

## D51 BY THE NUMBERS >

Data from the 2021-22 school year.  
Data from the Colorado Department of Education contributed to this report.

**21,315** Students

- 3.7%** Gifted & Talented
- 45%** Free & Reduced Lunches
- 1.9%** Dropout Rate
- 3.4%** English Language Learners
- 30%** Minority Students

**2,815** Teachers & Staff

- 1,526** Licensed Staff
- 1,148** Support Staff
- 141** Administrative Staff

Largest employer in Mesa County



**81%**

Graduation Rate  
Class of 2021  
\*4-year rate



**47 Schools**

- 25** elementary schools
- 8** middle schools
- 4** comprehensive high schools
- 1** middle/high school
- 3** charter schools
- 2** alternative high schools
- 3** K-12 schools
- 1** vocational school program



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## A MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT SIRKO >

Congratulations on another excellent year of in-person learning in School District 51! This has been a year of great celebrations, with a record number of Superintendent Scholars, many playoff journeys, and state championships for our talented students.

I want to thank each and every one of you for making my 47th and final year in education a memorable one! I have so enjoyed my time as superintendent and getting to watch our students and staff grow, learn, and persevere.

I am positive you will all welcome our new superintendent, Dr. Brian Hill, with open arms when he starts in his new role this summer. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Dr. Hill for the last three years, and I know you will be impressed with his vision for the future of D51.

I hope you like this State of our Schools report!

*Diana*



## A MESSAGE FROM INCOMING SUPERINTENDENT HILL >



I am excited and honored to be your superintendent starting July 1.

When my family and I moved here three years ago from Texas, the landscape of PreK-12 education looked very different than it does now. Thanks to the hard work and support of our students, staff, and families, we were the largest Colorado school district to remain open last year. That has made a difference in

our academic achievement and mental health support and helped fuel the economic growth of our community.

In the years to come, the Board of Education and I plan to support the implementation of our new D51 Strategic Plan in order to have prepared and supported students and staff and engaged and supportive community partners. I look forward to all that we will accomplish together for our D51 students, staff, and community.

*Brian Hill*

## MESA COUNTY VALLEY BOARD OF EDUCATION >



**Doug Levinson**  
District A



**Kari Sholtes**  
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**Andrea Haitz**  
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# NEW CURRICULUM >

A team of 47 teachers, principals, and other District 51 staff are working to bring a new literacy curriculum resource for kindergarten through fifth-graders to all D51 elementary schools in 2023-24.

The members of this group - called the Instructional Resource Selection Team, or IRST, for short - represent all 25 elementary schools in D51, plus staff from various departments, such as curriculum, special education, and culturally and linguistically diverse education. Having a large team ensures that all voices are heard in the decision-making process and will improve implementation efforts at each elementary school.



The switch to a new reading, writing, and phonics curriculum for elementary schools was prompted by state legislation. Several school districts in Colorado weren't seeing the results they had hoped to see following the 2012 passage of the READ Act: a bill that aimed to have every student reading at grade level by third grade. As a result, the state legislature passed another bill in 2019 specifying which curriculum resources are recommended for districts to improve elementary literacy outcomes. D51's resources for elementary literacy were not on the list.

The IRST has been looking at a dozen resources since the state released its most up-to-date curriculum resource list in March. The team will narrow the list to two options by the end of Summer Institute on May 25. In the fall, teachers will further research and test drive the remaining options and send a recommendation to the Curriculum Resource Governance Committee in October. The D51 School Board is expected to make the final decision on resource adoption by the end of 2022.

Though the state only requires new adoption of reading resources for grades K-3 under this new legislation, D51 is going one step further by adopting K-5 reading and writing curriculum so there is consistency and cohesion for students as they move from one grade to the next. D51 Curriculum Director Jackie Anderson said a unified curriculum better serves our students and should have a huge impact K-12.

"This process is driven by a love for kids and reading, and we want to see them succeed," she said. ♦

# POINTS OF PRIDE >



## Speech and Debate National Qualifiers

Erin Casey, Jenna Sackter (CHS)  
Lynessa Asplund, Kennedy Stephen, Annika Walla (PHS)



## SWL Girls Basketball

Coach of the Year:  
Michael Wells (FMHS)  
Player of the Year:  
Kylie Wells (FMHS)

## WSL Boys Basketball

Coach of the Year: Cory Hitchcock (PHS)  
Player of the Year: Donovan Maestas (PHS)



## State Knowledge Bowl Champions, Class 4A

Grand Junction High School

# GJHS BREAKING GROUND >

After years of anticipation, Grand Junction High School students and staff will finally walk into a new building in the fall of 2024! A groundbreaking ceremony in June will officially kick off two years of construction on the northeast side of campus. In the meantime, students will continue to attend classes in the current GJHS buildings.

