



Dear D51 Families and Colleagues,

Happy October! We are wrapping up the first quarter of school, and it has flown by. We had an eventful week in D51, and I had several opportunities to connect with our students, staff, and families. I have also been enjoying the cooler days and the change of colors that make D51 and the Grand Valley such a beautiful place to live, and I hope you've had the chance to take it all in as well.

This week, I stopped by the Network Improvement Community meetings for our secondary schools and witnessed the efforts our school admin and teacher leaders put into providing our students with enhanced academic and SEL support systems. I am always impressed and thankful for the dedication and commitment of our staff in ensuring that we consistently work to better engage, equip, and empower our students to reach their highest potential. Thank you to our Teaching & Learning Department and our SEL & Behavioral Supports Department for all of their hard work in providing space and time for staff professional learning...one of our Strategic Plan Priority Areas.

Additionally, I visited Grand Junction High School for their 2nd Annual Workforce Development Day. Students were able to learn more about the Academies at GJHS, learn about career pathways and job opportunities from community partners, and hear a motivational keynote. Thanks to Principal Sorensen and the GJHS admin and staff for all of their hard work to put this event on for our students. And thank you to our Engaged & Supportive Community Partners for attending and sharing your expertise with our students.

I ended the week by getting to join the Pear Park Elementary third graders out at Corn Lake for a fun adventure with the Colorado Parks & Wildlife, and I took advantage of the beautiful fall weather today and stopped by Colorado Mesa University to watch our D51 schools in action on the tennis courts. And if you're looking for something fun to do this evening, join me at Stoker Stadium at 7 p.m. to watch FMHS take on GJHS in some D51 football under the Friday night lights.

It's safe to say that there is always a lot going on in D51, and there are so many opportunities for our students to shine through extracurricular and engaging activities. This time of year, there is always a lot going on with fall athletics, school traditions, fall festivals, and, of course, fall Parent-Teacher conferences. During this time, I encourage you to take the opportunity to visit your student's school, meet with teachers, and see the progress they are making with the support of our amazing teachers and staff. We are all **better together**.

Indigenous Peoples Day

Monday marks Indigenous Peoples Day, a day for us to recognize and celebrate the rich history, diverse cultures, and remarkable contributions of Indigenous people around the world. District 51 is committed to fostering understanding and respect for the rich traditions and heritage of Indigenous people, a commitment that extends beyond just Monday. Throughout the year, you will likely notice lessons, discussions, and educational activities in our schools and classrooms that aim to raise awareness and foster a greater appreciation for the Indigenous communities that have called this land home for thousands of years. We encourage you to join us in this day of celebration and recognition. As a reminder, school is in session on Monday.

Upcoming "No School" Days

District 51 students will not have class October 12 and 13, and the following Monday, October 16 for various purposes. October 12 has been designated as a teacher workday, October 13 will be dedicated to elementary school conferences and middle/high school in-service and October 16 has been allocated as a CD Day. District 51 places a high value on this designated time for interactions with families, guardians, and students to discuss student performance and advancement. Parent/teacher conferences are important to the student learning experience, offering crucial support for academic success and mental & social well-being. The D51 calendar incorporates two CD Days or Conference Exchange days, designated as paid days for D51 teachers to compensate for their after-school and off-contract time spent participating in parent/teacher conferences.

If your child is enrolled in a D51 In-District Charter School or Choice School, please check your student's [school calendar](#), as schedules may vary slightly. We hope our students enjoy a well-deserved short break during this time, filled with relaxation and fun activities.

Attendance Matters. Every Day Counts.

As your proud superintendent, and a former teacher and school administrator, I understand how crucial it is to have our students in school daily, ready to learn. Having students present in school allows them to flourish academically, socially, and emotionally and is the foundation for every successful academic journey. When students are present, they learn and grow and actively engage with their peers and teachers, contributing to a positive and flourishing learning environment. Throughout the year, we will continue to work with, and encourage, our families to be active partners in ensuring their children's regular attendance, as it is a crucial step in nurturing a strong educational foundation. If there is a way we can better support you and your student, please reach out to your child's school or our attendance office.

Colorado Proud School Meal Day

On October 3, Colorado recognized Colorado Proud School Meal Day, a celebration highlighting the importance of supporting local agriculture and providing nutritious meals to students. For years, schools across Colorado have emphasized using locally sourced ingredients in school meals, showcasing the vibrant and diverse agricultural products grown within the state. Read more [here](#).

GJHS Workforce Development Day

The 2nd Annual Workforce Development Day at Grand Junction High School proved once again to be a valuable experience for our students, offering them a unique opportunity to dive into the area of career development. Read more [here](#).

Walk and Wheel to School Day

On October 4, I had the opportunity to join the excitement of National Walk & Wheel to School Day alongside our awesome students and staff at Pomona Elementary, and it was an absolute blast for both students and staff! National Walk & Wheel to School Day is an initiative that aims to advocate for safer routes to school for students and staff who walk or bike to school, and schools across the Valley gathered to highlight this positive effort. Read more [here](#).

Pear Park Elementary & CPW

Pear Park Elementary's P.E. teacher, Mr. Nick Moseley, was recently awarded a grant from the National Fishing in Schools Program, "Cast a Lure, Catch a Student." This generous grant enabled every third-grade student to receive their very own fishing pole and stocked Corn Lake with an impressive 5,000 fish! So, this week, these young third graders set off on an adventure to learn about all things fishing! Read more [here](#).

Fruita Reconfiguration Townhall Recaps

Last spring, District 51 conducted a survey among Fruita area families, students, and staff to gauge their thoughts on aligning Fruita area secondary schools with the district's overall secondary grade configuration. The majority of respondents supported the proposed reconfiguration, and in March 2023, the Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution charging the district to address the secondary grade configuration in the Fruita area. This week, we held two town hall meetings to discuss potential modifications within our Fruita area secondary schools. Read more [here](#).

Board of Education Recap

On October 3, the Board of Education held a Work Session in the Harry Butler Board Room. For highlights from this meeting, click [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Broadway Elementary Fall Fest**
Tonight (October 6), 5 p.m., Broadway Elementary
- **Loma Craft Fair**
Saturday, October 7, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Loma Elementary
- **R-5 Fall Fest**
Wednesday, October 11, 4 p.m - 7 p.m., R-5 High School
- **Noche Informativa**
Thursday, October 12, 6:30 p.m., Harry Butler Board Room
Our Access, Opportunity and Family Partnership Department hosts monthly Noche Informativa sessions that cover topics such as district resources and support for families. This month, we'll focus on excusing absences in ParentVue and feature a presentation by Hilltop on OmniSalud, a health insurance option for undocumented Colorado residents.

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