school year will come to a close before we know it. Did you realize that we only have 45 school days left before our first 2024 high school graduation?! And just over 50 days left until the end of the school year! So, let's celebrate a great start to the semester, but let's also stay focused as we finish the year off strong with the little time we have left.

Speaking of good things, on Tuesday, I was able to join outstanding D51 8th- and 12th-grade students and their families for the Student of the Quarter Luncheon. This is an opportunity for us to celebrate students who are nominated by their teachers to represent their schools, and for select staff members to brag about their students. Shoutout to CMU and Alpine Bank for their continued partnership with this event, including a \$500 scholarship to CMU or CMU Tech for each student.

On Tuesday, I also had the opportunity to see some of our amazing D51 students in action. I visited the Career Center where Interim Principal McClaskey introduced me to FMHS student, Elway. Elway showed off the project he created through the horticulture program at Career Center where he combined artistic talent and hydroponics to make a multilevel nutrient culture hydroponic system that was based on a sketch from a past student. I was even more impressed with Elway's story as he shared about the struggles he's had in the past with school and how the hands-on experience at Career Center has kept him engaged in his learning as he works hard towards graduation. Shoutout to the Career Center staff, and all D51 staff who work hard to engage ALL students from ALL walks of life.

Tuesday, prior to our Board Meeting, I was also able to visit Orchard Mesa Middle School and hear some of the presentations from our Challenge Program students during their National History Day Showcase. The students did amazing, and I want to shoutout Principal Medved, Tina Sleight, and all of the OMMS staff for supporting our Challenge Program students. After the Board Meeting that evening, I was able to hop over to Palisade High School to catch the second half of the girls basketball playoff game. Our PHS, CHS, and FMHS girls teams all made the playoffs, and I am proud of the effort all four of our high school teams put in all season long, and the effort our three teams showed in the playoffs. Thanks to our coaches for supporting our student athletes on the court and in the classrooms.

Speaking of playoffs, Wednesday night I was able to catch both the FMHS boys basketball playoff game and the GJHS boys basketball playoff game. It took some coordination, efficient yet safe driving, and a wardrobe change to pull it off (can't wear the wrong school colors to the games!), but I was able to catch the action from both teams. Shoutout to both FMHS and GJHS for winning their games and moving on to round two, and shoutout to CHS and PHS for making the playoffs, as well. You can join me on Saturday at 2 p.m. at FMHS to cheer on the FMHS team at home, and we'll all be cheering on GJHS as they travel to the front range for their game.

Lastly, I was able to meet with my Superintendent Student Advisory Group from R-5 High School this week. I always love hearing from our R-5 students, as their path isn't always the same as students in our comprehensive high schools, and the students always share about the amazing support they get from Principal Steinmetz and the R-5 staff. I'm glad we have R-5 as an option for our D51 students, and I appreciate the perspective they shared with me on the topics of responsible technology use and the impacts of social media on kids. This is a topic that we have been exploring at all levels this year in D51, and you'll be hearing more about how we want to address it as a district, in partnership with our families, in the near future.

With that, enjoy some good things highlighted below, enjoy a beautiful weekend on the Western Slope, and let's make these last 50ish days of the school year even more meaningful as we finish the year strong. Thanks for being a part of the D51 Family.

#### Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are the nation's longest-running and most prestigious recognition program for creative teens in grades 7–12. Thousands of students participate in this competition every year, and this year, multiple high schools across D51 had students earn awards. Read more [here](#).

#### Student of the Quarter

On Wednesday, I had the privilege of attending our 3rd Student of the Quarter Luncheon for the year. This event is an opportunity to celebrate and recognize D51 8th-grade and 12th-grade students who go above and beyond on their campuses, exemplifying leadership and character. Read more [here](#).

#### GJHS Hosts Academic Options Night

Grand Junction High School hosted its annual GJHS Academic Options Night for incoming 9th-grade students and their families, an opportunity to explore the academic program options available to GJHS students. Read more [here](#).

#### National History Day

National History Day in Colorado is a social studies and literacy program that equips elementary, middle, and high school students with the skills to succeed in college and the real world. Read more [here](#).

#### National Technical Honor Society

This week, we recognized 18 D51 students who were inducted into the National Technical Honor Society. Read more [here](#).

#### Chatfield Elementary Shines a Spotlight on Respect

This week, Chatfield Elementary hosted its Student of the Month Assembly with an exciting twist! Read more [here](#).

#### GJHS Students Organize Narcan Assembly

Students at Grand Junction High School organized a school-wide assembly this week, bringing awareness to the dangers of fentanyl and the life-saving potential of Narcan. Read more [here](#).

#### Central High School Career Fair

In partnership with numerous organizations across the Grand Valley, Central High School hosted its annual College & Career Fair this week. Read more [here](#).

#### State Wrestling Results

Exciting news! We are incredibly proud to share the amazing achievements of our District 51 students at the CHSAA State Wrestling Championships last weekend. Read more [here](#).

#### Bank of Colorado Art Contest Reminder

**Reminder:** The 17th Annual Bank of Colorado 2025 Calendar Contest is officially underway. This is a chance for our D51 students to showcase their artistic talents and be part of something special. Submissions are open to students in grades K-12 and will be accepted until March 29. For more information or to submit your art, click [here](#).

#### Leadership D51

Our Leadership D51 cohort met for their third class this week, led this time by Chief Human Resource Officer Nikki Jost, who provided a comprehensive overview of Focus Area 2 in our Strategic Plan: Prepared & Supported Staff. Read more [here](#).

#### BOE Meeting Recap

On February 20, the Board of Education held a Business Meeting in the Harry Butler Board Room. For highlights from the meeting, click [here](#). To view the recording of the meeting, click [here](#).

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

- FMHS Boys Basketball Playoffs Game  
*February 24, 2 p.m. at Fruita Monument High School*  
Come cheer our FMHS Boys Basketball Team to victory as they take on Broomfield High School in the playoffs.
- M.E.S.A Club Competition  
*February 28, 4 p.m. at Redlands Middle School*
- Parent Social Media Presentation  
*February 28, 6 p.m. at Bookcliff Middle School Cafeteria*  
Join the Colorado Office of School Safety to discuss strategies to keep your students safe online while navigating various social media platforms.
- Mesa County Safety Fair  
*February 28-29, 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Mesa Mall*  
Join various safety organizations and the Mesa County Safety Council, for the annual Safety Fair, focused on teaching youth tips and tools to be safer. Students will learn how to protect themselves, friends, family, and the environment.

*Brian Hill*

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