The north portion of the new Grand Junction High will have three stories of classroom space, teacher offices, and collaboration spaces for student projects. Instead of being grouped by subject, classrooms will be grouped by the school's four academies:

- 1) Arts & Humanities
- 2) Business Entrepreneurship
- 3) Engineering, Technology, and Natural Resources
- 4) Health Science and Human Services

On the south side of the school will be a single, secure entrance that opens to a commons area that will double as cafeteria seating. The south side of the building will also have a performing arts center; a media center; a community room; counseling offices; school administration offices; and a gym, auxiliary gym, and gym facilities like locker rooms and a weight room and wrestling room.

The bond measure that passed in November 2021 will supply \$115 million for the construction project. Another \$19.5 million for the project will come from the 2017 Bond Measure, and \$10 million is coming from a state BEST (Building Excellent Schools Today) grant. As with the 2017 bond projects, construction progress and spending updates for the GJHS reconstruction project will be posted at [d51schools.org](http://d51schools.org). ♦



**Regional FIRST Robotics Champions**  
Hi Fives Robotics Team #4944



**All State Jazz Band**  
Jacob Mason, Rogelio Montes, Paolo Reitz (PHS)



**2022 Daniels Scholar**  
Abigail Dickenson (PHS)



**2022 Boettcher Scholar**  
Sophia Feghali (PHS)

# ACADEMIC OPTIONS >

## S.T.E.M. Programming

(Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)

Students from all School District 51 schools and programs have opportunities to participate in myriad STEM opportunities, including FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Lego League and FIRST Robotics clubs, monthly MESA (Math, Engineering, Science Achievement) events (including solar car races and building boats out of milk jugs), the annual Rube Goldberg contest, performance-based learning and project-based learning, and the D51 Design Challenge, which asks students to find a solution to a community issue and present it to a panel of experts.

Many elementary and middle schools also have their own STEM or STEAM programming, and Central High School is a Nationally Certified STEM Campus. In addition to having a STEM program with classes focused on preparing students for a career in STEM, students can apply to the P-TECH program and earn an associate's degree in a STEM-related field without paying any of the tuition costs themselves.

D51 offers a variety of ways to tailor a child's education to fit their interests. Here are just a few of our academic options.

## International Baccalaureate (IB)

The IB program at Palisade High School is offered in two parts: the IB Middle

Years program is available to all PHS 9th- and 10th-graders, and the rigorous IB Diploma Programme is for 11th- and 12th-graders who apply and are selected to participate. Students who complete the Diploma Programme graduate with a D51 diploma, an IB diploma, and as much as a year's worth of college credit.



## Advanced Placement

Each year, hundreds of D51 students take advantage of the wide assortment of AP classes offered at each high school. Students can earn college credit by taking AP exams.

## Career and Technical Education

In addition to the many career-focused classes in everything from agriculture and business to journalism and food service, the district has a designated Career Center with seven CTE career programs. There are also CTE organizations like Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America; FFA; Technology Student Association; HOSA; and Future Business Leaders of America.



# POINTS OF PRIDE >



## ProStart State Champions

Avelyn Benefield, Kyley King, Elizabeth Potter, Taylor Schimek (FMHS)



**Katharine Smushkov (DIA)**  
Space Foundation  
International Teacher  
Liaison

## Paul Cain, AD

CHSAA Hall of Fame inductee



## All State Band

Averee Toft (PHS)



## Pathways in Technology Early College High School

### (P-TECH)

Students at Central High School, Grand Junction High School, and the D51 Career Center can jump start their careers and earn an associate's in a specific field in tandem with their high school diploma without paying a cent toward tuition.

In 2019, Central became the first school in District 51 to introduce a P-TECH program. Central P-TECH students can earn an associate's in a STEM-related field, such as mechanical engineering technology or welding. In 2021-22, P-TECH grew to include GJHS and the Career Center. Career Center students can earn an associate's in a construction or lineworker field, and GJHS's P-TECH program is linked to WCCC associates' degrees in the medical and IT fields. To learn more, visit the P-TECH section on the CHS, GJHS, or Career Center websites.

### Concurrent Enrollment

High schoolers can take classes at Colorado Mesa University or Western Colorado Community College campuses or take CMU classes taught by D51 teachers at their high school and earn college credit at no tuition cost to them.



### High School Alternatives

R-5 High School and Valley School have smaller environments for more individualized attention.

### East Challenge Program

Gifted students take rigorous core classes together, then attend electives with the general East Middle School population.



### Online Options

Grand River Academy offers a hybrid of online learning with in-person instruction one or more days a week for grades K-12 or an online-only program for middle and high school students. GRA students can participate in a wide variety of clubs and activities.

### Dual Immersion Academy

Students learn in both English and Spanish at the elementary site in Riverside and have the option to continue on in grades 6-8 in a wing adjoining Bookcliff Middle School.



### Job Experience/Work-Based Learning

D51 offers job shadowing and internship opportunities, as well as a Fire Academy, Teacher Educator Programs, a Construction Trades pre-apprenticeship program, and a Sports Medicine Program.

### High School of Business

Grand Junction High School has one of the top-performing chapters of a national program called High School of Business. Students can take up to three years of business courses, covering everything from marketing to management.



JUNIPER RIDGE  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL



### D51 Charter Schools

D51 has three charter schools: Independence Academy, Juniper Ridge Community School, and Mesa Valley Community School.

# More Programs

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Agriculture Science     | Hospitality              |
| Business                | Interior/Fashion Design  |
| Computer & Digital Tech | Journalism/Multimedia    |
| Construction Trades     | Manufacturing Technology |
| Culinary Arts           | Mechatronics             |
| Early Childhood Ed      | ProStart                 |
| Fire Science            | STEM/Engineering         |
| Health Science          | Vet Tech/Animal Care     |
| Horticulture            | Welding                  |

# OUTDOOR WILDERNESS LAB >



Did you know that District 51 has a hands-on program in Gateway that teaches math, science, and other subjects to sixth-graders using age-appropriate Colorado Academic Standards? OWL, short for Outdoor Wilderness Lab, has grown from a one-week program on Grand Mesa for a handful of sixth-graders at Bookcliff Middle School to a multi-week program that welcomes dozens of students from each D51 middle school, divided by school into two-and-a-half-day sessions.

Each group of students engages in experiential learning in the great outdoors at a permanent, district-owned site next to Gateway School. Lessons range from wildlife biology, plant and creek investigation, geology, and history to archery and teamwork- and communication-building challenge courses. To learn more about OWL, visit [www.outdoorwildernesslab.org](http://www.outdoorwildernesslab.org) or [bit.ly/district51owl](https://bit.ly/district51owl). ♦

## STRATEGIC PLAN: YEAR 1 >

The district's newly adopted Strategic Plan sets three years of goals to incrementally move the district forward. Below, you will find a list of the first year of goals, which should be met on or before June 2023. You can learn more about the Strategic Plan and find goals for 2024 and 2025 by clicking on the Strategic Plan icon at [d51schools.org](http://d51schools.org).

### Goals for Student Wellness

- The district will show growth of 2% or more on the yearly Panorama student survey on School Belonging for each level.
- Schools will show growth in their yearly Panorama data that closes the gap to the national norm by 50% on School Belonging through their specific goals and efforts and meet or exceed the national norm for student sense of belonging for all students, including disaggregated groups, as measured by the spring Panorama survey.

### Goals for Academic Success

By June 2023, 80% of schools will be at the Performance or Improvement levels on their School Performance Framework.

### Goals for Learning Experiences

D51 staff will identify and map specialized pathways to create opportunities in the district for students and align with Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) implementation.

### Goals for Professional Learning

- Eighty percent of educators engage in Learning Communities (LCs) linked to planning for, assessing, analyzing results, and adjusting instruction based on mastery of academic standards.
- Eighty percent of educators and leaders will identify, implement, monitor and adjust Social Emotional Learning (SEL) practices related to student SEL needs at their school.

- Eighty percent of educators will embed instruction that acknowledges and affirms different cultural viewpoints in order to meet the diverse academic needs of all learner groups.

### Goals for Educator/Leadership Pipeline

D51 will match the state average of a diverse teaching staff, increase the number of qualified certified candidates to 950, increase the diversity of our leaders to 8%, and increase the number of qualified leader candidates by 15%.

### Goals for Staff Wellness

D51 will issue an anonymous staff survey in which staff can report on their general well being.

### Goals for Community Partnerships

D51 will develop a map of current partners, how they are serving the needs of students and families, and identify gaps in partnerships.

### Goals for Resource Allocation

D51 will review current resource allocation and budgeting systems by identifying existing allocation methods and benchmarking current resource allocations to those of similar districts.

### Goals for Learning Experiences

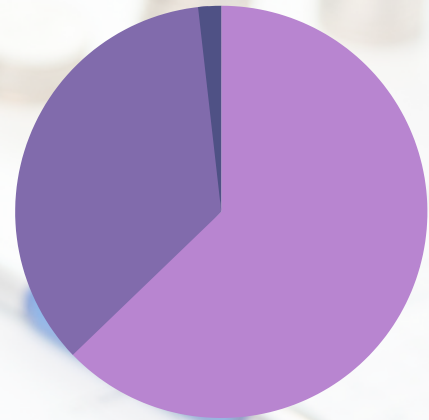
Departments serving migrant families and families who primarily speak a language other than English will connect with school leaders to discuss ways to better meet the needs of these families, and then collaborate with the Communications Department to see how they can aid in these efforts. The Communications Department will seek a communications audit to review its tools and see which ones could be used more effectively and determine if any should be added. ♦

# 2021-2022 RE-ADOPTED BUDGET >

As the largest employer in Mesa County, responsible for 47 schools and programs and more than 21,000 students, the budget for School District 51 has many impacts for our community. The bulk of the budget goes to the classroom in the form of instructional materials, student services, and the salaries and benefits of those who make an impact on your child's education.

Despite being one of the lowest-funded districts in one of the lowest-funded states for K-12 education, District 51 makes every cent count and is fully transparent with its finances. The district has earned the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Finance Reporting each year for 23 years in a row and posts budget and financial information on its website at [d51schools.org](http://d51schools.org). Citizens can also track all spending from the 2017 Bond Measure and Mill Levy Override at [bit.ly/d51bond](http://bit.ly/d51bond) and [bit.ly/d51mill](http://bit.ly/d51mill). Financial reporting for the 2021 Bond Measure will also be posted at [d51schools.org](http://d51schools.org) as the GJHS bond project gets underway. ♦

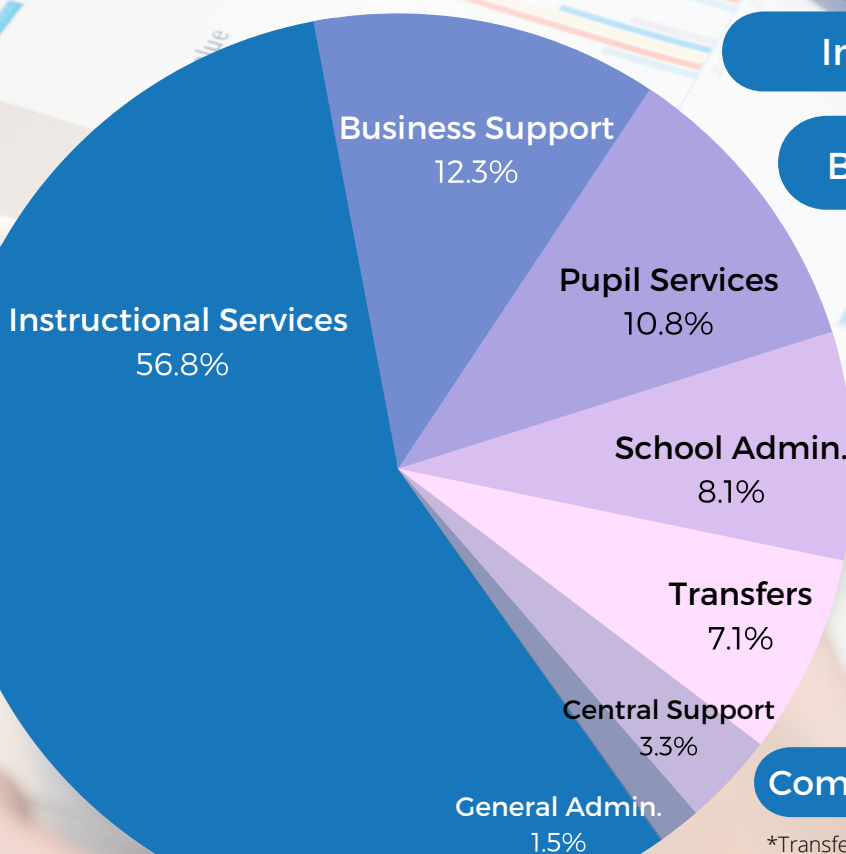
## General Fund Revenue



### General Fund Revenue

- State Revenue = \$128,280,475
- Local Revenue = \$74,917,712
- Federal Revenue = \$416,661

## General Fund Expenditures & Transfers



Instructional Services = \$115,544,395

Business Support Services = \$24,990,441

Pupil Support Services = \$21,912,250

School Admin. Support = \$16,510,327

\*Transfers = \$14,482,163

Central Support = \$6,764,439

General Admin. Support = \$3,001,997

Community, Other Support Services = \$64,732

\*Transfers to charter schools, capital projects/insurance, and physical activities.

# SCHOOL SAFETY >

D51's security and safety protocols have been recognized as among the most exemplary in the U.S. by the National Institute of Justice.

Each school performs 11 fire drills, two lockdown drills, and one shelter-in-place drill every year to prepare for the worst, while the District 51 Safety and Security Team works tirelessly to prevent the worst. D51 is in full compliance with the Claire Davis Act which, in part, requires that districts use a threat assessment tool to investigate and document potential threats of harm

or acts of violence. The building's crisis team investigates these tips and two members of the D51 Security Team review them. Threats that are deemed to be serious or serious substantive are further

investigated using a risk for violence assessment. Threat assessments have led to placing 32 high-risk students on safety plans and performing 11 violence assessments in 2021-22. School staff received training twice this year on completing threat assessments.

Districts are also required to have an anonymous reporting system for safety concerns under the Claire Davis Act. D51 encourages students to use Safe2Tell, which is a statewide system, and gives all sixth-



graders a presentation on how to use Safe2Tell to report everything from school threats to suicidal ideation to bullying. The district has established a working committee to align anti-bullying efforts to the Colorado Department of Education Model Policy for Bully Prevention and Education released in February.

When a crisis occurs at a school, the school receives immediate help from the District Crisis Response Team. The team is made up of staff from schools across the district who provide counseling, communications, security, administrative help, and more.

Also responding to incidents are the 12 School Resource Officers and two supervisors provided by local law enforcement agencies, plus our 10 D51 Security Officers. The D51 Security Team has more than a century of law enforcement experience combined. In addition to having previous law enforcement experience, all officers go through psychological and physical fitness testing. Security officers patrol schools, create safety plans for large events, provide support at those events, and give presentations to classrooms. We greatly appreciate all they do for our schools every day! ♦

# LUNCH LIZARD >

This is the eighth summer that District 51 will operate the Lunch Lizard mobile summer meal program. This innovative service brings breakfast and lunch to neighborhoods with high rates of children receiving free or reduced-price meals during the school year. Anyone 18 or younger can eat free. Find the schedule for this year's Lunch Lizard stops and school food service sites at [bit.ly/lunchlizard](https://bit.ly/lunchlizard). Thank you to the Western Colorado Community Foundation and our other partners for making the Lunch Lizard program possible! ♦



# REGISTRATION >

Incoming kindergarten students and all other students new to D51 in the 2022-23 school year can begin online registration on July 20, 2022. Parents/guardians will need a ParentVUE account to register online; those without an account can call their child's future school for help setting up a ParentVUE account. There was no Kindergarten Roundup this spring, though individual schools may choose to host their own events later this summer.

Once a parent or guardian has completed online registration, they must provide the following documentation in person or electronically in order to complete their child's registration:

- Child's birth certificate
- Child's immunization records
- Proof of address (for example, a utility bill)

Families must complete online registration materials through ParentVUE each year, but only need to provide a copy of a child's birth certificate, immunization records, and proof of address if the child is new to the district.

For more information about registration, visit [d51schools.org](https://d51schools.org) and click on "Enrollment & Registration" under the "Parents" tab. ♦